

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36719/2706-6185/51/51-56>

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Comparison of Traditional and Modern Marketing Approaches: Models Adapted for Education

Abstract

In today's competitive environment, educational institutions are increasingly adopting marketing strategies to attract students. Traditional models like the 4P framework (Product, Price, Place, Promotion), originally designed for consumer goods, offer limited applicability in service-oriented sectors such as education. This paper examines the transition broadly 7P model, which incorporates additional elements mandatory to services: "People", "Process", and "Physical Evidence". Furthermore, the study proposes an education-adapted marketing model by expanding on the 7P framework with four additional elements—positioning, partnerships, personalization, and performance metrics. By analyzing each component in the context of educational services, this article highlights how institutions can enhance their competitiveness, improve service delivery, and better meet student needs through strategic marketing.

Keywords: education marketing, 4P model, 7P model, service marketing, positioning, personalization, partnerships, performance metrics, student satisfaction, higher education strategy

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Ənənəvi və müasir marketinq yanaşmalarının müqayisəsi: təhsil üçün uyğunlaşdırılan modellər

Xülasə

Müasir rəqabətli mühitdə təhsil müəssisələri tələbələri cəlb etmək məqsədilə marketinq strategiyalarından getdikcə daha çox istifadə edirlər. Əsasən istehlak malları üçün nəzərdə tutulmuş ənənəvi 4P modeli (Məhsul, Qiymət, Məkan, Təbliğət) xidmət yönümlü sahələr, xüsusilə təhsil üçün məhdud tətbiq imkanlarına malikdir. Bu məqalədə xidmət sahələri üçün nəzərdə tutulmuş və "İnsanlar", "Proses" və "Fiziki sübutlar" kimi əlavə elementləri əhatə edən daha geniş 7P modelinə keçid təhlil edilir. Bundan əlavə, məqalədə təhsil sahəsinin spesifik xüsusiyyətlərinə uyğun olaraq 7P modeli əsasında genişləndirilmiş marketinq modeli təqdim edilir. Bu modelə dörd əlavə istiqamət – mövqeləndirmə, tərəfdaşlıqlar, fərdiləşdirmə və icra göstəriciləri daxil edilmişdir. Məqalədə bu komponentlərin hər biri təhsil sahəsində təhlil edilərək göstərilir ki, təhsil müəssisələri bu strategiyalarla rəqabət üstünlüyü qazana, xidmət keyfiyyətini artır və tələbə ehtiyaclarını daha effektiv şəkildə ödəyə bilərlər.

Açar sözlər: təhsil marketinqi, 4P modeli, 7P modeli, xidmət marketinqi, mövqeləndirmə, fərdiləşdirmə, tərəfdaşlıqlar, icra göstəriciləri, tələbə məmnuniyyəti, ali təhsil strategiyası

Introduction

In the modern era, the field of education—like other service sectors—operates under market principles and in a competitive environment. Therefore, the application of effective marketing approaches in educational institutions is becoming increasingly essential.

Traditional marketing models—especially the 4P model (product, price, place, promotion)—have long been used as product-oriented approaches across many sectors (Goi, 2009). However, the dynamic nature of service-oriented sectors, particularly education, and the significant role of the human factor, have made it necessary to expand these models and develop more modern forms (Saunila et al, 2019).

Research

This article compares the 4P model with its enhanced version for the service sector — the 7P model — and presents marketing approaches adapted to the specific characteristics of the education sector. The aim is to evaluate the applicability and effectiveness of various approaches in education and to determine which marketing strategies educational institutions can use to gain a competitive advantage in the market.

The 4P (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) model is a classical marketing model mainly focused on consumer goods and is described in Table 1.

Table 1. 4P Model (Traditional Marketing Approach).

Element	Description	Implementation in Education
Product	The value offered as a physical item or service	Educational programs, specializations, diplomas
Price	The amount paid by the customer	Tuition fees, scholarships, discounts
Place	Channels through which the product is delivered	Educational facilities, online platforms
Promotion	Communication about the product	Advertisements, education fairs, social media campaigns

Source: Compiled by the author.

A detailed explanation of each “P” element and its application in education is given below:

Product

In traditional marketing, the concept of “product” is understood as a physical good or service presented to the customer (Grundey, 2008). The value of this product is measured by its ability to meet the customer's needs and expectations.

In the field of education, “product” refers to the academic programs, specialties, training courses, diplomas, and certificates offered by the educational institution (Parasii-Verhunen et al, 2020). The value of this “product” is determined by the quality of its content, teaching staff, instructional methodology, and competitive advantage in the labour market (Gryshchenko et al, 2021). The institution must determine how it will differentiate its educational product in the market (for example, innovative programs, international accreditations, education opportunities in foreign languages, etc.).

Price

Price is the financial value of a product or service to the customer. Price is not only a monetary amount but also reflects its perceived value (Naylor & Frank, 2001). In education, price primarily refers to tuition fees. It also includes scholarships, payment discounts, student loans, and fees charged for additional services (Massy, 2012). Educational institutions should plan their pricing strategies not only in terms of financial income but also in terms of accessibility and attractiveness. For example, high tuition fees may create a prestigious image but may exclude certain audiences.

Place

Place includes the methods of delivering the product to the consumer and how it is accessed. This covers sales channels, distribution networks, logistics, and customer access paths (Christopher, 2016).

For educational institutions, the concept of “place” is understood as the geographical location of teaching facilities, branches, distance learning opportunities, online platforms, and virtual classrooms. In the modern era, as a result of digital transformation, educational products can also be offered beyond geographical limitations (Gunter, 2025). For example, an online master’s program offered by a university may attract students from various countries around the world.

Promotion

Promotion encompasses all communication activities carried out to introduce a product or service in the market and to increase its sales.

Promotional activities in the field of education include the following:

- Television and radio advertisements
- Campaigns on social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, etc.)
- Participation in education fairs
- Open house days, master classes, and webinars
- Collaboration with schools and preventive seminars

These activities serve to strengthen the image of the educational institution, attract the attention of prospective students and their parents, and highlight the institution’s unique advantages.

Although the traditional 4P model is used in education, it has certain shortcomings — for example, it does not sufficiently cover the service-oriented nature of the sector and the importance of the human factor. Since the education sector is a service field, the 7P model is considered a broader and more modern approach. The additional three elements — People, Process, and Physical Evidence — are included in this model. The 7P model is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. 7P Model (Service Marketing Approach).

Element	Description	Implementation in Education
Product	The value offered as a physical item or a service	Educational programs, specialties, diplomas
Price	The amount paid by the customer	Tuition fees, scholarships, discounts
Place	Channels through which the product is delivered	Campus buildings, online platforms
Promotion	Dissemination of information about the product	Advertisements, education fairs, social media campaigns
People	Individuals in direct contact with customers	Teachers, administrative staff, students
Process	The mechanism by which the service is delivered	Teaching process, admission procedures, online registration
Physical Evidence	Tangible indicators of the service	Diploma samples, classrooms, education platforms

Source: Compiled by the author.

Since the first four elements of the 7P model are the same as the 4P model, their explanation is not repeated. A detailed explanation of the three additional elements and their application in education is provided below.

People

People involved in service delivery—that is, employees in direct contact with customers, as well as other individuals who influence the value of the service—are included in this category.

In an educational institution, "people" refers to the teaching staff, administrative personnel, technical staff, academic leadership, as well as the students themselves (Mwesigwa et al, 2020). Their

behaviour, professionalism, communication skills, and service culture significantly impact the student's impression of the institution. For example:

- The pedagogical expertise and motivational ability of teachers affect students' success and interest in education.
- The courteous and responsive attitude of administrative staff toward students shapes the institution's image.
- Healthy communication between students and with teachers enhances the overall quality of the educational environment.

Process

It shows how the service is delivered, what stages it goes through, and how this process affects the customer experience. In an educational institution, "processes" refer to the following areas:

- Admission process: document submission, interview stages, online registration forms, initial communication with prospective students;
- Teaching process: structuring of curricula, organization of semesters, class schedules, examination procedures;
- Additional services: mentoring, student support services, career planning, alumni relations.

Effective and transparent processes increase student satisfaction, enhance the quality of education, and strengthen the institution's credibility.

Physical Evidence

Since services are intangible, visual and physical indicators that demonstrate their presence and quality play an important role.

Physical evidence includes the following:

- Aesthetic and functional condition of the learning environment: cleanliness of classrooms, technical equipment, laboratories;
- Brand attributes: design of diplomas and certificates, logo, brand colors, and corporate uniforms;
- Digital traces: functionality and design of the website, ease of use of online education platforms;
- Spatial organization: student centres, libraries, recreation areas.

These elements are essential tools for conveying the institution's value visually to students and parents.

The "7P" model allows for a more precise analysis of service quality, the human factor, and experience-based elements in education.

The "4P" and "7P" models have been expanded for the education sector, with the additional directions shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Education-Adapted Marketing Model.

Element	Description
Positioning	The image and distinctiveness of the educational institution in the market (e.g., international accreditations)
Partnerships	Collaborations with other universities, companies, and government organizations
Personalization	Programs and support tailored to the individual needs of students
Performance Metrics	Employment rate of graduates, teaching quality, student satisfaction

Source: Compiled by the author.

Conclusion

Each element of the education-adapted model is explained in more detail below.

1. Positioning

Positioning refers to the market position of an educational institution, how it is recognized, its distinguishing characteristics, and the way its image is formed (Baturina et al, 2019). A university or

college may position itself as a specialized institution in a specific field — for example, with a focus on technology, arts, or economics.

Examples include:

- International accreditations, placement in rankings, graduate achievements, and academic research performance are factors influencing this positioning.
- To differentiate from competitor institutions, a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) should be developed.

2. Partnerships

Strategic partnerships of educational institutions with other organizations create additional value and strengthen institutional capabilities (Eddy & Amey, 2023). Applications in the field of education include the following:

- Inter-university agreements, dual degree programs, scholarship agreements, and research collaborations.
- Partnerships with companies: student participation in internship programs, job placement opportunities.
- Cooperation with government agencies: training of specialists based on government orders, programs aligned with national strategies.

These partnerships not only enhance the brand of the institution but also increase students' future career prospects.

3. Personalization

Personalization refers to instructional and support approaches that are tailored to students' individual needs, interests, and abilities. Applications in the field of education include:

- Modular-based academic programs and elective course selection according to the student's preferences.
- Additional educational support: tutor assistance, individual mentoring, psychological services.
- Accessibility and inclusion: special accommodations for students with disabilities, customized teaching methods.

Personalization enhances student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes.

4. Performance Metrics

Performance Metrics refer to objective measures and indicators related to the outcomes of an educational institution's activities. Applications in the field of education include:

- Graduate employment rate and salary levels of alumni
- Student satisfaction surveys and teaching quality assessments
- Number of scientific publications and research projects, program accreditations
- User experience and service quality on digital platforms.

These indicators play a crucial role in both internal management and public accountability.

This model emphasizes a student-centred approach and supports quality management in a competitive environment.

As the explanations indicate, a combination of the 7P model and the education-specific extended model is more appropriate for use in the education sector.

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Received: 21.04.2025

Accepted: 30.08.2025