

INFLUENCE OF MARKETING ON THE SELECTION OF A SECONDARY SCHOOL

Dane Malešević

Tehnička škola, Gradiška, Bosna i Hercegovina

dmalesevic@gradiska.com

***Abstract** – This paper presents the results of an empirical study into the possible influence of organised marketing on the selection of a secondary school, that is, on pupils' choice of a range of vocations for which training is provided at secondary schools.*

The method of theoretical analysis was applied in this research, and a questionnaire was designed to meet the needs of this study.

The sample of respondents comprised 555 pupils from 9 primary schools in the municipality of Gradiška, and 154 pupils who attend the first grade of the Technical School in the same municipality.

Some of the findings of this research indicate that organised marketing influenced primary school pupils' attitudes and choices of secondary school.

***Key words:** marketing, marketing in education, marketing approach, secondary school, primary school.*

Introduction

At the time of great social and economic change, secondary vocational and technical schools are facing a lack of pupils, the consequence of which is a reduction in the number of teaching classes. In other words, there is a surplus of employees both within and outside the teaching process. Various factors bring about this situation: lower birth rates, migration, competition, etc. One more factor needs to be mentioned, as pointed out by Matijević (2008, 200): "A basic comparison of the curricula of compulsory schools in Croatia shows a neglect or a complete lack of studying in state schools. It looks as if work (studying) in Croatian compulsory schools is unwanted! After eight years of predominantly intellectual activities, it is hard to expect pupils to select and succeed in various vocational, craft and technical schools".

Secondary vocational and technical schools, bearing in mind the above factors, are now in a position where they have to fight fiercely for their survival on the market of educational services. One of the ways to fight on this market is certainly marketing, which is often a topic of scientific research papers. Marketing should be education, education should be marketing (head-rush.typepad.com). Most authors define marketing in literature as a social and managerial process of exchange between the beneficiary and the benefactor of the service, the result of which is mutual interest and satisfaction. In order to make a school capable of undertaking marketing actions, it is necessary to research educational needs. In other words, it is necessary to identify wishes, needs and expectations of the beneficiaries, analyse the problem, make a cross-section of the established situation and on the basis of this information, plan marketing activities. Researching education needs is a standardised procedure. It includes the collection, analysis and interpretation of data, the purpose of which is to extract information relevant for making marketing decisions as well as other decisions in an institution... (Vančina, 2008).

The essence of marketing activities on the market of educational services has to be based on quality. In our case, we want to grown into a training centre for highly qualified professionals and technicians and a centre of education for young people and adults in machine engineering and metallurgy, which can be compared to similar institutions in Europe (strojna.scptuj.si). If the school decides to undertake marketing activities, it will point out the best of what it has, that is, its best facilities, particularly technological equipment and conditions for education, the available teaching staff, and it is also important to point out the results which the school achieves as well as its educational and pedagogical work with pupils.

This paper has no intention of providing answers to all the questions of marketing in education, or to define precisely the perfect marketing models to help pupils select one school or another. The purpose of the paper is, first of all, to raise the issue of school marketing as a relatively new issue within the educational system, and at the same time to point out the possibility of action according to this plan. In other words, certain considerations are raised, although no general solutions are provided.

I THEORETICAL ASPECTS

In the framework of basically new relations in society, in the transitional changes which bring a different concept of the market in comparison to earlier experiences in this area, the school faces new challenges regarding its role and organisation. Some of them are clearly highlighted, thus becoming the guiding ideas for school management. At a time when it is common to talk about management in general, but also about specific areas and aspects of

management, a new task arises before the school management: marketing in education.

The initial theoretical consideration was supplemented in the mid 1990s with empirical facts on marketing aspects of school life. The marketing approach is a means to achieve a goal – the exchange must lead to a mutual benefit (Haton, 2003, 16). By following the marketing philosophy, school management defines more precisely and more carefully the needs of its “clients”. Oplatka, however, points out that in school life, before marketing was recognised and defined as a kind of life philosophy, as well as subsequently, various activities have been going on which can essentially be defined as marketing activities. The opening of the school to the public, its representation to citizens, parents, efforts to develop the inner life of the school, making connections with other social factors and similar steps represent activities that are characterised by the need for public recognition and presentation.

When talking about the new, extremely important role of marketing, Karpati (2001, 99) writes: “The importance of marketing in this turbulent time of constant changes is to draw the attention not only of marketing experts but of all those people who are involved in any way in marketing. All the challenges and changes of our times require certain adjustment to all these challenges and changes, including the activity of marketing itself”. The contemporary school is not an immediate marketing target. However, since it is liable to wider social and economical influences, it cannot remain beyond the realm of marketing. Marketing must identify, assess and select the possibility of a market launch and it has to define management strategies and the potential domination of targeted markets (Kotler, 2004, 28). It is therefore necessary to approach school marketing as one of the forms of marketing activities, although they are undertaken under entirely specific circumstances in comparison to marketing forms in other areas.

In terms of new conditions on the market, the school must take care of itself in advance, that is, it has to create its marketing by trying to represent itself fully to the public with one basic goal – to attract the perfect primary school pupil.

When Karpati (2001, 59) points out marketing as an integrative function of an enterprise, which would make this function the leading philosophy of the enterprise, as well as institutions outside economic activities, he has in mind a specific marketing philosophy. In other words, a certain enterprise marketing philosophy becomes important for the totality of the current work and of the vision of the future work of an enterprise.

The strength of (self-) promotion should help the perfect primary school pupil decide. Thus, not fully, but significantly, the true affinity of the young man is put aside and the promotion appeals to his consciousness in order to direct him on the basis of external factors (within the presented system of

positive arguments) to the school which, under the circumstances, can provide him with the best educational and pedagogical basis for further life. At the same time, each school tries to be the very one. Companies send messages through advertising, sales improvement, salesmen and the public with the aim of attracting attention and interest (Kotler, 2006, 65). In this sense, marketing in education is going to become an important aspect of school life; at the same time, it is going to motivate the inner development of the life of a school. However, there is another dimension: marketing reduces the perfect primary school pupil's "free" and personal space for a final decision. Thus, the economic and social justification of marketing overlap, or, as Ivanković claims (2006, 254): "Contemporary organizations cannot reduce their targets only to the economy but to a range of social goals: satisfying the needs, expectations and interest of employees; providing permanent employment; achieving a high quality of work life." Naturally, this overlapping in school life has the dimension of an extremely sensitive psycho-emotional determination among pupils, as well as the needs of the system.

With a lower number of primary school pupils, there is evidently a stronger need for secondary schools to present themselves as well as they can on the market of educational services, that is, to present their capacities, to point out their advantages in comparison to other secondary schools in the municipality or town where they operate. What has brought most education institutions to the point where they accept the marketing concept and turn to the market on which they offer their services was a decline in the expected number of registered students, reduced donations and other financial sources, with a parallel increase in various costs (Glišković, 2003, 250).

Apart from this aspect of decreasing numbers of pupils (due to lower birth rates and other geo-political factors), the new role of the school is under the ever-growing influence of marketing relations created in transitional processes. Any organisation which wants to survive on this market has to analyse the strategies of its competition (www.learnmarketing.net). The need to survive in new socio-economic conditions requires the school to fight not only for its users but also to be more "competitive" and to perform in a more open and "richer" market. Although we would be happy to be able to say that the best beat the competition, the fact is that the (sole) quality of work is no guarantee for success on the market

In this respect, Galogaža (2003, 53) points out the importance of anticipating the diverse influences of new needs, competitors, technology, communication: "We are dealing here with creating new values for the consumer and new advantages in comparison to the competition". When applied to education, the school is not in the position to be able to make new values, because it is socially and system based. However, through a high quality approach to the educational process, by defining new school development based on fresh

pedagogical paradigms, through innovations, more appropriate equipment, an essentially different role and the new status of a pupil, through the enthusiasm and motivation of staff, through partnership relations which are built towards students, etc, it is possible to show the idea of a high quality school, and one which can be recognised as such.

What is interesting in this sense is word of mouth in marketing, which is defined as follows by Predrag Haramija (2007, 885): “The main reason why word of mouth has a much stronger persuasive power than media advertising, according to almost all studies, lies in the fact that consumers are sceptical towards the claims of advertisers, because they, of course, serve to promote their interests. On the other hand, when a product is recommended by a cousin or a friend it is correctly recognised as a message from someone who is not directly interested, that is, he has no other interest but to help”. By predominantly accepting this attitude, we can only add that a school will be represented mostly by its results, that is, by the success of its people: pupils and teachers. Marketing in the real world is perhaps the most powerful weapon in anyone’s arsenal. Think about whether there is anything stronger that could attract you to a certain product than the word of a trustworthy friend who is delighted by this product (Džojner, 2006, 137). At the same time, there will always be those who, mostly because of their own failure, do not contribute to creating the image of a school. The fact that the school is said to be “good” (as some kind of public opinion) attracts in itself those who want quality. Those who are looking for “an easier way” also rely on word of mouth, and if they are able to choose, they will find a school which suits them better in this respect. Haramija (2007) would add that in selection through word of mouth, new technological innovations (mobile phones, the internet) provide great assistance. More and more activities can be done in the virtual world, such as searching for information, watching the daily news, purchasing consumer products, communicating, entertainment, etc. (www.ris.org/si/). Apart from this, the question can be asked: do schools and the users of educational services take sufficient advantage of modern technologies? Computer information systems are used to improve the presentation and access to information and they are used in combination with other media to increase the value of offered data (Fletcher, 2003, 39).

It is not usual, nor does it sound appropriate, to call pupils consumers. Apart from that, is it not the task of every state, that is, every socio-political system, to systematically set development priorities within its own development, thus promoting a value system which cares for its offspring, that is, those who are to become themselves the pillars of society?

The concept of the secondary school as compulsory for each student finishing primary school contributes to this vision. At the same time, those secondary schools, whether compulsory or not, are now in a position where they have to fight generally for their survival.

Dilemmas arising from educational marketing are obviously numerous. However, regarding the new situation created through transitional changes in the entire socio-political system, especially on the market of merchandise and services, there is a need to consider educational marketing as a necessary aspect of school activities.

II RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological concept of the research comprises contemporary research methods and techniques chosen in accordance with the nature of the problem, the topic, the goal, the tasks and the set hypotheses.

1. The Topic of the Research

The topic of the research is the marketing approach and the changes generated by this approach to influence the selection of a secondary school.

2. The Goal of the Research

The goal of the research is to examine the interest of pupils in the selection of a secondary school and to establish whether the specific marketing activities have an influence on pupils in the selection of a secondary school.

3. The Tasks of the Research

The tasks of the research are to:

1. examine the orientation of pupils towards certain schools in the municipality of Gradiška before marketing;
2. establish the influence of marketing on the orientation of pupils when selecting a secondary school;
3. examine the influence of individual elements of the implemented marketing activities on the orientation of pupils;
4. establish the factors that are decisive in the pupils' orientation in selecting a profession;
5. establish the impact on students of access to ICT when selecting a school.

4. Hypotheses

In the research, we started from the hypothesis that the interests and orientations of pupils for a profession through the selection of secondary schools in our municipality are superficial and diverse, that they are not firm enough in

respect of the decision on the selection, and that it is possible to influence the selection of a secondary school through organised marketing.

Secondary hypotheses are derived from the main hypothesis:

1. Primary school pupils in the municipality are clearly oriented towards some of the secondary schools in which they can enrol in their immediate environment;
2. Through organised marketing activities, influence is exerted on the orientation of pupils when selecting a secondary school;
3. All the elements of prepared marketing have an equal influence on the orientation of pupils when selecting a secondary school;
4. Other factors also influence the selection of a profession (family, friends, schoolmates, etc.);
5. Pupils have equal access to ICT to make the process of orientation to a school easier.

5. Methods, techniques and instruments

The method of theoretical analysis and a survey by means of a questionnaire designed to meet the needs of this research were used.

6. Research sample

The sample consisted of 555 primary school pupils in the municipality of Gradiška (Bosna and Hercegovina) during the school year 2007/2008. In this sample, attitudes were examined, the orientation of pupils to particular schools in Gradiška was identified, and the influence of organised marketing on that orientation was established. The sample included 154 pupils of the Technical School in Gradiška in the school year 2008/2009. The aim was to examine and establish factors influencing the pupils' selection and to examine whether access to ICT makes it easier for pupils to select a school.

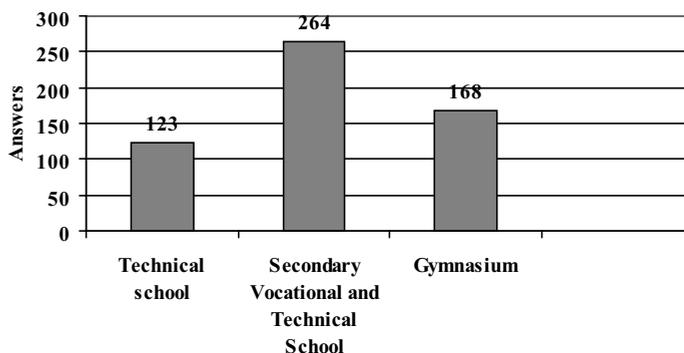
III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis of data collected by means of the questionnaire are as follows:

1. In order to prepare the marketing approach, in 9 primary schools in the municipality of Gradiška in the school year 2007/2008, the current attitudes of 555 pupils were established regarding the selection of individual secondary schools. In the prepared survey, students had to select professional directions offered by enrolment in one of three secondary schools.

Table 1. The results of the survey in the ninth grade of primary school

School	Technical school		Secondary Vocational and Technical School		Gymnasium General Course	
	Answers	%	Answers	%	Answers	%
Orientation by number and percentage of pupils	123	22.16	264	47.56	168	30.28

**Figure 1.** Graphical representation of the results of the survey in the ninth grade of primary school

The table and figure above confirm **the first secondary hypothesis** that primary school pupils in the municipality are clearly oriented to some of the secondary schools in which they can enrol in Gradiška. All the respondents made their selection, no matter how superficial or poorly founded for their long-term perspective it might be.

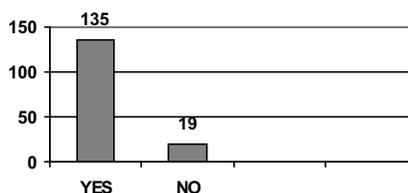
2. In order to answer **the second secondary hypothesis**, we tested the importance of the difference in proportion t (bigger sampler, no correlation) at the level of 0.05 of relevance. In order to calculate the t proportion, we calculated the following:
 - a. proportion: $p=0.22162$; $p=0.27747$
 - b. counter sample proportion: $q=0.77838$; $q=0.72253$
 - c. standard proportion error: $Sp=0.01764$; $Sp=0.01902$
 - d. standard error of the proportion differentiation without correlation $odp=0.02594$
 - e. difference of proportions: $dp=0.05585$
 - f. t -proportion for the difference of proportions: $t = 2.15304$

The calculated proportion, with 95% probability, leads to the conclusion that organised marketing did have an influence on the orientation of pupils in the selection of a particular secondary school in the municipality of Gradiška, by which the second hypothesis is accepted.

- The hypothesis that all the elements of the prepared marketing campaign had equal influence on pupils' selection was tested through an analysis of the results of the survey of a sample of 154 of pupils in the first grade of the Technical School.

Question: Was there a presentation of the Technical School in your former primary school?

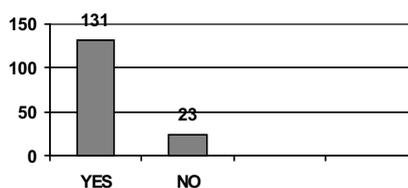
Answers:
135 (87.67%) – YES,
19 (12.33) – NO



- The answers to this question confirm that a presentation was made in all primary schools in the area of the municipality.

Question: Did you like the presentation?

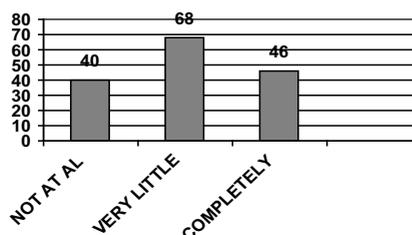
Answers:
131 (85.07%) – YES,
23 (14.93%) – NO



- The results of the survey indicate a good quality realisation, as well as the fact that the presentation attracted the pupils' attention.

Question: to what extent did our presentation influence your decision to enrol in the Technical School?

Answers:
40 (25.97%) – NOT AT ALL
68 (44.15%) – VERY LITTLE
46 (29.88%) – COMPLETELY



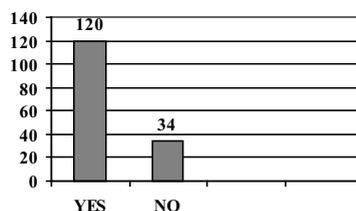
We tested whether the presentation influenced the students to select a profession in the Technical School through the χ^2 test.

From the tables and figures we notice that the pupils' orientations are different. In order to establish if the pupils' views are statistically relevant, we calculated an χ^2 test whose value is 8.529239. With the second degree at the level

of relevance of 0.05, the margin value of the χ^2 test is 5.991 so we may conclude that the pupils' orientations are not statistically relevant and that the prepared presentation did not have a major influence on the pupils' orientation.

Question: Did we manage to provide you, as a ninth-grade pupil, with a realistic picture of the Technical School through this presentation?

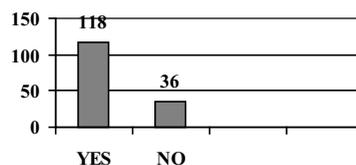
<p>Answers:</p> <p>120 (77.92%) – YES</p> <p>34 (22.08%) – NO</p>
--



The presented results of the pupils' answers indicate that the pupils gained a realistic picture of the school, that is, they were able to notice the advantages and the disadvantages of the school.

Question: Did you read the advertising leaflet which was distributed during the presentation?

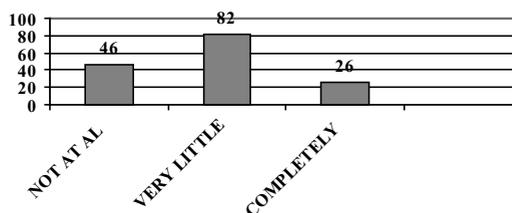
<p>Answers:</p> <p>118 (76.62%) – YES</p> <p>36 (23.38%) – NO</p>
--



The advertising leaflet, as a marketing element, was read by 76.62% of the pupils, which indicates that there was interest in gaining information about their future profession in this way. The students could show the leaflets to their parents, and they could also return again to a text they were interested in.

Question: How much did the advertising leaflet help you select a profession offered by the Technical School?

<p>Answers:</p> <p>46 (29.87%) – NOT AT ALL</p> <p>82 (53.25%) – VERY LITTLE</p> <p>26 (16.88%) – COMPLETELY</p>
--



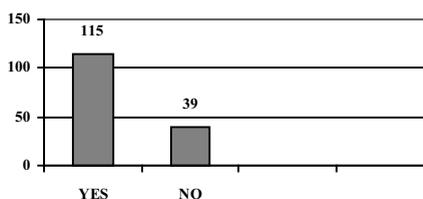
Since the calculated $\chi^2=31.58822 > 5.991$, which is not statistically relevant within the group of the examined sample, the hypothesis that the presentation helped the pupils to get to know thoroughly the professions at the

Technical School is partly accepted. On the basis of the calculated χ^2 we conclude that the influence of the applied marketing elements is not the same.

4. The assumption that the selection of profession was influenced by various factors (family, schoolmates, etc.) was proven by an analysis of the answers in the survey to the following questions:

Question: Did you hear about the Technical School from someone in your surroundings (parents, friends, pupils who are already attending this school...).

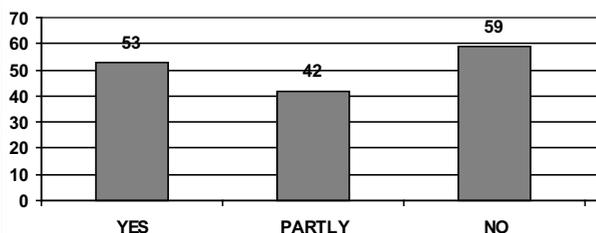
Answers:
115 (74.68%) – YES
39 (25.32) – NO



The environmental factor has a great influence upon this age group, and it was expected to be the same in this case, which is proven by the results: 74.68% of the pupils declared that they had had the opportunity to hear some details regarding the Technical School before the presentation.

Question: Did it affect your decision to enrol in this school?

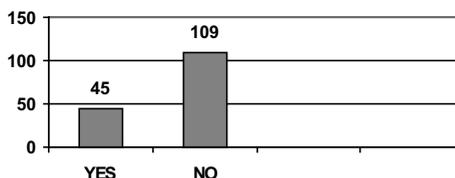
Answers:
53(34.41%) – YES
42 (27.28%) – PARTLY
59 (38.31%) – NO



The χ^2 test, whose value is 2.92156, is calculated at two degrees of freedom at the level of relevance of 0.05, the margin value of the χ^2 test is 5.991, which, according to theory, leads to the conclusion that the set hypothesis may be accepted as realistic.

Question: Did your parents influence your decision to enrol in the Technical School?

Answers:
45 (29.22%) – YES
109 (70.78%) – NO

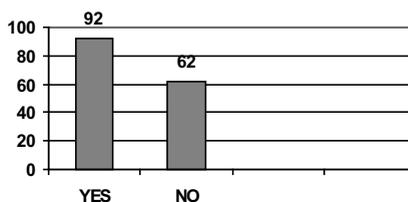


The shown results of the survey on the influence of parents in the pupils' orientation indicate that parents in 70.78% of cases did not affect the selection of the pupils' profession. However, since other influential factors were not examined, there is no way to establish which of the environmental factors had a greater influence.

5. The assumption that the pupils have equal access to ICT in order to make an easier selection of school is proven by an analysis of the answers to the questions:

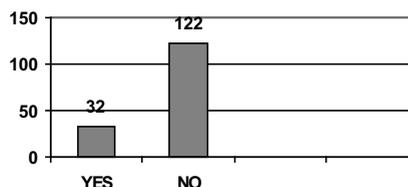
Question: Did you know that the school had its web page?

<p>Answers:</p> <p>92 (59.75%) – YES</p> <p>62 (40.25%) – NO</p>



Question: Have you ever visited the web page of the school?

<p>Answers:</p> <p>32 (20.78%) – YES</p> <p>122 (79.22%) – NO</p>
--



The shown answers to the former two questions indicate that a certain percentage of pupils knew that the school had its web page (59.75%), but visits to the page are low (20.78%), which leads to the conclusion that a large number of students do not possess a personal computer, or that schools do not have enough computers with internet access. Therefore, the claim that students have equal access to modern technological tools is not proven.

6. Conclusions

From the undertaken survey and by proving the set hypotheses, we have derived the following conclusions:

1. Primary school pupils in the municipality of Gradiška are acquainted with the types of schools and the professions catered for in secondary schools;
2. By organised marketing, stronger influence is achieved on the orientations of the pupils;

3. From a range of applied elements in marketing, the advertising leaflet is of greater help to the pupils, because they can re-use it and they can analyse some texts with their parents, which can contribute to a mutual decision on the selection of a profession and a school;
4. Various factors have an influence on the selection of a profession among primary school pupils: parents, older pupils, the environment, but the influence of each of the aforementioned factors was not examined;
5. Not all the pupils have the same opportunities to use modern information technology which would help them more easily choose a profession and a school;
6. The results of the research confirm the initial hypothesis that the interests and orientations of the pupils in the selection of a profession in a secondary schools in the municipality are superficial and diverse, that the pupils are not sufficiently determined regarding the stability of the decision concerning such a selection, and that it is possible, through organised marketing, to influence the selection of the secondary school.

REFERENCES

1. Bubalo, A. (2008). Primjena marketinške koncepcije u cjeloživotnom obrazovanju u Hrvatskoj-magistarski rad. Zagreb: Ekonomski fakultet.
2. Džojner, M. (2006). Neodoljiva ponuda – kako da prodate svoj proizvod ili svoju uslugu za tri sekunde ili kraće. Beograd: MIP Leo commerce.
3. Filipan-Žignić, B. (2008). Marketing u obrazovanju s osvrtom na škole stranih jezika,-magistarski rad. Zagreb: Ekonomski fakultet.
4. Flečer, K. (2003). Upravljanje marketingom i informaciona tehnologija. Beograd: IP Klio.
5. Galogaža, M. (2003). Marketing-menadžment istraživanja. Novi Sad: Škola evropskih znanja.
6. Glišović, J. (2003). Razvoj marketing koncepcije u obrazovnim institucijama. Teme Vol. 27, No. 2, 245-258.
7. Haramija P. (2008). Marketing usmenom predajom: fenomen i mogućnosti. Bogoslovska smotra, Vol. 77, No.4, 881-900.
8. Haton, A. (2003). Planiranje u marketingu. Beograd: IP Klio.
9. Ivanković, P. (2006). Značaj menadžmenta ljudskih resursa. Godišnjak Pravnog fakulteta u Banjoj Luci, br. XXVII-XXVIII.
10. Karpati, T. (2001). Marketing u dinamici. Osijek: Ekonomski fakultet.

11. Kotler, F. (2006). Marketing od A do Z. Novi Sad: Adižes.
12. Kotler, F. (2004). Kako kreirati, upravljati i dominirati tržištem. Novi Sad: Adižes.
13. Matijević, M. (2008). Školski i pedagoški pluralizam u zemljama u tranziciji, Zbornik radova– Škola i njena budućnost I dio, 193-206. Beograd: Srpska akademija obrazovanja.
14. Oplatka, I. (2007). The Principal's Role in Marketing the School: Subjective Interpretations and Personal Influences. College of Education, State of Illinois University, Planning and Changing, Vol. 38. Nos 3-4, 208-221.
15. Vančina, I. (2008). Marketing i menadžment u obrazovanju odraslih. Zagreb: Andragoško učilište Zvonimir.

Internet sources:

- “Marketing should be education, education should be marketing”. Accessed on 23 January 2009 from <headrush.typepad.com>
- “Marketing Theory”. Accessed on 23 January 2009 from <www.learnmarketing.net>
- Lozar, K. and Vehovar, V. “Majhna ekonomija v dobi interneta”. Accessed on 23 January 2009 from www.ris.org/si/

UTICAJ MARKETINGA NA IZBOR SREDNJE ŠKOLE

Dane Malešević

Sažetak – U radu su predstavljeni rezultati empirijskog istraživanja o mogućem uticaju organiziranog marketinga na izbor srednje škole, odnosno na opredjeljenja učenika za neku od profesija za koje se osposobljava u srednjoj školi.

U istraživanju je korištena metoda teorijske analize i anketiranje pomoću upitnika, koji je konstruiran za potrebe ovog istraživanja.

Uzorak ispitanika predstavlja 555 učenika iz 9 osnovnih škola s područja općine Gradiška i 154 učenika prvog razreda Tehničke škole iz istog grada u Bosni i Hercegovini.

Neke otkrivene činjenice i argumenti upućuju na zaključak da je organizirani marketing utjecao na stavove učenika i izbor srednje škole od strane učenika osnovne škole.

Ključne riječi: marketing, marketing u obrazovanju, marketinški nastup, srednja škola, osnovna škola.