

Original article



SATISFACTION OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE DENTAL LABORATORY

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Analysis of the attitude of dental physicians, dental technicians, patients and students of dental technology, about the marketing communication in the work of dental technical laboratories.

Material and Methods: The main study was conducted on the territory of Northeastern Bulgaria, using direct anonymous paper questionnaires in the period between April and July 2015.

A total of 700 respondents were interviewed, distributed into four groups (dental physicians, dental technicians, students of dental technology and patients of dental laboratories).

Results and Discussion: The study was designed to investigate the satisfaction with marketing communications among all participants in dental laboratory activities. Satisfaction of dental physicians with aspects of marketing communication of dental laboratories was 47,39% (n=127), and a negative answer was given from 22,76% (n = 61) of respondents. The majority of dental technicians (75,91%, n=104) were satisfied with aspects of marketing communication with dental clinics/dental physicians, while 29,85% (n = 80) weren't satisfied. The study of the satisfaction with the communication among the students showed that 60,42% (n=116) of them were satisfied and lack of satisfaction with communication was reported by 1,56% (n=3) of the respondents. Among the studied patients, 81,55% (n=84) felt satisfied with the communication carried out at the dental clinics, and 8,74% (n = 9) among patients were not satisfied.

Conclusion: The integrated communications may successfully achieve the goals of a given communication campaign by a well-coordinated utilisation of the different kinds of IMC instruments: advertising, public relations (PR), personal sales, sales promotions and others. The desired synergy is attained when all the IMC instruments are synchronised and mutually enhanced.

Keywords: marketing communications, dental laboratories, dental technician

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays everyone can find information at any time, and this prompts organisations to use new approaches for communication. The new approaches increasingly rely on the use of Integrated marketing communications (IMC) in the exchange between the organisations and their clients. These approaches impose elements of the marketing mix as advertisements, special promotions, direct marketing, personal sales and public relations [1, 2] according to the specific product, situation and customers [3].

The purposeful exploration of the communication policy can lead to effective management and can improve the general economic outcomes of the activities. State of the art and the significance of the problems associated with integrated communications in the work of the dental technical lab and the need for their more detailed analysis and examination, the establishment of working models for their solution in practice give us grounds for the development of this research.

To implement successfully the overall communication policy, it is necessary to take into account the position that dental technical lab occupies, its possibilities and competitiveness as well as the nature of the provided products and services.

Aim

Analysis of the attitude of dental physicians, dental technicians, patients and students of dental technology about the marketing communication in the work of dental technical laboratories.

To achieve this aim, the following **tasks** were fulfilled:

1. To present the main characteristics of the integrated communications and the communication process in

the dental technical laboratories.

2. To study the opinion about the quality of marketing communication in the dental technical laboratories of dental physicians; dental technicians; students of dental technology; patients of dental technical laboratories.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main study was conducted on the territory of Northeastern Bulgaria in the cities of Varna, Dobrich, Razgrad, Russe, Silistra, Targovishte and Shumen using direct anonymous paper questionnaires in the period between April and July 2015.

A total of 700 respondents were interviewed, distributed into four groups:

- I group - 268 dental physicians
- II group - 137 dental technicians
- III group - 192 students of dental technology from the Medical Colleges in Varna, Plovdiv and Sofia
- IV group – 103 patients over 18 years

The methods applied in the study are the following:

- **Documental method**—used for the analysis of Bulgarian and international documents and literary sources related to the study of the explored problems.

- **Sociological method**—a direct anonymous questionnaire was applied to study the opinion of dental physicians, dental technicians, patients from Northeastern Bulgaria as well as the students of dental technology from Sofia, Plovdiv and Varna.

- **Statistical methods**—descriptive analysis, variation analysis, correlation analysis, comparative and graphic analysis.

The data were statistically processed by means of PSS v. 20.0 for Windows, using descriptive indicators for quantitative variables and presented as tables and graphs. The statistical difference of the indicators was assessed at the critical level of significance $\delta < 0.05$, e.g. guaranteed probability 95%.

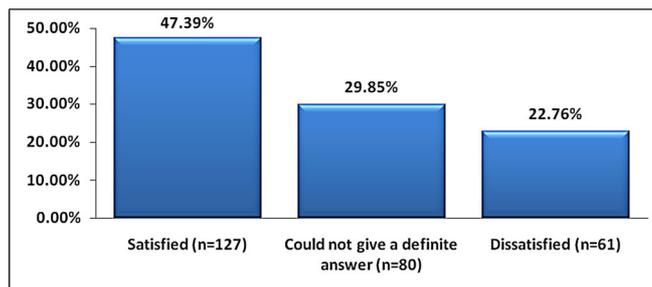
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was designed to investigate the satisfaction with marketing communications among all participants associated with the operations of dental laboratories. Aspects of marketing communication, namely the specific type of business communication were described in questionnaires, including any business organisation associated with giving messages to inform, persuade and a reminder of the main users and the general public about the products and services [2].

• Satisfaction of dental physicians with aspects of marketing communication of dental laboratories.

The study of the satisfaction with the communication among the dental physicians demonstrated that 47,39% (n=127) of them were satisfied. A negative answer was given from 22,76% (n = 61) of respondents, while 29,85% (n = 80) of dental physicians could not give a definite answer (Figure 1). Most of the respondents were satisfied with the marketing communication with the dental laboratory.

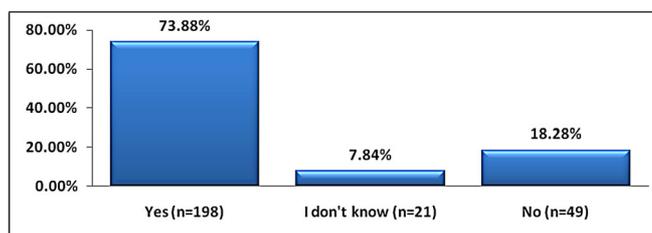
Fig. 1. Satisfaction of dental physicians with aspects of marketing communication of dental laboratories.



The main recommendation made by the dental physicians regarding the improvement of the communication policy, was directed toward the introduction and utilisation of modern forms of communication, shortening the time for submission of the reprint from the dental surgery to the dental technical lab.

A statistically significant relation ($p < 0,001$) was established between the use of modern forms of communication by the dental technical lab and dental physician satisfaction. A great part (84,2%, n=107) of the dental physicians who reported that they were satisfied with the communication with the dental technical lab, shared that the lab used modern forms of communication (Fig. 2).

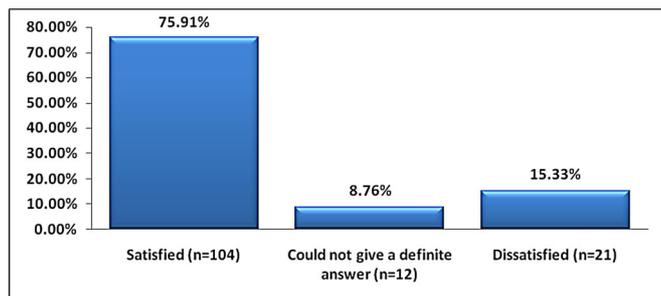
Fig. 2. Dental laboratories using modern forms of marketing communication.



• Satisfaction of dental technicians with aspects of marketing communication with dental clinics/dental physicians.

The study of the satisfaction with the communication among the dental technicians showed that more than ¾ of the respondents (75,91%, n=104) reported that they felt satisfied with their communication with the dental physicians, 15,33% (n=21) of respondents weren't satisfied and 8,76% (n=12) of dental technicians could not give a definite answer (Fig. 3).

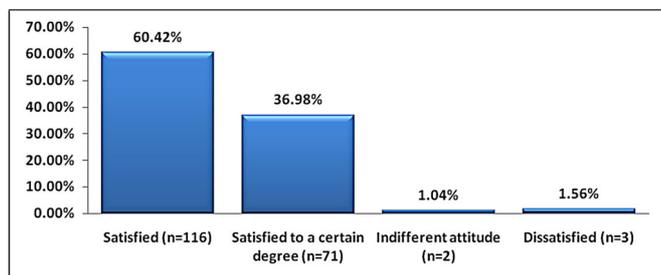
Fig. 3. Satisfaction of dental technicians with aspects of marketing communication with dental clinics/dental physicians.



• Satisfaction of students of dental technology with aspects of marketing communication of dental laboratories.

The study of the satisfaction with the communication among the students showed that 60,42% (n=116) of them were satisfied. 36,98% (n=71) of the participants in the survey were satisfied to a certain degree. An indifferent attitude to communication in the dental technical lab was reported by 1,04% (n=2) of the responding students. Lack of satisfaction with communication was reported by 1,56% (n=3) of the respondents included in the survey (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4. Satisfaction of students of dental technology from aspects of marketing communication of dental laboratories.

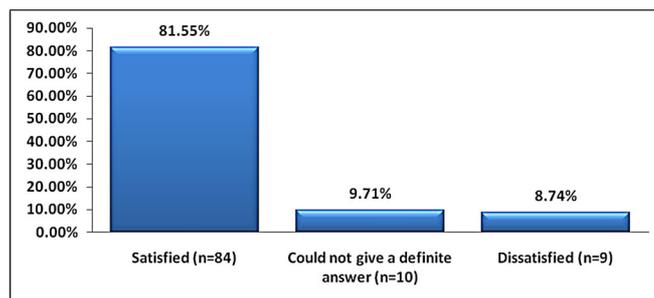


• Satisfaction of patients with aspects of marketing communication of dental clinics/dental physicians.

Patients have no direct communication with the dental laboratories. Intermediaries between patients and dental lab, in the case of making dentures and others, are dental physicians.

The study of the satisfaction with the communication among the patients demonstrated that they felt satisfied with the communication carried out at the dental clinic and/or the dental physician (81,55%, n = 84). Nearly nine percent (8,74%, n = 9) were not satisfied, and 9,71% (n = 10) could not give a definite answer (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5. Satisfaction of patients with marketing communication performed by dental clinics/dental physicians in the case of manufacture of dentures.



CONCLUSION

The integrated communications may successfully achieve the goals of a given communication campaign by a well-coordinated utilisation of the different kinds of IMC Instruments: advertising, public relations (PR), personal sales, sales promotions and others. The desired synergy is attained when all the IMC instruments are synchronised and mutually enhanced.

Abbreviation list:

IMC – Integrated Marketing Communications

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