

Attracting Donations:

How Iranian Charity Organizations Promote to Attract Donation?

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Abstract

Non-Profit Organizations (NPO), also called the third sector, are organizations that do not aim to generate revenue and, as the name suggests, profit making is not their goal. However, like any other organization, they have expenses to cover in order to reach their goals. Thus, these organizations have to focus on fund-raising besides the main goals of the organizations. In order to make money, these organizations have to conduct marketing communications. Hence, NPOs marketing communication involves objectives and tools.

Iranian NPOs have been active in the last couple of years and they used fund-raising activities in order to attract public funds. They majorly focus on public and social problems and their main aim is to increase public awareness and help people of the society in particular ways. After reviewing the previous studies in the marketing communication, we have come up with the topic, which focuses on the marketing communications of NPOs in Iran. The main goal of this study is to find out the marketing communication objectives and tools of NPOs in Iran.

We have used a case study approach in our qualitative research method and our study was conducted on two major NPOs in Iran. After analyzing the collected data, we have come up with the final conclusions.

Our study reveals that NPOs main objective is fund-raising and variety marketing communication tools are used by NPOs in order to attract funds. To do so, the NPOs use both digital and traditional marketing communication tools.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This first chapter includes the background of marketing communication as well as an overview on non-government organizations. Moreover, the problem discussion and the gap in the research area will be covered, and finally the delimitation of the thesis will be discussed.

1.1. Background

Non-profit organizations (NPOs), also called the “third sector”, play an important role in our society these days (Aiken & Bode, 2009; Kim, 2011). Non-for-profit organizations have the responsibility of social interests. They serve the public while not having the legitimate right to make profits; hence, they are called non-profit organizations. (Jha, 2009)

Martens (2002) believed that many studies fail to present a definition of Non-Government Organizations (NGO) as the understanding of the phrase is common knowledge. Willets (2006) also argued that there is no generally accepted definition of the term NGO. The term includes different types of bodies as carries diverse connotations in different circumstances. But they share some fundamental features. One feature is that an NGO is independent and the government does not have direct control over it. Another feature is that an NGO is not a political party. An NGO will not be a criminal group; it is non-violent and it will be non-profit.

Non-profit organizations (NPOs) focus on real-world social problems (Oakley et al, 2014). According to Parthasarathy (2012), in recent years, the voluntary sector of non-governmental organizations as a not-for-profit organization are more concerned with humanitarian issues and play an increasingly important role in generating desirable changes in social behavior and socio-economic development issues such as cancer awareness, changing of a nutrition diet, promotion of non-smoking behavior, reducing poverty, awareness and prevention of AIDS, etc. Werker and Ahmed (2007) have other examples of non-profit organizations engagement fields in such activities as agricultural development, education development, health development, environment, population and sustainability development, human rights, migration and refugee issues, etc. (Parthasarathy, 2012)

Nabou & Tirole (2010) believe that society’s demands for individual as well as corporate social responsibility (CSR) are increasingly growing. These demands are for alternative responses to the market and distributive failures. According to Smith (2011), general perception is that the organizations with good social responsibility normally attract better employees and have employees with higher morale, motivation, loyalty, and commitment to their organization.

Nabou & Tirole suggest that a standard definition for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is that CSR is sacrificing profits in favor of the social interest and the firm has to voluntarily go beyond its contractual and legal obligations to realize the sacrifice. CSR encompasses behavioral actions such as being environment friendly, respectful of

communication, conscious of ethics, etc. Smith (2011) believes that both for-profit and non-for-profit organizations have a reason to be socially responsible.

According to Dolnicar & Lazarevski (2009), non-profit organizations have already started to use marketing techniques used by the for-profit sector. The reason has been non-profit's confrontation with the typical pressures of for-profit organizations such as competition for funding to fulfill their mission. Blery et al. (2010) also believe that non-profit organizations could use marketing to achieve benefits from philanthropic activities. Due to the market pressure and the competition that exists between the for-profit sector for funding and the need to earn money to be able to finance their mission, non-profit organizations have also started to follow and take the same marketing techniques used by the for-profit organizations. (Donlan & Crowther, 2014)

According to Modi & Mishra (2010), the market-oriented non-profit organizations are more successful in their mission compared to the ones that were less market-oriented. They believe that it does not depend on the size or age of the organization. No matter how big or small, new or old, the organization is, it should have an outward focus on its key stakeholders. Cihovska & Lipianska (2002) believe that marketing activities should be oriented to analysis of external and internal environment of the NPO, donors and other relevant analysis in order to make a starting point for determining the objectives of organization and selecting the target group to communicate with among the segmentations of the market.

The primary goal of a non-profit organization is not economic or financial gains, but in order to achieve the particular goal, the organization may have to take on profit-making activities. Holtzhausen (2014) believes that in today's world, funding is becoming a rare phenomenon. In such situation, non-profit organizations need to earn money, not to make profit, but to protect their stakeholders, that is, those who are in dire need of the service offered and provided by the non-profit organization, and to be able to improve their services. Although non-profit organizations face difficult financial times, they need to improve and renovate themselves to convey the message to those who financially support them as well as their stakeholders that they are capable, committed, and can be trusted. Overall, they need to maintain their reputation.

Sarstedt & Schloderer (2010) believe that non-profit organizations are increasingly becoming more aware of the importance of reputation of the organization which is considered the intangible asset. The reputation is needed for achieving competitive advantages. They believe that there is a direct relationship between reputation and donated funds in NPOs. Positive reputation increases the willingness to donate. It can enable NPOs to secure donations even during a competitive environment.

According to Liston-Heyes & Liu (2013), *Cause-related marketing* brings potential benefits to non-profit organizations. Cause-related marketing takes the firms in partnership with non-profit organization. Some managers hesitate to get involved in such partnerships, though. Recently, companies increasingly know more about the market value of social

credentials and the dire need of non-profit organizations for funds. This has helped cause-related marketing grow faster.

Blery et al. (2010) believe that non-profit organizations have to operate in a competitive environment within the constraint of their limited resources of manpower and finance. Most non-profit organizations are not selling products, but they sell their organization's mission, programs, ideas, and services. The non-profit organization's mission, which is considered as product, is defined in advance and cannot be changed according to the market needs. The development of communication messages and advertising and communicating with people (customers) through channels that are regularly used by people can help the non-profit organizations to continue without changing or denying their true mission.

Londre (2009) defines promotion as the activities taken to communicate with the market. Tavernier (2013) states that promotion is one of the four major marketing mixes which is based on communication. This communication is expected to result in increasing sales of the organization or the demand for the services. Hence, an NGO should communicate and convince potential donors (customers) about the benefits of the organization's services. Ullah et al. (2012) suggest the change in a donation-oriented marketing mix in which the promotion is replaced by campaign. They also suggest the use of Channel instead of place. These two elements play an important role in the marketing communications for NPOs.

Non-for-profit organizations should introduce themselves as the type of service they provide and establish their core values, the honesty and ethics that shape the organization. The organization should try to engage potential donors/volunteers, convince them of the mission of the organization and bring them on board. (Krige, 2010)

1.2. Problem Discussion

Non-profit organizations are successful in reaching their goals compared to other non for profit organizations. Marketing communication is an inevitable step of every marketing campaign, without which, none of the four marketing mixes (price, product, promotion, place) could result in desirable outcomes. According to Verhage (2010), non-governmental organizations need to communicate and persuade potential donors about the benefits of their services.

Waters (2009) suggests that non-profit organizations keep communication with their aid workers and at the same time keep others informed on their activities and efforts and hence they need to have reliable communication plan. He believes that fundraising through mass media is less effective compared to soliciting funds face to face, but still it helps to a large extent in situations like crisis relief efforts. Having proper message tailored to specific situation that reflects the preferred/required donation means, it is important and can pave the way for fundraising activities to reach success. According to Waters, the organizations have started utilizing social networking sites into their public relations programming, but

he believes that non-profit organizations need to be more active in developing their social networking and disseminating their information, and have more strategies and incorporate them into their public relation programming. In this regard, research plays an important role in their benefits as well. Ingenhoff & Koelling (2009) also believe that the internet and social networking encourages and provides the non-profit organizations with two-way communications. It makes the organizations to benefit in their charitable fundraising activities.

Many marketing mix elements, like price/contribution that is usually voluntary or product/cause that is not changeable, are not under control of NPOs and success of their marketing activities as the manipulating strategy toward people depends on promotion/marketing communication campaign of the NGOs. (Lassila, 2010)

According to Krige (2010), a non-profit organization needs to define who they are, and what it is that they do. They need to communicate through different channels of communication. Non-profit organizations should form a culture of communicating their data as well as what is being done with the donors. This will help them build credibility for their causes. It can be achieved by interaction of the organization with donors/potential donors, volunteers and other stakeholders through different channels including interactive websites besides newsletters and other ways of communication.

Searching the scientific journals through database of Luleå University, we found out that the pattern of marketing communication for NPOs has not been researched adequately. Most researches on NPO marketing were conducted on topics such as communication tools for marketing (e.g. Salmenes et al., 2013; Shanahan et al., 2012), Sponsorship (e.g. Terblanche-Smit & Terblanche, 2013), branding (e.g. Lee, 2013), etc. Scholars who researched broader aspects of the topic also admitted that there is a gap in the research field of marketing aspects of NPOs (e.g. Modi & Mishra, 2010). Eventually, we have found out that the *HOW* of NPO marketing communication is less explored, researched, and discussed. Therefore, the pattern of marketing communication of NPOs is our focal point of the study.

1.3. Overall Purpose & Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to provide a better understanding on *how charity organizations promote in order to gain donations*. To research this purpose, the following research questions are stated:

RQ1: *How can the objectives/ benefits of promoting the NPO be described?*

RQ2: *What are the Marketing Communication Channels/Tools of Charity Organizations?*

1.4. Outline for Rest of the Study

During this study we will cover the followings in the upcoming chapters:

Chapter two: Literature Review

In this chapter, we will cover the previous literature in the marketing communication and brand promotion of NPOs. At the end of this chapter, the conceptual framework of our study will be presented.

Chapter Three: research Methodology

In chapter three of the thesis, we will cover the methodology of our research and present how we approach in our study. The research study as well as the case selection and case presentation are covered in this chapter

Chapter Four: Empirical Data

The collected data will be covered in this chapter. We will conduct the field research at this time and the collected data are presented in this chapter.

Chapter Five: Data Analysis

In this chapter, we will analyze the data, which was presented in the chapter four. The data analysis will be the base for making the conclusion.

Chapter Six: Findings and Conclusion

In chapter six, the final remarks will be presented. We will present our findings along with making the final conclusion and the suggestions for the future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In the previous chapter, we discussed the need for adoption of promotion and marketing communication activities by non-profit sector and came up to our research questions. In this chapter, the previous literature and theories regarding our two major research questions, objectives and tools for promoting NPO brand will be reviewed, and finally, we will present the conceptual framework of the thesis based on the literature review.

2.1. The Objectives of Promoting NPO Brands

“*Objectives*” is one of the main elements of every marketing plan and should be *particular, measurable, and reachable* (Daugherty, 2003; Simerly, 2013; Chen et al., 2007). Besides selection of correct messages in marketing communications, firms should also set particular objectives and align their activities with those objectives in order to be efficient in their marketing efforts. Marketing communication objectives of firms should be explicitly defined and measured in order to give insight to the managers about the success of the program. The marketing communication objectives, however, depend highly on each campaign and defining specific objectives does not follow any standard. Pope et al. (2009) believe that non-profit organizations must prioritize taking advantage of marketing, so that they could be able to address brand development and brand recognition. In addition, it helps them reach different stakeholders, obtain funds, and find and utilize volunteers.

Customer satisfaction is the major element in customer acquisition and customer retention. The qualities of the service or product along with price are the main elements of the customer satisfaction. Satisfied customers are more likely to repeat their purchases and stay loyal with the company. (Rao et al., 2011)

2.1.1. Fundraising

According to Mano (2010), non-profit organizations focus on their target to increase social visibility for the purpose of fundraising. He believes that non-profit organizations should give a special care to develop appropriate tools of communication for the purpose of boosting marketing effects. He states that even when the product remains the same, to ensure that the marketing is effective, targeting a specific group means developing a different way of communicating and different approaches. According to Mano (2010), marketing has not been successful in enhancing performance in non-profit organizations. Marketing practices’ effects are different on public and private stakeholders and non-profit organizations, not properly communicating what funders expect, results in ineffective use of marketing.

Physical events and in-person communication for fundraising are helpful for NPOs to reach not only their short-term goals, but also their long-term communications and interactions

with donors. Thus, due to the efficiency of physical activities in the short-term goals, these types of activities could be an initial approach for NPOs in their fundraising activities. (Higgins and Lauzon, 2002)

2.1.2. Brand Awareness and Persuasion

Branding is considered to be the primary driver of marketing communications. *Brand awareness*, along with *brand image*, *brand loyalty*, and *perceived quality* are major elements of brand equity. These elements are not all the same for each industry, for instance, *brand awareness* is not an element in hotel industry. (Šerić et al., 2013)

Keller and Lane (1993) define brand awareness as the strength of the brand to stay in the consumers' memory. Brand awareness refers to the ability of the brand to be *recognized* and *recalled* by consumers. Brand awareness is critical in marketing communications and impacts some Key Performance Indicators (KPI). The impact of brand awareness on some KPIs such as *market share* and *sales* is positive; hence, the more the companies focus on their brand awareness, the more likely they are to succeed in reaching their goals. Moreover, brand awareness positively impacts the marketing mix. Promotion can increase the brand awareness among consumers by exposing the messages to the consumers. (Huang et al., 2011)

Dowlan & Crowther (2014) mention the sponsorship has grown globally in the recent years. It is increasingly being used in order to achieve and realize the objectives of connection building with customers, form a customer consultation, and creating customer conversations. These can all be achieved through creating sponsorship-linked brand experiences, together with events.

According to Mihart (2012), marketing mix impacts the process of integrated marketing communication. According to his proposed model, the consumer response has hierarchical effects that start from the time the consumer is aware of the event until the final decision. Conviction is the aim of the process. The consumer response is the base for the consumer behavior in the learning process that comes from the consumer's knowledge. The feedback from consumer's behavior will be used to optimize the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) process. This feedback leads to either a change in strategy or an enhancement in the IMC strategy. In this model, the conviction plays an important role, as the aim of the marketing communication is to persuade the audience into taking our desirable action, which is donation for NPOs. Thus, in the case of rejection, the feedback should be used in order to implement a new persuasion strategy to get better results. Figure 1 represents the IMC model.

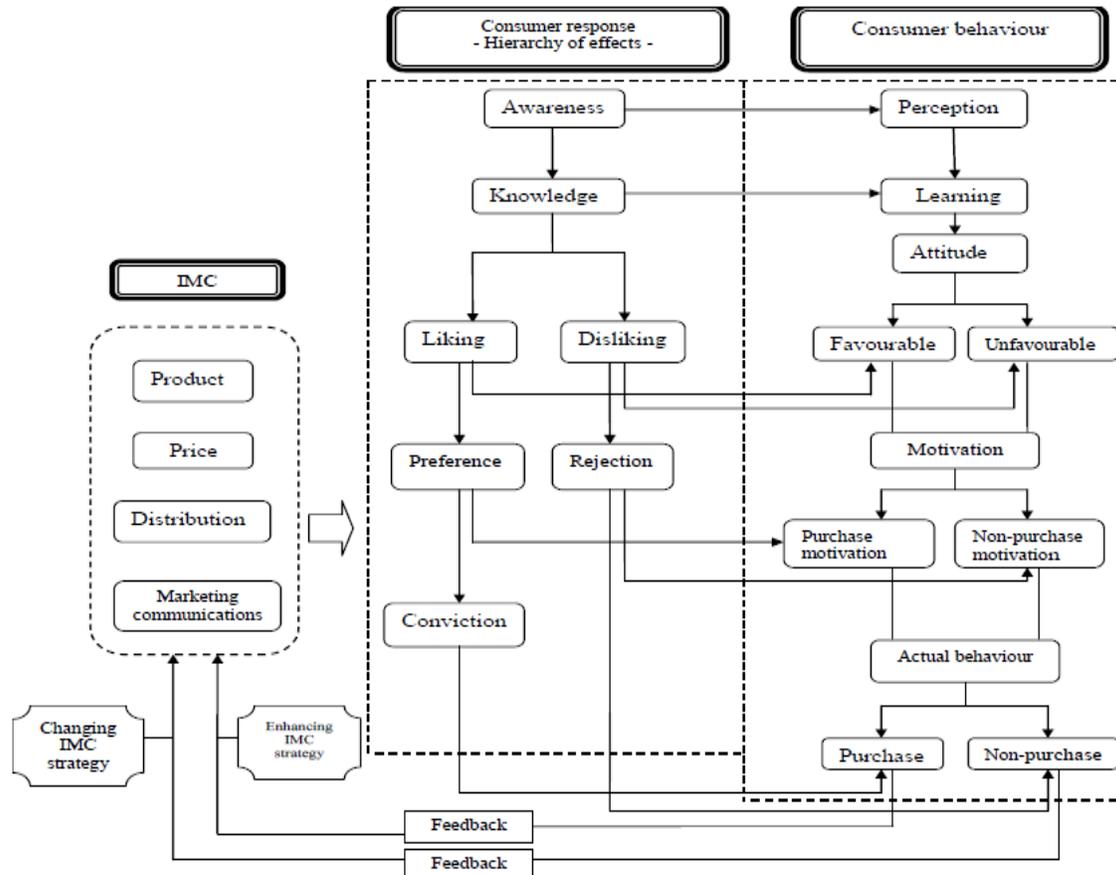


Figure 1: Modeling the influence of integrated marketing communication on consumer behavior: an approach based on hierarchy of effects concept

Non-profit organizations need to apply an appropriate marketing strategy due to gaining means and ways of achieving the objectives relevant to their existence in a highly changing and competitive environment. Well-chosen marketing strategy results in accomplishing mission and objectives of NPOs. (Cihovska & Lipianska, 2002)

Marketing of NPOs aims at maintaining, changing or shaping attitudes and behaviors of the targeted audience of organization. Different social groups including suppliers, government, administration, sponsors, donors and the public may form the target market in the non-profit sector that should be focused on by suitable marketing strategies. Marketing activities should be oriented to analysis of external and internal environment of the NPO, donors, and other relevant analysis in order to make a starting point for determining the objectives of organization and selecting the target group to communicate among the segments of the market. Then, marketing-mix should be restricted to the needs of the target group based on the available resources and possibilities of non-profit organization. Prospective selected volunteers should be trained to take the responsibility of the

marketing-mix implementation prior to the phase of strategy implementation. (Cihovska & Lipianska, 2002)

Relationship marketing is one of the persuasion techniques that NPOs can use in order to get better results from potential donors. The NPOs should make close ties to the individuals and provide a platform in which the potential donors can communicate easier and more with the NPO's staff. This way the ties between the organization and individuals will be stronger. NPOs should also focus on those identities that increase the prestige of those donors or potential donors and try to communicate based on those identities. The presence of celebrities in the social cause of NPOs is highly recommended in order to gain trust and make the brand more popular among donors. The more people like these celebrities, the more positive the social cause will seem to them and the more donations they will make. In other words, celebrities can act as stimulus to people's donation and contribute to the NPO objectives. Story telling in form of pictures and videos or blogging is another way to attract the potential donors for NPOs. (Ullah, Ahmad, & Farooq Khan, 2012)

Identity congruency is also important for fundraising and persuasion of potential donors. Providing information about the past contributions and donations from people or organizations with the same social identity is one of the most effective ways of persuasion. (Shang et al., 2008)

2.2. The Tools Used in Marketing Communication

According to Smith et al (1997), communication is defined as the act of sending information from the mind of one person to the mind of another person through the message. Then the media as the channels to communicate were added by to the model of Schramm. Since processes are perceived as the ways without which achieving outcome do not have any value, communication is considered as a process or campaign by the experts of the field.

According to Doyle (1998) and Sargeant (1999), the reasons why managers want to communicate to audiences are to inform and persuade current and potential customers about the service uniqueness of their organization and image creation. Noise, inappropriate media or person and vague message are some of the factors that should be taken into consideration in order to prevent a message from conveying poorly or being distorted.

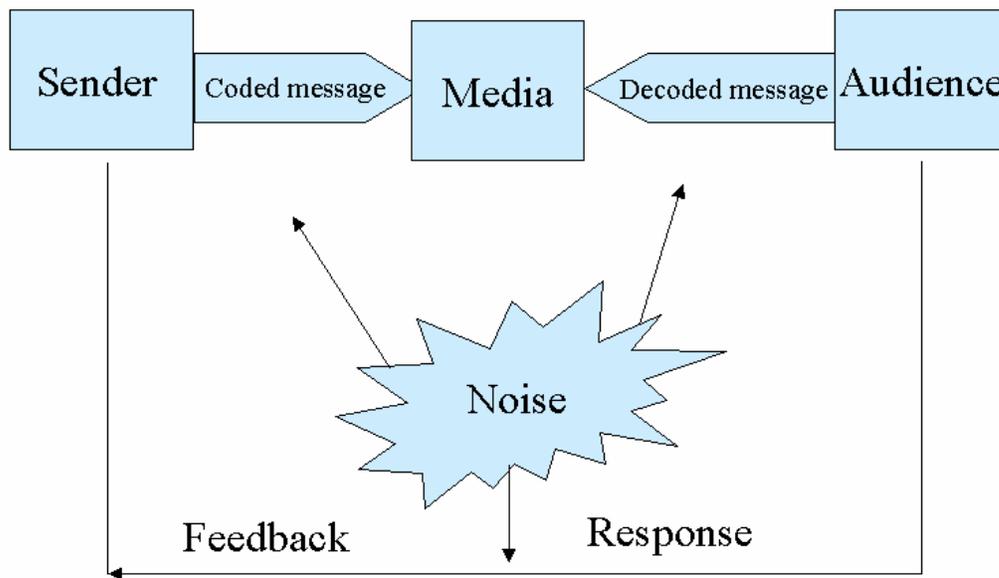
Sargeant (2009) believes that designing a communication campaign consists of seven steps as following:

- Specification of the target audience
- Communications process objectives
- Specification of promotional message
- Media selection

- Schedule
- Budget
- Monitoring/control

Communication Process by Doyle

Doyle (1998) believes that the communication process is the transmission and receipt of a message in which two parties are involved as the sender and the audience. Without picking up the message by the audience, there would be no communication. A sender starts the communication process by coding the message and sends it through the media to the audience. If the audience receives the transmitted message, it will be interpreted or decoded. At the end, the response and the feedback information indicate that either the message is transmitted successfully or distorted by the elements called noise. Doyle's communication process is shown in the following figure.

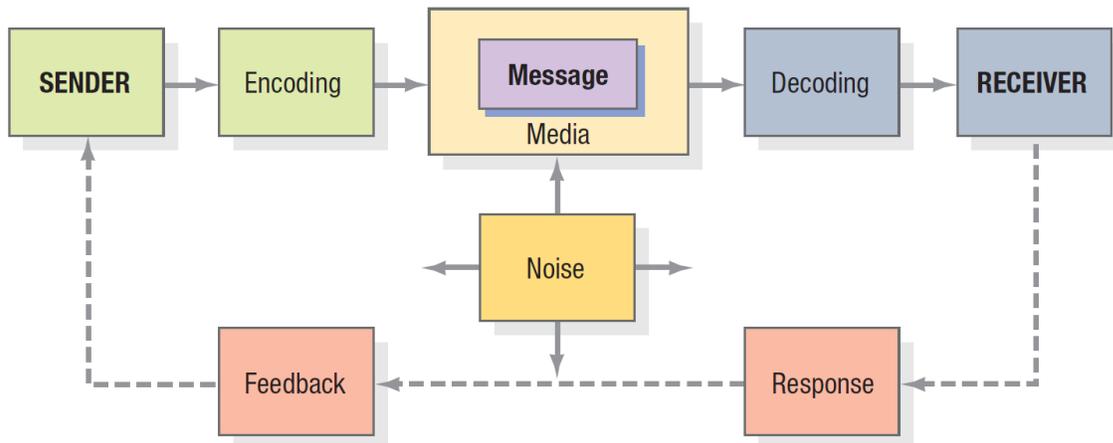


The communications process, Source: Doyle (1998) p.252

Communication Process by Kotler

Kotler (2003) presents a new view point of communication process by offering a macro model with nine key factors of effective communication including the Message and the Media as the major tools. The message must be encoded so that the target audience can decode it. They must transmit the message through the media that reach the target

audience. A feedback channel to monitor the responses and consider the distortion and retention should be developed.



The communications process, Source: Kotler and Keller (2012)

Knowing target audience leads to making a clear starting point for setting campaign objectives that result in behavioral changes. Since deep and detailed characteristics of behaviors in each segment are significant, only the segments of particular importance have to be selected. (Frankova, 2012)

The key considerations to be taken for designing the appropriate promotional message are stated by Kotler (2003) as: “what to say (message content), how to say it logically (message structure), how to say it symbolically (message format), and who should say it (message source)”.

Selecting the Communication Channels

Once a marketer has chosen the exact way of communicating, depending on the goal of the communication, he has to find out the best medium to reach the target. The tools that are used in marketing communications can be divided into two categories: *traditional marketing tools*, and *digital marketing tools*. (Tavernier, 2013)

Eastwood believes that, with the beginning of the 21st century, the need for moving toward using digital marketing channels is felt by marketers. The reason is that digital marketing offers the most cost-effective solutions to all the businesses. Nevertheless, the traditional

media should not be completely forgotten. Sharing experiences and word-of-Mouth has always been a powerful channel in marketing.

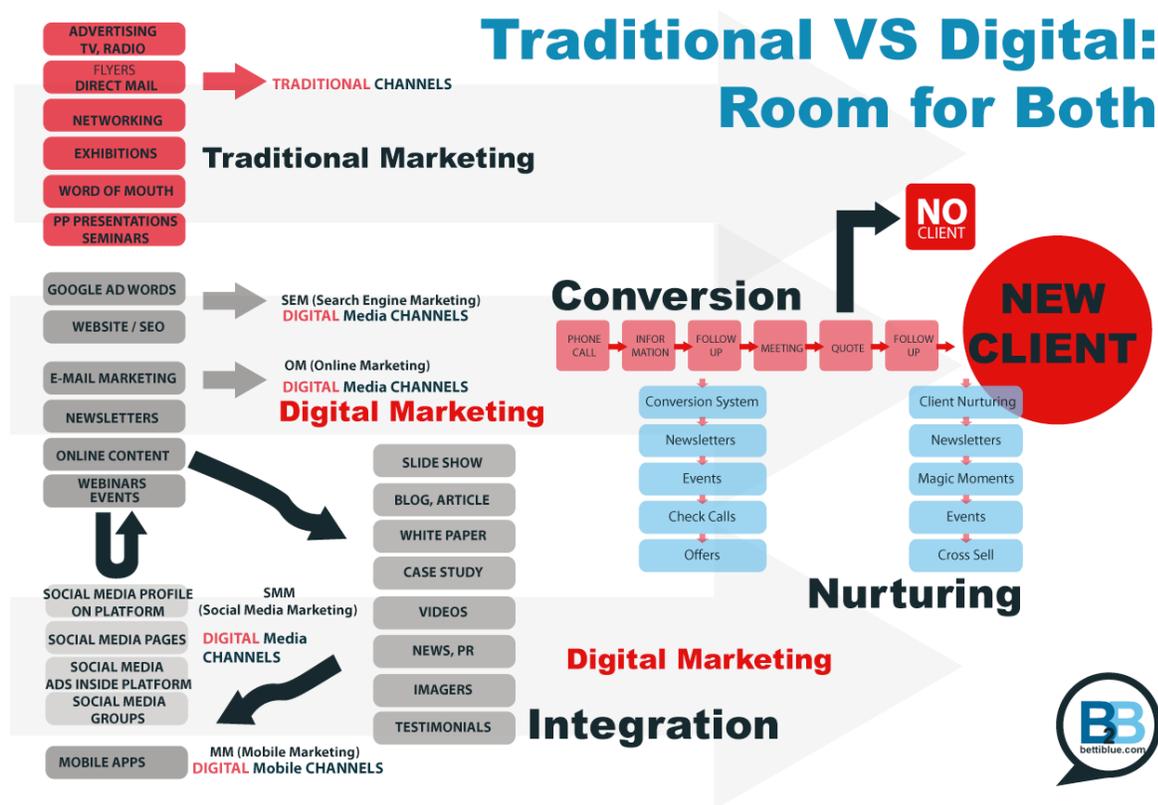


Figure 2: Traditional vs. Digital: Room for Both by Irina Kalonatchi (Eastwood, 2014)

Danaher & Rossiter (2011) have compared different old and new media channels for communication in terms of different attributes such as reliability, entertainment, convenience, and trustworthiness value in both consumer and business markets. The channels comparison is done from the perspective of both receivers and senders of the message in B2B and B2C promotion offers. They believe that even though the digital channels are widely used and well-established, the traditional channels are still preferred by consumer recipients in the marketing communications. Their study shows that this result is even valid for the younger consumers. Even though business receivers are more interested in digital marketing communications compared to the consumers, they seem to be acting more on a marketing offer that is coming through traditional ways of communication.

2.2.1. Traditional Marketing Communication Tools

Markov is a traditional fundraising approach, a direct mailing system through which the NPOs use direct mails to reach different group of people. Soukop (1983) believes that in spite of high initial administrative costs in Markov approach, the future income will compensate the costs and contributes to the future cash flow of NPOs, making Markov approach a reliable strategy for NPOs.

Londre (2009) defines promotion as the activities taken to communicate with the market. This includes personal and non-personal activities. The aim is to increase the demand for sales or services. An organization, including NPOs, needs to communicate to convince possible customers about their service and its benefits. He divides the activities as follows:

- Personal selling/sales force
- Advertising: mass or non-personal selling done through communication of information by various media
- Sales promotion
- Collateral material
- Direct marketing
- Public relations

Viral marketing and word of mouth (WOM) is one of the most proven tools for marketing. Word of mouth in particular is critical to companies that are looking to gain particular results. With the advent of the Internet, online communities and social networks provide a great platform for word of mouth. Both companies that are using the online review methods and those that do not use online tools for electronic word of mouth can take advantage of WOM in their marketing. Word of mouth is one of the most persuasive instruments of marketing (Bao et al., 2014; Keller & Fay, 2012). Nonetheless, Ahrens (2013) believes that WOM marketing is an old form of communication for attracting customers. Marketers can take advantage of technology, both online and offline, to acquire customers in the form of referrals.

Exemplars are another method that is used to persuade the audience. The use of methods such as the videos, pictures and illustrations that can convey the message faster than words and texts is a popular method in advertising these days. As the audience is not willing to spend a lot of time to process the advertising and promotion messages, the exemplars are efficient tools to deliver the message faster to the consumers. (R. Uribe et al., 2013)

According to Winer (2009), the number of media used by marketers has increased drastically since the early 21st century. It started in the 1990s with having the Internet used as an advertising medium (e.g. web pages with banners and other ways of ads). Internet advertising improved communication tools for marketers that have been using the traditional media such as television, radio, hardcopies, etc. However, it doesn't mean that the traditional media will be disappeared.

According to Wiggill (2014), non-profit organizations should consider two-way communication as the principle of their relationship with the donors. The purpose would be creating a mutually beneficial relationship with the donors. He believes that the donors are considered as investors who invest by donating to the non-profit organization and so they want to see the results of their investment and get feedback and updated on the progress. On the other hand, Wiggill (2014) believes that two-way communication provides the opportunity to listen to the donor's views and this assists the organization to identify possible threats to its relationship with that donor. This results in enhancing the donors' retention. According to O'Neil (2007), there is no clear link between the outcomes of relationship with the donors and the amount of contribution, but there is a link between the public relationship and the years of support of the donors, as well as recommending others to donate. Phillip & Smith (2014) believe that the requirements by charity organizations to report have been increasing during the last years.

According to Dinnie et al. (2010), IMC can be considered as comprising coordination of communications disciplines; a way to develop brand strategy, organize the firm, and provide messages; coordination of advertising, and a strategic brand business process. They believe that organizations have to form teams of members with specific skills sets from different communication disciplines related to IMC approach.

According to Kotler (2003), communication channels may be personal or non-personal. Personal communication channels are the direct communication between two or more persons face-to-face or person-to-audience. Non-personal channels consist of media, atmospheres and event. Media include print media, broadcast media, network media, electronic media and display media. Atmospheres are "packaged environments" that create or reinforce the buyer's leanings towards product purchase. And finally events are occurrences designed to communicate particular messages to target audiences. Therefore, the efficiency could be a decisive factor for communicators to select the channels for carrying the message.

2.2.2. Digital Marketing Communication Tools

Increasing abundant application of social media technologies is a topic to be considered. The social networking technology, on one hand, facilitates communication between the organization and the consumer around an event, and on the other hand, also facilitates the communication among the consumers as well which leave the organizers to have less control over the event. It means that the relational effect of the event will go over the physical attendees. (Donlan & Crowther, 2014)

According to Baruah (2012), online communications and social media technologies make collaboration easy and can be effective for developing social authority. He believes that organizations can use social media to prove themselves as experts in their fields and influence these fields. Moreover, social media technologies facilitate reaching audiences all around the world. .

Winer (2009) believes that there are at least four factors that are moving marketers towards the new media:

1. Upgrading the new technologies at home and workplaces; advertisers need to find new ways of reaching their target market because as an example, the digital video recorders enable people to fast-forward through television commercials.
2. In today's world of competition, in order to differentiate their products and services, marketers tend to create new experiences for the customers. This is difficult to be done through the traditional media considering the tendency to be one-way communication from seller to buyer.
3. Media habits and obtaining information are different among people of different ages. The traditional demographic breakdowns gradually becoming less useful makes the markets become fragmented.
4. One of the interests of marketers is to have behavioral targeting and developing personalized messages for their target market. This will happen by following people on websites they visit or even by their GPS system on their cell phones. This will push marketers toward a number of alternative media rather than the traditional ones.

According to Waters et al. (2009), organizations have started new strategies in their public relations and communication programming such as taking advantage of social networking sites of Facebook and MySpace, as they are allowed to develop profiles on them. Waters et al. (2009) believe that as non-profit organizations try to grow their social networking relationship with their stakeholders, careful research and planning is required to help them increase awareness and make the non-profit organizations benefit. The result of the survey that Waters et al. conducted among 275 non-profit organizations in the United States indicates that non-profit organizations need to improve their involvement strategies as well as information dissemination. .

According to Curtis (2010), in non-profit sector, social media tools are increasingly turning into beneficial ways of communicating with public relations. Many organizations form public relations department adopt social media technologies and tools to achieve their organizational goals. Considering the effectiveness in reaching target audiences, promoting a specific cause, and further development if communication strategies become more concerns of the public relations practitioners, social media techniques will become more abundant.

As "Place" in commercial marketing mix is the way of delivering the products to the target market, NPOs require to have a communication "Channel" with the donors, that is, the channels of communication are utilized to reach donor organizations/persons. Traditional marketing tools like direct mail, personal contact, TV, radio and newspaper were used for fundraising in earlier period but nowadays different social Medias like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube links are used by NPOs as their promotional tools. Recently applying social media by NPOs has increased due to its low cost, ease of access and potential to reach and to interact with more people in comparison with traditional methods of donation collecting. (Ullah, Ahmad, & Farooq Khan, 2012)

According to Rossiter and Bellman (2005), advertising, promotion, public relations and personal selling have been traditional forms of marketing communication channels that were used for delivering the messages from the marketers to the target audience but in newly modern communication world, less weight is placed on traditional media where the message does not have an interactive factor (Marken, 2008).

Unlike the traditional marketing communication, digital marketing communication offers different options for marketing channels like blogs, website, social media, e-mail, online communities and mobile marketing to marketers. (Hudson, Roth, & Madden, 2012)

According to Mulhern (2009), traditional marketing communication activities will be transformed to different forms of practices for connecting consumers by the digitalization and networking of information in the new emerging world of digital communication. A dynamic and automated process of digital communications will be applied instead of traditional media planning.

Table 1. From media planning to digital services.

Concept	Traditional	Digital
Planning process	Linear/batch	Dynamic/ongoing
Targeting	Demographics	Consumer and/or context
Consumers	Audience of individuals	Users in social unit
Partner	News and entertainment	All media, digital services and places
Pricing	CPM	Contingency

Note: CPM means cost per thousand.

From media planning to digital media (Adapted from Mulhern , 2009, p.92)

According to Marken (2009), some of the benefits and distinctive characteristics of social media could be mentioned briefly as follows:

- To present the consumer perception to the organization clearly
- To have a remarkable power by online word-of-mouth over audience perception and acceptance
- To provide consumer experience feedback through their blogs and websites
- To create viral campaigns for products effectively

The greatest essential difference between digital communication and the idea of communication is that the first one is about an electronic world of networks through automated systems and algorithms in order to create connection between information and people; whereas the idea of communication is about delivering messages to people through media channels. Contemporary marketing communication has developed from the world of

mass communication constructed on a foundation of a few key premises about how the marketing communication reaches the messages to the costumers.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

According to Miles & Huberman, conceptual framework is the base and the design of the research focusing on the main factors of the study and should be presented in the form of illustration or narration (1994). Based on the two main research questions, which are based on the pattern of the “*tools*” and the “*objectives*” of marketing communication of NPOs, and the past studies by scholars, we came up to the following conceptual framework.

2.3.1. Marketing Communication Objectives

Fundraising (donation) and brand awareness are major objectives of the marketing communications of NPOs (Pope et al., 2009; Mano, 2010) and NPOs should focus on increasing their brand recognition and brand awareness while struggling for fundraising. In our study, we will cover these two objectives of NPOs.

Brand Awareness

As mentioned by scholars, it is crucial for NPOs to make a powerful brand that can ensure the donors to contribute more (Pope J.A, et al., 2009; Thrassou & Vrontis, 2009; Huang et al., 2011). Brand awareness is the first part of our study when it comes to marketing communication objectives. We try to explore the brand awareness and the role of brand in the marketing communication of NPOs.

Fundraising

Fund raising is the final element for our conceptual framework. In our literature review, all scholars agreed (e.g. Mano, 2010; Higgins and Lauzon, 2002) upon the fact that the fundraising is the inevitable objective for the NPOs, as they only rely on their fundraising campaigns in order to meet their social or humanitarian goals. Therefore, we took this into consideration as the other objectives to be the base for our study.

2.3.1. Marketing Communication Tools

After reviewing the literature on the marketing communication tools, we have come up with variety of studies by different scholars from which we focused on some. The investment and making some initial costs on the marketing communication is inevitable for NPOs if they want to conduct successful fundraising campaigns (Soukop, 1983). When it comes to marketing communication tools, NPOs have two different alternatives to choose from:

Traditional Marketing Communication Tools

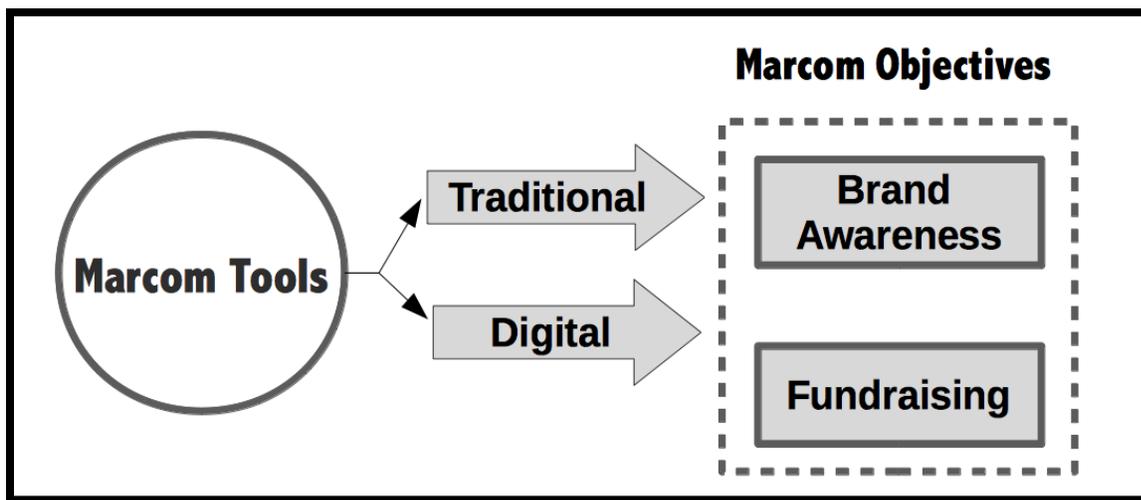
There are variety of traditional marketing communication tools that have been used by NPOs and other firms for years. Traditional tools such as direct mail (Soukop, 1983), word of mouth (Bao et al., 2014; Keller & Fay, 2012), or face to face marketing Kotler (2003) advertng (Rossiter and Bellman, 2005) TV and Radio are the major traditional tools for marketing communication. Thus, in order to find out whether NPOs use any of these traditional tools; we focus on these traditional tools that were mentioned by scholars who already studied the topic and take them as the base for our study.

Digital Marketing Communication Tools

Scholars almost agreed that with the advent of the Internet and popularity of social media and online tools, these tools are the primary channels for NPOs and other firms to communicate with their target audience and clients (Waters et al., 2009; Ullah & Khan, 2012; Curtis, 2010). Furthermore, Mulhern (2009) also discussed the essence of automated marketing campaigns that are done with the help of technology and is quite different from the traditional marketing tools. Therefore, we take these two major digital marketing tools as the second category of our research on the research question about the tools for marketing communication of NPOs. The NPOs use these tools to fulfill their marketing communication objectives.

2.3.3. Emerged Frame of Reference

The marketing communication process needs interaction between the elements and none of them can exist as a single element. The tools, which are digital and traditional, help the NPOs and through these channels they try to meet their main objectives. Fundraising alone could not be a rational objective, as NPOs need to have a parallel brand building and through this brand awareness they can meet their goals and make the fundraising a sustainable process as shown in the Figure 2.



**Marcom: Marketing Communication*

Figure 3: Promotion of Charity Organizations as an NPO

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology that is used in our research. Research purpose is discussed and followed by the approach of the research. Then, the research strategy and the method of data collection are discussed. The selected samples followed by the analysis strategy are also described.

3.1. Research Purpose

When it comes to the choice of subject in the management field, there is a variety of topics to choose from. There are several reasons for us to choose the marketing communication of NPOs as our research's focal point from which our following marketing backgrounds weigh more:

- Studying one-year MBA course in marketing
- Working in the Trade Section of an Embassy in Tehran, which can be considered a kind of non-profit governmental organization, and having the experience of being involved in marketing and trade, investment, and tourism of international firms and organizations and attendance in different exhibitions, seminars, workshops; exchange of delegations, organizing competitions, publishing promotional articles, videos, materials, etc.

Based on the mentioned background and following the suggestion of a friend of ours, who is a university lecturer in sales and marketing, we came to the unexplored and less-researched topic of marketing communication of NPOs in Iran. After the suggested topic, we then researched and reviewed the current literature in the field. We came up with the fact that this is the true gap of research and we decided to research the current topic.

We then decided to focus on the marketing communication process of a non-profit organization, a charity organization specifically. MAHAK and IAPSS charity organizations were selected as our case-studies, since they both are the most active organizations in Iran and have the most successful marketing (communication) activities with a positive reputation in Iran as well as other countries.

3.2. Research Approach

We have chosen the qualitative research method due to the nature of our study. The main reason is that we are going to explore the HOW types of questions, which make us approach our research in qualitative method. As we are going to test a theory, which is our conceptual framework, the qualitative research method is the approach that we have to consider.

3.3. Research Strategy

According to Singh (2014), case study is a reliable strategy to research the non-profit organizations in particular when we are going to research the *WHY* or *HOW* of a phenomenon.

We have chosen to use the qualitative method rather than quantitative, since we try to come up with a new conceptual framework and as mentioned before, we are trying to explore the *HOW* of the marketing communications of NPOs. Yin (2011) suggests the use of at least three different sources of data or what is called triangulation in order to reduce the subjectivity of the study. In this research, we try to be as close as possible to the triangulation strategy by using secondary data besides the main case and data which is collected through interview.

3.4. Data Collection

According to Yin (1994) there are six sources of evidence including archival records, documentation, direct observations, participant observation, interviews, and physical artifacts for collecting empirical data in qualitative method. One of the main strong points of case study data collection is that it allows using different sources of evidence. This way, “triangulation” provides the opportunity for the researcher with multiple measures of the same experience and this increases the validity factor of the research.

The main source for our data is the interview with the representatives of MAHAK as well as IAPSS organizations. Besides, we will use the secondary data from other sources in order to get closer to triangulation and reduce the bias of our study.

According to Yin (1994), one of the most significant sources for collecting data of a case study is interview. The positive aspect of the interview is its “targeting” possibility which leads to a further clarification. The interview concentrates directly on the topic of the case study. It is also considered “insightful” since it provides perceived causal results. The positive aspects are our reason for choosing interview as a method of data collection.

Yin (1994) states that case study interviews can be in forms of open-ended, structured, or focused. In an open-ended interview, the facts of a subject and the key respondents’ opinions are asked for; and the second type is more structured along the lines of a formal survey. A focused interview allows the researcher to follow a certain set of questions pertaining to the case study protocol through which the respondent(s) are interviewed for a short period of time, and the interview may remain open-ended.

The focused interview has been chosen in our research because we are stating a set of interview questions that requires answers to provide us with the data on our research questions. Since we wanted to have the interview to be flexible with the study, we needed to keep the interviews open-ended to some extent.

Yin (2011) suggests note taking and voice recording as two strategies for data collection. Our aim is to get permission to record the voice of the interviewee and then transcribe the recorded voice to have the full data available. This way, we leapfrog the bias that may arise by the author's own misunderstanding. Besides, notes are complement to the recorded voice and we may use illustrated notes or text notes to complete the data collection.

Documentation in the form of brochures and homepage is used in this research to enable us to collect general information on the organizations investigating as well as more specific data on the research questions as a source of collecting data in our research. Documents include articles and formal studies as well as letters (Eriksson, L. T. and Wiedersheim-Paul, F., 1997; Yin, 1994). According to Yin (1994), in every case study, documentary information is likely to be relevant and documents have different forms. Progress reports and other internal documents are included in administrative documents as an example, and archival records include organizational records that reflect organizational charts or calendars, telephone listing, and other personal records (Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 2001).

3.4.1. Case Selection

Non-profit organizations in Iran have not been researched regarding their marketing communication pattern. There are some research found in this field, if could be credible and reliable, focused on performance of NPOs in Iran (e.g. Givarian et al., 2012), but the number of them is very few. Hence, as mentioned in the first chapter, we intend to explore the HOW of NPOs in Iran.

In order to leapfrog the subjectivity and increase the reliability and credibility of the study, we conduct the case study on two major NPOs in Iran, namely MAHAK and Imam Ali Popular Students Society (IAPSS) both dealing with humanitarian aids in the country.

Case 1: MAHAK

Primary goal of MAHAK as a non-profit organization is to provide support services to the children suffering from cancer and to lessen suffering of their families in line with the mission of MAHAK. The support services include social, psycho-social and welfare services. MAHAK seems to be successful in: accountability, transparency (from the background of MAHAK). This is why it is important for us to study MAHAK.

Recently, a lot of positive news has been heard about MAHAK Charity Institute for its success. The positive news and success stories have been reflecting the success of the organization and have attracted attention by creating a positive brand and motivated more support of the society, i.e. humanitarian and financial assistance by the public. MAHAK Marketing and marketing communication seem to play an important role in this success.

MAHAK as a non-profit and non-governmental organization was established in 1991 by Mrs. Saideh Ghods. She had suffered from the experience of having a child with cancer and had witnessed the difficulties of raising a child fighting against cancer, so she decided to set up a center that would assist children in a similar situation; a center to function as a shelter for children and their families. A board of governors was selected with assistance of the same friends and relatives who had helped her through her own experience, and “MAHAK Society to Support Children with Cancer” was set up as a non-profit, non-governmental organization.

MAHAK faced some difficulties at the beginning. MAHAK volunteers for assisting cancer-stricken parents faced huge difficulties in performing their role at the beginning. They were wearing name badges of “supporters of parents with cancer-stricken children” in Persian language, because of the word cancer written on their badges which carried a negative concept. For solving this problem, the decision was made to use only the first initial of every word on the badges, and so the word 'MAHAK' was introduced. This name has global recognition today.

About seven to eight years after registering MAHAK as a non-profit organization, other associations in support of cancer-stricken children were formed. It helped the gradual acceptance of cancer as a disease and changed the wrong perception by the society. Special attention was given to the children and their families and they were noticed. MAHAK started with gathering volunteer and financial support through bazaar sales. The Board of Trustees then decided to purchase a land of 4700 square meters and construct a purpose-build structure on the hillsides of Darband in Northern Tehran.

The charity provides supportive, psycho-social and welfare services to the children in need and their families. As their Mission, “*The organization concentrates on cancer-stricken children at a national and international level in the three domains of charity, treatment and research*”. Moreover, “*Transparency, trust and accountability are the most valued principles at MAHAK*”. It has been active internally and internationally since then to help cancer-stricken children and their families; and has grown drastically over the last years. MAHAK’s hospital was officially opened in 2007. Today, it is the single largest and best equipped pediatric cancer hospital in Iran and the Middle East. It offers all medical services as well as complimentary residential services for parents. So far, MAHAK had provided services to close to 21,000 children with cancer and their families. It now has over 550 employees plus thousands of volunteers, over 80,000 members, and over ten fundraising offices and booths all active in ten divisions and two residential centers.

International activities of MAHAK include promotion of the organization’s activities in international bodies such as the United Nations Department of Public Relations (UNDPI), United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCO), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). MAHAK also carries out activities to collect and obtain international donations through these international bodies. MAHAK has the commitment of sharing knowledge, information as well as expertise with the international medical community.

MAHAK, being a non-profit and non-governmental organization is supported by humanitarian assistance and fundraising. As their Vision, “*MAHAK ensures that children with cancer are never refused treatment due to poor financial status. MAHAK aims to be a unique organization that is placed among the top ten organizations throughout the world. Our hope is that MAHAK’s achievements will be utilized as criteria for evaluating similar institutions at national and international levels.*”

MAHAK has set the task of establishing and developing relations with foreign cancer related institutes and organizations in order to exchange information and promote scientific and research cooperation with other similar NGOs, hospitals and cancer centers internationally as well as calling for dedicated group volunteer establishment abroad.

MAHAK, as a major accomplishment and meeting the global levels standards, was recognized by the Société Generale de Surveillance (SGS) and awarded the Verified Certificate of NGO Benchmarking in November 2007. It is considered the first NGO in the Middle East to have been awarded such a certificate and ranked in the top ten globally among over 260 NGOs recently audited by SGS for NGO benchmarking.

Case 2: Imam Ali Popular Students Society (IAPSS)

Imam Ali Popular Students Society (IAPSS) is another charity foundation in Iran. IAPSS as a non-profit and non-governmental organization was first established in 1999 by Sharin Meymandinejad, a sessional teacher of “Internal Way Finding” (Rahyaft-e- Darooni) course of Sharif University of Technology. The aim was to provide support to the needy people, especially to weaker members of the society, women and children, who are suffering from unemployment, hunger, and the lack of education facilities.

Around ten years ago, IAPSS was comprised of the founder and a number of Sharif University of Technology students who were already active in an office established in the University, registered the society as an NGO with the Iranian Ministry of Interior. They started their first official office in the Southern part of Tehran and expanded their activities by opening more offices in other provinces of Iran.

Currently, IAPSS has three active offices in Tehran. The Society has then expanded its activities and has added other social development activities and programs, such as street wonderer lovers, free food, children’s of affection, teaching love, child social justice, stop child labor program, etc. It is very important for the Society to pay attention to the social difficulties and problems, take the necessary measures and actions wherever needed and preventing measures and actions regarding the children in need of such measures in the long term. In order to achieve this goal, IAPSS has had the innovation of implementing the strategy of using traditional customs as well as religious and national rituals and rites of Iran and other countries and has conformed them with the needs of the modern societies.

The vision of the Society is “A healthy international society based on human rights, equal opportunities, justice and honesty, focusing on children needs.” And the mission is defined as “Enhancing elites’ participation in contributing to public cultures, law and policies via creative ways and methods, focusing on developing or non-developed societies.”

IAPSS’s activity objectives are divided into three categories of short-term, mid-term, and long-term objectives. The objective of short-term activity concerns the critical condition of the people who are under protection in terms of food, shelter, etc. Foreseeing to increase the number of Iranian Houses is included in the long-term activities. The mid-term activities are precise and continuous educational aspects. Iranian house is to act as an intermediary between the region population and the poor. These supports and services considering the educational and assistance needs of the clients are provided continuously throughout the year.”

IAPSS is considered the first *intelligent* social organization in Iran. It means that the problems in the society may be rooted in phenomena not directly causing the problem. So the concentration will then be in the root and the relevant required actions are adopted toward it. It also encompasses the way the Society supports and communicates and interacts with charitable people and its volunteer member, as well as the needy people or the ones that suffer from a social problem in the community. It is in a way that anyone in the Society, in any part of his activities, is able to choose the type of activity he likes to provide or monitor provision of the services or dispatch procedure of the assistance till the end of the process and achieving the target. It is also possible for him to personally extend the service to be provided or the assistance item to be provided to the target person. This is possible through observation of the existing standards of the Society, in case there is no risk such as security.

The outcome of this interaction will be building confidence in charitable people and will help easily offering of their donations to the needy people. On the other hand, the Society members can contribute in the projects and programs while conjunct their abilities or interests to their social activities and see the effect in the shortest time possible. This will result in resolving the needy people’s problems and will cause realizing the problems and difficulties of the society in a proper way.

“Extracted from <http://www.sosapoverty.org/>”

Chapter Four: Data Presentation

In this chapter the empirical data of the two case studies will be presented. First, the case study organizations will be provided. It will then be followed by the data collected to each research question.

4.1. Case1: MAHAK

As mentioned in the previous chapter, MAHAK mainly provides support to the children suffering from cancer as well as helping their families. In our primary data phase, we conducted the interview in a friendly atmosphere with the organization's Public Relations (PR) Manager. The interview was partly held in MAHAK's office and partly over the telephone. In both cases the environments were calm and friendly and the manager was willing to answer the questions.

The PR Manager, who had been involved in the marketing activities of the organization for more than 7 years, presents the company's promotional and public relations activities from the early time. The Institute started its marketing communications activities since the early days of its establishment. The communication started through different channels and models. Word-of-mouth was the best practice of communication at the beginning. So, not much was spent on marketing or any advertising activities at that time, instead, they tried to build the trust and try to perform their job correctly, so that people can trust them at that stage. During the early stages of the organization, the initial network was their primary promotion tool. However, as the organization grew bigger, they had to increase their promotion's activities.

4.1.1. Objectives of Promoting Organization's Brand

Establish Relationship with New Customers

The PR manager stated that the objective of any organization's promotion activities should be set on *identifying the target group and responding to the needs of that target group.*

"According to Kotler (2006), brand is a promise; so we try to fulfill our commitment toward our target group. As written in our organization's mission statement, we always consider transparency, trust, and accountability in our relationship with our target group."

Customers are donors and targeting new groups has always been a part of the organization's plan. The organization tries to reach out more groups and now is targeting more companies to attract more donors from companies. The organization needs to target the new groups in order to expand its activities, be able to cover a larger number of children and bring them under the organization's support and protection besides adding to the services of the organization.

Convey a Message

MAHAK believes that whatever is sent to the target group(s) through their communication is considered a message. This message depends on the objective(s) of the communication. Different target groups require different and customized messages and the channels of communication differ when we communicate with different target groups and this is due to different factors, such as their social class, age, sex, habits of life, etc. One single message might have different effect on different target groups. One message that is communicated through a channel and results successfully in attracting donations for the organization might not be successful in attracting the attention of the other group(s). The language and tool of communication plays an important role in this regards. As an example, the message and channel(s) in communicating with a child to promote him/her to take MAHAK's piggy bank of empathy compared to communicating with a bazaar businessman to convince him to donate would be different. But generally, MAHAK considers the transparency, trust, and accountability in all the communication.

Test a New Segment of the Market

This has constantly been the objective of MAHAK to reach new segment(s) of the market and attract new donors. As an example in the process of the expansion of MAHAK, a hospital was established. The system of the management of a hospital, the expenses, as well as other resources are different from the main organization and its activities and such things brought up the need for targeting new market segments for MAHAK. Instead of attracting donors who dedicate financial resources to MAHAK, they had to attract donors from healthcare system of the country, such as doctors, nurses, pharmacies, etc. Different groups can provide assistance differently and this has created the necessity to target new groups.

As the PR Manager stated: *“Entering new market segments requires sustainable ideas. MAHAK has always considered accountability and transparency whenever starts a new activity or applies a change. Along with it or even before that, MAHAK provides all the information and the relevant motives and causes to the relevant target groups through different channels of communication”*.

As an example, a new product was introduced to the market: the new green donation boxes in the shape of piggy banks. This product which is made of recycled papers was introduced through different channels of communication such as websites, advertisements, press conferences, and bazaars, to the market. Apart from lowering the production cost of the product, the new donation boxes are easier to carry and do not need a plastic shopping bag to carry them due to its shape and being lighter in weight compared to the old ceramic piggy banks. Moreover, it is recyclable and besides the ones who are already attracted to the piggy bank donation box concept, it might attract the attention of a new group of donors for being a green product. MAHAK thought this could motivate those who are concerned about environmental protection and conservation of natural resources to join the MAHAK family. In the Bazaars held by MAHAK where they offered their products, those who had already been a donor to the organization were easily taking the piggy banks, but they

believe that they should wait to see the behavior and the reaction of the new donors in this regard (explained in their website).

Create Brand Awareness

In order to position the organization in the minds of the target groups, and in competition with the other charity organizations, and also in order to build trust to attract funds, MAHAK gives weight to brand awareness. In particular at the beginning, the organization had to deal with this challenge. MAHAK had to make brand awareness in order to attract donors, but the key point was to gain trust of people who hear the messages and make them believe in the organization and MAHAK believes that this could be achieved by brand awareness in the society. This, the Public Relations Manager stated, can result positively in the communication with the target groups. Because when the society knows the brand and trusts the brand, they respond faster to the communication. That is why MAHAK has always been taking on activities and tried to promote its brand and create brand awareness.

Maintain Relationship with Customers

MAHAK should maintain the relationship with the customers as mentioned by the founder: *“A charity as a non-profit organization follows the same principles and procedures of a profit-making organization since the needs are similar. We need to maintain the relationship with our fund providers. The needs of both of the organizations are similar, but the model might be different compared to the profit-making organizations. We try to use any opportunity or event to remind ourselves to the target groups and also convey our appreciations to them.”*

The PR Manager described the reason as maintaining the relationship with the donors and either providing them with the feedback on how their donations/assistance has been used or conveying the appreciation for their donation, encourages them to keep on their contribution and assistance when the organization announces new plans and activities. This has always been the practice and the results show a success of the practice.

Affect the Corporate Image

MAHAK managers believe that promotion of an organization affects the corporate image. If the corporate image is not promoted, the promotion will result in short-term effects only. Promoting of an organization and the corporate image are merged together and cannot be separated. In order to achieve a long-term result, corporate image must also be promoted while promoting activities of an organization.

“There have been some cases that we had to ignore and forget about a profitable activity or event just because we knew that the short-term profit could damage the long-term profit just because it will damage the image of our organization and the trust toward our organization. This does not mean that we don’t need the funds; but we are looking for more sustainable source of funds.” MAHAK Public Relations Manager (2015)

Again, as stated before, the corporate image has an effect on trust of the target groups. This can lead to encouraging or discouraging of the donors. MAHAK has been trying to pay attention to the corporate image for that reason.

Short-term vs. Long-term Objectives

Short-term fundraising activities are followed in MAHAK, only if it does not affect the long-term fundraising activities because long-term fundraising is the priority in the organization. It has happened that they had to ignore and forget about a profitable activity or event with a short-term profit just because they knew that it could damage the long-term profit for the organization and that has been due to the damage to the image of the organization and the trust of the target group toward the organization.

Increasing long-term fundraising has always been in their plan of the organization's marketing communication. Positioning, trust building, and creating a positive image of the organization in the minds of our target groups can lead to long-term results in collecting donations.

4.1.2. The Tools of Promoting NPO Brand

“All the channels are used as a channel of communication. Each target group responds to a certain channel, depending on their age, social class, etc. we use all the channels in our marketing communications.” MAHAK Public Relations Manager (2015)

Traditional Marketing Tools

The traditional marketing tools were the organization's first marketing tools. The initial traditional tool MAHAK used was the word-of-mouth as well as advertising in newspapers. Later, the organization made some alliances with some organization on particular occasions and used this strategic alliance for promoting its brands.

As soon as MAHAK successfully managed to build trust amongst donors, they started to practice more aggressive marketing tools during the expansion period. Tools such as newspaper ads, TV advertisements, exhibition and special events such as charity Bazaars were the most salient tools for advertising and promoting the organization's brand. They also used some materials such as flyers and brochures in order to publicize and promote their brand in different events. These events are announced electronically on their web pages and social networks. It is also announced on billboards and banners in different parts of the city. MAHAK also has been holding seminars participated by famous/popular faces. They have been using all sorts of traditional communication tools since they believe it is still effective even after emerging of the digital tools. There are some target groups that prefer traditional communication tools and these tools have a greater effect in communicating with them.

Digital Marketing Tools

MAHAK used the digital tools besides traditional marketing channels. According to the PR manager of the organization, the majority of online marketing campaigns are through social network accounts of the organization. Besides, MAHAK uses the web site as the main media to directly collect the required funds. The web site is in both English and Persian languages and has newsletters and provides awareness on the organization's activities as well as facilities and the ways of communication between their target groups and the organization. The organization attracts donors from all over the world now. International Society for Children with Cancer (ISCC) and Independent Community and Health Concern (IKHH) are two affiliates, through which MAHAK attracts the funds of international donors.

MAHAK has been trying to keep up with the new technology since there are a group of potential customers that can be reached through digital tools. The organization is mainly active in Facebook as well as their website for communicating with their target groups. The results show that the digital tools are effective according to the PR Manager.

4.2. Imam Ali Popular Students Society (IAPSS)

Promotion Background

IAPSS is the second case study. The interview was held with the CEO of the organization. The interview took place in the office of IAPSS in a friendly atmosphere with the CEO, Mrs. Zahra Rahimi, whose professional background started about 15 years ago as the co-founder of IAPSS along with her husband.

“Every organization requires implementing marketing and promotional activities, but it is the biggest challenge to do promotional campaigns during the startup of the organization. For us it was the same and the promotional campaigns were face-to-face marketing as well as our network of friends and family”, says the CEO.

Later, as the organization grew, they used more organized marketing campaigns through advertisements in the media.

4.2.1. Objectives of Promoting Organization's Brand

According to the CEO of IAPSS, objectives of promotion of the brand rely highly on the organization's mission statement and goals. The private organizations need more promotion of their brands, as they do not receive any fund from government and rely 100% on people's donation for both finances and volunteer human resources. Even those organizations that have access to public funds from government need to promote their

brands, since they have to maintain their brand position in the long-term competition with the others. According to the CEO, trust building through marketing communication as well as fund-raising and attracting the volunteer human resources are the main objectives of the organization's brand promotion.

Establish Relationship with New Customers

The organization needs to approach new customers as they are trying to expand the span of the activities of the organization as a continuous practice and that is what IAPSS has been doing so far. Following the same objective, they believe that new customers can be both from the same or a new segment of the society. The main focus of the organization has been on the individuals as customers, but now they feel that they need to target corporation as a new segment in order to be able to cover and support a greater population of people who need the support. *"We also need to change our dialogue with the new segment of the market,"* says the CEO.

Convey a Message

IAPSS considers conveying their messages as part of their objective. The messages are following certain objectives such as involving people of the society to the social problems; create awareness to the sensitivity of social issues and problems in the minds of people of the society and make people consider the problems as one of their concerns even if they don't take any action to donate. This is the kind of message the organization would like to convey to their target group. The CEO believes that conveying the message is very important. As an example, she mentioned some articles that are published in magazines or newspapers. The way (literature and language) the stories are written can result differently in the same magazine or newspaper.

Test a New Segment of the Market

The organization tested targeting new segments of the market, but according to the CEO, the outcome and the results of all their cases were not as they expected and she called it unsuccessful in some cases. She believes that the main reason for their failure on testing the new market was due to the fact that they did not use proper literature (message) that matches the expectations of the target group. As an example, they targeted a group of people who wanted to do the Hajj pilgrimage. The organization tried to convince them to reduce their pilgrimage trip expenses and, instead, support the needy families of their own society. They used the Hajj metaphors to attract their attention to different cases that needed the support. Young students were promoting and presenting the cases. The organization didn't find the results successful. IAPSS's assessment was that they targeted a wrong segment. They believe that the target group's motivation to do Hajj pilgrimage was not assessed correctly and they would have listened to a wiser, mature or religious person whom everyone knows and trusts instead and they young students couldn't convince him.

On the other hand, they had some successful experiences with some other cases in which they targeted academic lecturers and professors, which brought them successful results.

The reason for success and failure on testing new market is the culture, according to the CEO. She believes that the organization can use commercial ways to attract funds, but the strategy of the organization requires attracting funds through creating awareness, i.e. the conveyed message is important.

Create Brand Awareness

“We never directly promoted the brand of the organization. Creating brand awareness through marketing and advertising campaigns has not been in our policy. What we believe is that, we have to provide activity reports to the donors, and so they would know that their donation is not spent on the promotion of our brand and our organization. Building trust through our activities is the main policy”, stated the CEO. *“We still believe that face-to-face marketing and word-of-mouth is much more effective than other media and campaigns”*, she adds. The organization believes that direct promotion of their brand might have short-term results for the organization, but IAPSS is more looking at long-term results. They believe that the activity report will indirectly promote their brand.

Maintain Relationship with Customers

IAPSS has been interested in maintaining relationship with their customer through different channels of communication. Facebook is the most effective media for them to maintain the relationship between them and the target group according to the CEO. *“We believe that it is helping us by the word-of-mouth and virtual one-to-one way of marketing. We have also had advertising campaigns on different TV shows as a channel of communication, but they never brought us any remarkable results.”* She said. There have been some donors who were affected emotionally and donated but this did not mean that the relationship was maintained.

Affect the Corporate Image

Like any other organization, the corporate image has been important for IAPSS. This can affect the trust of their target groups according to the CEO. There are some practices done by the organization in this regard. Activity reports provided to the target groups, creating social awareness in the society, and other activities are all affecting the corporate image. The more positive corporate image presented the more motivation it will bring up amongst the target group.

Long-term vs. Short-term

So far Facebook has shown the best short-term channel of communication. E-mails that are forwarded amongst friends and networks are also developing fast. *“Sometimes these e-mails that are sent out will get back to me too. We have groups on Facebook, run e-mail campaigns or send short text messages by phone are normally used for short-term fundraising”*, say the CEO. Different groups are dedicated to monitor and follow the channels of communication.

There are some donors that the IAPSS maintains relations with and are reached whenever a specific donation is required. As an example, some donors might not be able to assist financially on some cases, but they assist the organization with their connections for major items such as infrastructure facilities.

4.2.2. The Tools of Promoting NPO Brand

Traditional Tools

On the traditional tools, the company used the word-of-mouth and the family and friends network, which according to the CEO, is one of the most effective tools they still use. Some tools such as banners and billboards have not been much effective. Story telling is another factor, which is really effective. Some case reports have been published in the newspapers and magazines that have resulted very positively for the organization. As mentioned before, professional journalists can serve the purpose of properly conveying the message is a fundamental point. She believes that magazines are more effective since it has regular followers of its stories. As an example, the buyers of “Ideal Life” (Zendege-e Ideal) magazine who are mainly from middle class of the society are the most effective target group of the organization since they understand the problems and issues of the society and also are able to donate. That has also formed a network of IAPSS followers in that magazine and the organization maintains the relationship with them through the publication.

According to the CEO, *reporting articles are more effective than news articles* for them, in particular when the professional journalists write them. They also use targeted magazine that their audiences need to fill a gap by donating to their organization or becoming the member.

“For TV and Radio, we believe that Radio is a much more effective channel compared to TV, as people and the audience consider the radio as a more channel of private sector and not a state-run channel. The Radio can also be heard almost everywhere and even while people are moving. There have been unique success cases while promoting through Radio, whereas, we did not get the feedback we expected, where we presented ourselves on TV shows,” CEO of ISPSS (2015)

The organization also participates in specialized fairs and exhibitions, where they attracted specific donors and expand their network. They use catalogues, brochures, and newsletters as well as their own publication entitled “Gole-Yakh” as their main material in fairs. Brochures are not helpful in all of their events though, she believed. Sometimes a PowerPoint presentation is used as a promotion channel. Book fairs, dental relevant fairs, journalism fairs, and business shows are the main target fairs in which they participate. Volunteered human resources are also attracted besides the donations. As an example, in the dental relevant fairs, some dentists volunteered to provide free dental services to the children who are under the support of the organization.

According to the published marketing materials of the organization, IAPSS also organizes art works exhibitions and presents the artworks of the children who are under the support of the organization. The artwork includes their paintings, theater performance, singing, etc.

Digital Tools

The society uses the digital tools as the main tool of communication and as the CEO believes more than 70% of their donations are received from their digital communication in which Facebook comes first. The interactive platform made it possible for the organization to get the best out of their campaigns and they directly ask for donation via Facebook. This is the type of crowd funding they use and Facebook is their best channel.

They send some e-mails which were different from e-mail marketing campaigns. The e-mails that they send contain the report of the successful cases or the cases that are in urgent need for help to friends and family members and ask them to forward it to their friends. These e-mail circulations, as the CEO mentions, sometimes get back to its original sender. The CEO says that she got the e-mails she started herself after couple of weeks and rounds of circulation, which shows that the e-mail has been forwarded by and toward many people. Figure 4 illustrates the e-mail campaigns of the organization.

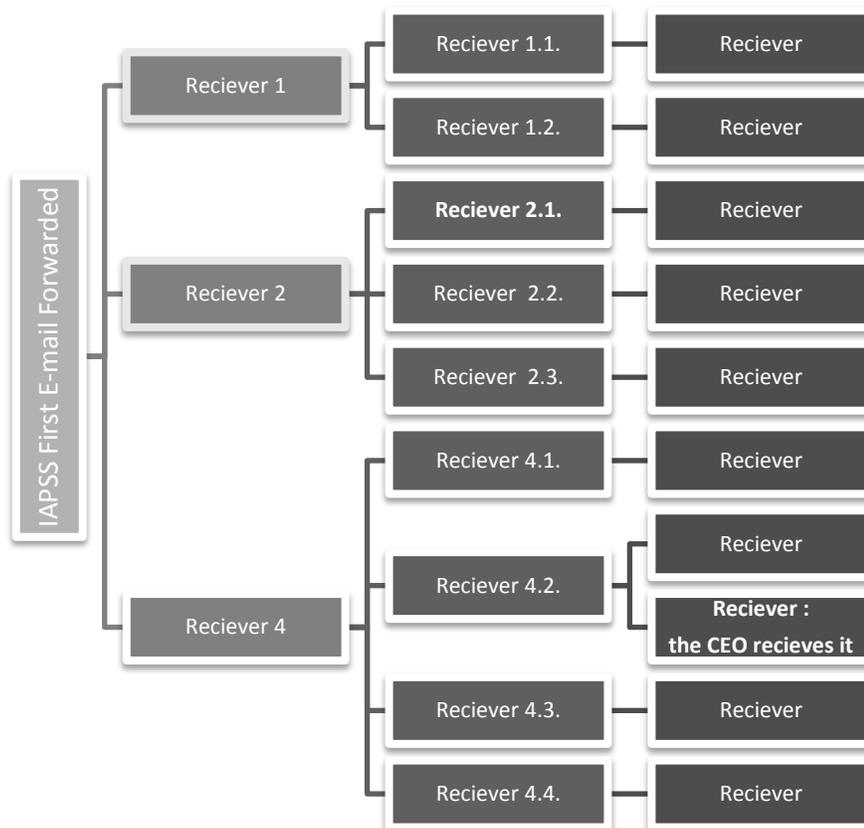


Figure 4 – e-mail campaign of IAPSS (Based on the interview with CEO)

The organization also uses short message system (sms) to keep in touch with their members and previous donors. Viber, Whatsapp, Twitter, and other digital social networks are also used limitedly.

Future Plans

One of the organization's strategies in future is to target companies and organizations as a new target group. They intend to establish new communication with them since the type of donation and the items they can cover would be different. They would also like to expand internationally and target the Iranians abroad.

So far, IAPSS' success has been due to their communications with their target groups, but there is a lack of a section in the organization that specifically concentrates on the promotional activities of the organization. This is a need of the organization and they are planning to create the section.

Chapter Five: Data Analysis

In this chapter, the collected data presented in the previous chapter is analyzed.

5.1. Marketing Communication Objectives

The primary and secondary data, which were collected through interviews, electronic and printed reports and news, etc., reveal the followings:

Each organization has tried to be as active and effective as possible to introduce their service and brand to their target society and influence them for the purpose of fund-raising.

Table 1 illustrates the marketing communication objectives of NPO's. The objective criteria between the two organizations are presented. The main criteria from which we extracted our data are based on the conceptual framework.

Table 1 – NPO's Objectives of Marketing Communication

Variable/Case	MAHAK	IAPSS
Establish relationship with new customers	+/+	+/+
Convey a Message	+/+	+/+
Test new Segments of the Market	+/+	+/+
Maintain Relationship with Customers	+/+	+/+
Affect Corporate Image	+/+	+/+
Brand Awareness	+/+	-/-

Coding:

+/+ = *The organization states it as an objective and they think it is beneficial to them.*

+/- = *The organization states it as an objective, but do not feel it is that beneficial to them.*

-/+ = *The organization does not state it as an objective, but they feel it could be beneficial if they did.*

-/- = *The organization neither state it as an objective nor feel it would be beneficial if they did it.*

As shown in the above table, both organizations of MAHAK and IAPSS have tried establishing relationship with new customers; it means that they are interested in expanding their target groups and adding their donors and as it requires they target new groups as their new customers.

When communicating with their target groups, both organizations have the objective of conveying a message while promoting. The messages might differ in various events and occasions, but overall they share a common root of humanitarian concepts.

In order to expand the size of their customers (donors in these cases), both organizations have been trying to target new segments of the society and add the number of donors to their group of customers. It has been sometimes successful and in some cases not very satisfactory according to the expectations of the organizations.

MAHAK sees success in promoting their brand and has tried to create a positive brand image in order to build trust and attract more customers in their strategy of marketing communication with their target groups. On the other hand, IAPSS does not have the intention of promoting the organization's brand image. They, instead, would like to promote the cause of their act and create awareness amongst their target audience of why they should join the organization by either donating funds or providing humanitarian assistance.

In order to achieve their objectives, both organizations have adopted establishing relationship with their target groups and maintaining this relationship with their customers since it is important for both of the organizations to follow long-term fund-raising programs.

Even though IAPSS has not had any interest to promote its organization's brand, it is still important for them to present a positive corporate image amongst their customers. So they try to avoid activities that might have a negative effect on their corporate image and they try to improve it through the feedback they receive through their communication with different target groups. This also applies to MAHAK. The feedback they receive from their audience especially on their Facebook pages is the main tool that is assisting them to achieve the objective.

5.1.1. MAHAK'S Marketing Communication Objectives

MAHAK has been practicing the strategy of expanding its customer both by targeting new customers within one group and also targeting new customers in new group(s) and establishing relationship with them since they believe it's been beneficial according to the results they have received. One reason is that different groups could provide different sort of support and assistance to the organization, and the other reason is that the organization always requires more financial resources to be able to expand its span of activities.

MAHAK believes that there's a message in all of its communications with their target groups that might differ according to different events and the target group. They believe that a message is the necessary element in any communication they hold in order to make it effective and beneficial and so they have been practicing it.

Testing new segments of the Market has been a valuable practice to MAHAK and the result has shown its effectiveness as per example of establishing a new hospital and enjoying the assistance from health service sector as targeting a new segment.

MAHAK has found maintaining relationship with their customer an effective way of communicating with their target market and encouraging them to continue providing support to the organization. MAHAK has been practicing it so far and they believe it has been a successful practice and beneficial to the organization.

Corporate image has been an important practice for MAHAK's fundraising. They have adopted strategies in this regard and they plan to continue it since they've found it beneficial.

MAHAK has always been stressing on promoting their brand since they believe that it is an effective way of trust building in the society and helps them attract funds. They are planning to continue this strategy since they have found it beneficial by receiving the positive results.

5.1.2. IAPSS's Marketing Communication Objectives

IAPSS has always considered establishing relationship with new customers. This has been beneficial to the organization and they are planning to continue it since they have found it an effective approach. The reason has been expanding the span of their activities and support to the needy population.

IAPSS conveys social messages to their target groups and they have found it beneficial by receiving responds for them. The organization believes that social messages conveyed by the organization turns into awareness and concerns of their target groups and that are how the organization attracts donations.

The organization has always been practicing testing the new segments of the market. Even though the organization has experienced some unsuccessful cases, they still consider it as an objective due to the benefits of other successful cases.

IAPSS has always had the objective of maintaining relationship with their donors and have found it beneficial for the organization. They have been after a continuous relationship with their donors. Again, there have been some unsuccessful cases, but overall the organization has found the practice beneficial.

Corporate image has been important for IAPSS. Improving the corporate image has been considered an objective of the organization and the activities adopted in this regard have been evaluated success and brought benefits to the organization.

Brand awareness has never been an objective of the organization. They have concentrated on providing their donors with activity reports for trust-building. They aware them of how their donations have been used and supported needy people, but they don't find promoting their brand beneficial to the organization. It might have some short-term benefits, but since their perspective is long-term benefits, they'd rather not consider brand awareness as an objective.

5.2. Marketing Communication Tools

The following table, which is formed by the data, collected through both the primary and the secondary data reveals that both of the organizations have been using the traditional tools such as fairs and exhibitions, TV and radio advertisements, billboards and banners, etc.

In the recent years, digital world has become a major communication tool everywhere. To keep up with the society and the technology, both organizations have tried to include digital tools of communication in their communications with their target groups. It has had some benefits such as saving time and cost while increasing and maintaining the communication with the customers.

5.2.1. Traditional Tools of Communication

Traditional tools are one of the main tools that NPOs use in the marketing communication process. Both organizations, MAHAK and IAPSS used traditional communication tools in order to meet their goals. Getting tools such as Word of mouth, TV and radio promotion programs, newspaper and magazine articles and ads, printed marketing materials, seminars and exhibitions, and other marketing campaigns have been used by both organizations. Table 2 illustrates traditional tools of communication used by both organizations are case study. The table shows which tools have been used by organizations and whether they found that used tools beneficial to their marketing campaigns.

Table 2 – Traditional Tools of Communication Used by NPOs

Variable/Case	MAHAK	IAPSS
Word-of-Mouth	+/-	+/+
Promotional Programs on TV	+/-	+/-
Promotional Programs on the Radio	+/+	+/+
Articles in the Newspapers	+/+	+/+
Articles in Magazines	+/+	+/+
Printed newsletters/ Leaflets/ Brochures, Billboards, etc.	+/-	+/-
Participating in Exhibitions	+/+	+/+

Variable/Case	MAHAK	IAPSS
Holding Seminars	+/+	-/+
Alliances with other corporations/companies	+/+	-/+
Holding Charity Bazaars and performances	+/+	+/+

Coding:

+/+ = *The organization uses the tool and they find it useful and effective.*

+/- = *The organization uses the tool but they don't find it useful and effective.*

-/+ = *The organization does not use the tool, but they believe it would be effective and useful if they do.*

-/- = *The organization neither uses the tool nor believe it would be effective if they did it.*

Traditional Tools Used by MAHAK

The initial tool that MAHAK used for its promotional communications has been word-of-mouth. It is used to be an effective tool at the beginning but the organization believes that this tool is not as effective as other tools anymore. So the organization is not using this tool as one of their channels of communication with their target groups anymore, because they believe that it does not cover a large population as their organization is targeting.

MAHAK has been using some promotional programs on TV, but they believe that, considering the cost of the tool, the result is not that successful, so they don't have any plan to continue the practice for now.

Advertising on the radio has been beneficial to MAHAK. They consider it an effective channel of communication. They believe that by this tool many groups of different sectors can be targeted. MAHAK has been using this tool and they are planning to communicate through it again.

MAHAK regards articles in the newspapers an effective tool of communication. Their experiences of such kind have provided them benefits and they are looking at this tool as one of the effective ones. They believe that newspaper has its fans and followers besides being an easy-access tool for customers.

MAHAK is also finding articles in magazines effective for communicating with their target groups. Because they believe that depending on the topic of the magazine, specific groups can be targeted and communicated.

MAHAK used to print out leaflets/brochures, posters, banners, billboards, etc. for different events. The organization was also publishing newsletters and activity reports. The organization is trying to minimize the number of such print-outs since they don't find it an effective tool of communication with their target groups. They believe that the electronic

version of the material is a more effective tool of communication. Banners, billboards, and posters still seem to be useful tools to communicate with the target groups.

Participating in some of the exhibitions is recognized as effective and useful for MAHAK to communicate with their target groups. They believe that specific groups can be targeted depending on the subject and specialty of the exhibition. They have come up with successful results using this tool of communication and planning to continue the policy.

Once in a while, MAHAK holds a seminar to introduce the organization, present activity reports, announce the internal and international awards and honors they have been achieving, etc. They find it effective because this way they can communicate their brand easier and distinguish themselves from similar charity organizations. The seminar will then be reflected electronically on the social networks to communicate with larger groups and this has proved to result very successfully for the organization.

MAHAK, as part of its activities, has been using the strategy of alliance with other corporations and benefit from their promotional plans and policies because they believe this tool can provide them a stronger communication with more extensive groups. They have found it effective and fruitful and planning to continue the policy.

Charity Bazaars are also another channel that MAHAK has been using to communicate its brand with its target groups and attract funds. They have found it effective and has brought positive outcome. MAHAK believes that Bazaars attract different segments and provide closer communication with the target groups because people are able to communicate and interact personally with the organization apart from just reading or hearing about it. They are planning to continue holding charity Bazaars in future.

Traditional Tools Used by IAPSS

IAPSS has been using the traditional tool of word-of-mouth in their communication with their target groups and they still find it a useful tool of communication.

Participating in promotional programs on TV has been practiced by IAPSS. Their assumption was that it would be an effective tool for promoting and attracting funds, but the results showed that it could bring them short-term funds attraction, but the communication will not continue. As mentioned before, IAPSS's main concentration is on long-term effects activities; hence, they are not planning to use this tool anymore since they did not find it an effective tool.

Advertising on the radio is known an effective tool of communication by IAPSS since they have always experienced successful results. They have been using the tool and they are planning to continue benefit the tool in their future plans. The reason is that they believe this channel of communication, being a portable device, can address a large number of audience compared to TV and so they can reach a bigger number of their target groups with

each promotional program. Moreover, people don't consider it as a state-run channel and are paying more attention to its programs compared to TV.

IAPSS believes that newspaper can be a very effective tool of communication. There are some important factors involved though, such as the expertise of the writer. But overall, the organization evaluates this tool as an effective tool and they are planning to use it more in future.

Magazines are used as an effective tool of communication by IAPSS to target specific segment of the market. There are two different magazines that is being used as the tool of communication by the organization and according to the positive feedback they have received so far, they regard this tool effective and beneficial and will continue the policy.

IAPSS used to print out brochures, catalogues, leaflets, billboards, banners, posters, etc. Their assessment was that these print-outs are not useful and effective in communicating with target groups. They believe they should reserve the print-outs for some specific occasions and events only. Even the billboards, banners, and posters do not seem to be very effective tools of communication. However, newsletters are still being printed for specific cases such as other organizations and corporations.

IAPSS has been participating in fairs and exhibitions in different occasions. They believe that this is a beneficial and very effective tool of communication and have been able to make successful attraction of funds as well as services. As mentioned earlier, dental exhibition was a success for the organization to attract volunteers for providing services to the organization. Depending on the subject of the exhibition/fair, specific segments can be communicated. IAPSS is planning to use this tool of communication again whenever they get a chance.

Holding seminars had not been a part of activities of IAPSS. They did not use this tool before, but they believe that it could have been an effective tool of communication if they had used it. They believe that they can target a specific group by holding a seminar. They believe they need to consider this policy in their future planning.

IAPSS has been holding charity Bazaars besides art exhibitions and performances by the children of under protection of the organization. They have found it effective channel of communication. They believe that the children's participation provides them with a good feeling and this is another benefit they can get from the Bazaar besides attracting funds and donations.

5.2.2. Digital Tools of Communication

Both of NPOs of our case study used digital tools of communication in their marketing campaigns. They both used digital tools such as website, social networks, banner advertising, email marketing, and electronic newsletter. In table 3, these digital tools that were used by both organizations are presented. Through a coding system, we show whether these organizations used any of these digital marketing tools. Moreover, we also present if they find the tools useful and effective or not.

Table 3 – Digital Tools of Communication Used by NPOs

Variable/Case	MAHAK	IAPSS
Website (own, interviews, adv. Banners)	+/+	+/+
Social networks	+/+	+/+
E-mail Marketing Campaign	+/+	+/+
Electronic Newsletter	+/+	-/+

Coding:

+/+ = *The organization uses the tool and they find it useful and effective.*

+/- = *The organization uses the tool but they don't find it useful and effective.*

-/+ = *The organization does not use the tool, but they believe it would be effective and useful if they do.*

-/- = *The organization neither uses the tool nor believe it would be effective if they did it.*

Digital Tools Used by MAHAK

MAHAK has a user-friendly and active website that reflects all the facilities and activities of the organization. It is one of the main communication tools that MAHAK has been using for the last couple of years. They find it very helpful in communication and publicity since it is easily accessible to almost all the segments and their target groups and the result has been successful. They have large number of visitors every day. They have found it useful and effective.

Facebook is the main and most effective social network after the website for MAHAK. They reflect almost all the activities on their Facebook and communicate directly with their donors and target groups. Social network provides individual interaction of almost all the

segments and even though the social network's site is filtered by the Iranian government, Feedback is assessed successful for MAHAK.

MAHAK keeps relationship with their donors by e-mail as one of their effective channels of communication; aware them of how their donations have been utilized and inform them of the new support opportunities. Maintaining relationship with their donors is achieved through this tool and the result is considered successful.

On their website, MAHAK has published their newsletter reflecting all the activities and news of the organization. The newsletter is also communicated through e-mails. The organization finds it an effective way of communicating with the donors, introducing the organization and its activities, motives, as well as its brand to their target groups.

Digital Tools Used by IAPSS

IAPSS has a website that shows the activities and supports of the organization to the children in need. Donating is easily arranged on the website. The organization finds it an effective channel of communication between the organization and their target groups. They have special team for this and are trying to improve their website.

According to the CEO of IAPSS, Facebook provides almost 70% of the donations to the organization. This result reveals how effective and beneficial social networking is for IAPSS. The direct interaction with individuals is added to the benefits and makes it an attractive channel of communication between the organization and almost all the segments.

IAPSS uses e-mails to communicate with their donors to inform them how their donations have been used and also aware them of the urgent cases in need of help and support. Besides, IAPSS sends out some e-mails which were different from e-mail marketing campaigns. The e-mails contain the report of the successful cases or the cases that are in urgent need for help to the friends and family members and ask them to pass it on and share it with other friends by forwarding it to them. These e-mails, as the CEO mentions, are so actively circulated so that they sometimes get back to its original sender. The CEO says that it has happened that she received the e-mails she started herself after couple of weeks and rounds of circulation, which shows that they have been shared with a large number of people. Figure 4 illustrates the e-mail campaigns of the organization. They evaluate this tool as effective and will continue communicating through this channel.

IAPSS has been producing printed newsletters, but they now feel the need for producing electronic newsletters and distributing them to their target groups to attract funds. Their assessments reveal that printed newsletters are less welcomed than the electronic ones; besides, the electronics are communicated easily compared to the printed newsletter with a lower cost. So IAPSS is planning to start communicating its fund-raising activities and activity reports through distributing electronic newsletters.

Chapter 6: Findings and Conclusions

In this final chapter, findings and conclusions will be presented. The research questions presented at the beginning of the thesis will be answered by the findings and finally implications/recommendations for the practitioners and future research will be provided.

6.1. RQ1: How can the objectives/benefits of promoting the NPO brand be described?

Like any for-profit sector, there is a need for NPOs to promote their brand. The overall goal would be raising fund and attracting financial resources for the organization, but a number of objectives need to be described to achieve that goal.

Establishing relationship with new customers seems to be a common interest of the two cases that were studied. Customers represent providers of financial as well as volunteer human resources. The organizations need to find new customers so that they can replace the new customer in case they lose an existing customer. Moreover, its more customers could mean more financial resources for the organization. Having access to more financial resources, means that the organization will be able to increase the number of children/families under the protection of the organization. The organization would also be able to develop and improve the quality of their services by adding its equipment and facilities which will eventually lead to the growth of the organization.

In order to promote their brand, NPOs have to communicate with their customers, either the existing or the potential ones. In every effective communication, a *message has to be conveyed*. Both of the studied cases believed in that. The message plays an important role in attracting the attention of customers. If a proper message is designed, it can lead to attract customers and result in fund-raising for the organization.

Establishing relationship with new customers can happen within the existing sectors as well as *testing new segments of the market*. Both NPOs under study were practicing targeting new segments. Their results showed that there were successful achievements in some segments and failure in some other segments. New segments can provide different forms of resources to the NPOs. Having customers of one segment can also help promoting within the segment and promote other members of the segment. The failure cases revealed that each segment must be studied differently before being targeted and each segment has its own approach and communication.

It seems like retaining customers is as important and valuable as attaining customers for NPOs in today's world of competition. They try to *maintain relationship with their customer* through different channels of communication since the organizations are thinking of a more long-term benefit rather than short-term benefits. All the efforts and expenses can be considered wasted if the attained customer could not be maintained.

The corporate image plays an important role in attracting customers. Organizations try to present a positive image of their organizations. This is another behavior that is derived

from organization's intention for having long-term benefits. To promote themselves and their brands, organizations communicate through various tools of communication with their customers. As an example, organizations provide the customers with the report of their activities, their social causes, and etc. to *affect their corporate image*.

Both organizations tried to create trust amongst their target groups/segment; one was stressing on attracting financial resource through directly promotion of their brand name and *creating brand awareness* amongst their target groups, whereas the other organization preferred to create awareness on the social cause and motives of their organization instead of their brand name. It seems like the second organization is trying to create brand awareness indirectly through causes and motives of the organization. Thus it can be concluded that creating brand awareness is the common important element for both organizations in their communication with their target groups and this is achieved through trust-building between the organization and the customers.

Table 4 – Common beneficial Brand Promotion Objectives of NPOs



Conclusions

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the following conclusions can be stated:

- Like for-profit sector, there is a dire need for the non-profit sector to practice promotional activities and communication with their target market.
- Benefits/objectives of the brand promotion of an NPO are achieved through their communication with their customers.
- Long-term benefit has greater priority compared to short-term benefit for the NPOs.

6.2. RQ2: How can the tools (media/channel) of promoting the NPO brand be described?

A brand of an NPO can be communicated with the customers through different media/channels of communication. Channels/media is an important element in the communication. Each channel has its feature and so will have different effect on the audience. NPOs, like other for-profit organizations, have been using both traditional and the modern digital tools.

The initial tool that the NPOs used at the initiative stages of their existence, when their resources were limited, was the traditional tool of *word-of-mouth*. This tool seemed to be effective at the beginning, but as the years passed, new tools emerged and started to bring more effective results, especially in the mass communications. The tool still seems to be effective in specific cases though.

Mass media such as *TV and radio* have been used by both organizations. TV does not seem to be an effective media compared to the radio. They have short-term results for the organizations only. The organizations also assess them as not cost-effective. Radio, on the other hand, seems to be more beneficial for the fund-raising purposes of the organizations. It seems like the radio is a more effective traditional medium compared to TV and is a more proper channel of communication to target greater number of segments/groups in the society.

Other traditional channels that have been used by the organizations are *newspapers and magazines*. It seems like the pen of a professional writer is powerful enough to create a communication between an organization and their customers. These are the channels that have been successfully used by the NPOs of our research. Each communicates better with different segments, but overall the approach seems to be similar.

Another traditional way of publicizing the events or activities of an NPO has been distribution of *printed newsletters, leaflets, brochures, etc.* These tools are not assessed effective channels of communication with customers. These tools might even have a negative effect on the corporate image of specific segments that are fans of the green world because the electronic version of them can communicate more effectively with the larger number of segments of the society.

The organizations have also used *banners and billboards* to promote different events. Each organization of our research has different views on these tools. One is finding them effective while the other believes the results have not been beneficial. The difference in results seems to be due to being able to communicate with the customers for having a proper design/message and the compatibility between the design/message and the target groups.

Participating in exhibitions and fairs has been evaluated as a very beneficial and successful tool for both organizations. Exhibitions and fairs are traditional channels of communication where customers and target groups have the opportunity to interact individually and get

connected to the organization. Exhibitions and fairs are where customers experience their participation by the close interaction.

Charity Bazaars and performances, like exhibitions, seem to be amongst the best communication tools for the NPOs. Participation of the children of under the support and protection of the organization, such as theatre and singing performances by the children, art galleries exhibiting the art works of the children, and bazaars presenting the hand-made creations of the children, were all traditional tools of communication that had effects on customers and could attract funds for the organization.

Organizing seminars are also another traditional channel. Through this channel of communication, the organizations are provided with an opportunity to present a report of their plans, activities, success, and achievements to their customers, while having the option of benefiting from the assistance of popular faces to attract more customers. Targeting the fans of the popular face could bring the organization great benefits.

It seems like joint cooperation can be beneficial when NGOs join. One of the organizations of our research has experienced it. The benefit has not only been financial, but also made them achieve an international credit. It seems like a synergy is created when the two organizations make an alliance since they share resources. The other organization has also realized the advantages of the *alliance with another corporation* and has included it in their policy.

In the new era of technology, the digital world has found its way to be amongst popular tools of communication. The organizations feel like having no choice but to keep up with the technology and update their tools/channels of communication with their customers. Our researched organizations have also made use of this technology. They communicate through their *websites* with their customers for various segments and they cover a wide range of activities. Through this channel, they provide an easy access and effective communication with their customers, build trust by introducing themselves, create awareness of their achievement, publish their activity reports and *newsletters*, etc. Websites of other organizations might also be used for advertising banners, publishing interviews, etc. Moreover, this channel is considered to be very cost-effective comparing the result it brings to the organizations, so this tool has turned into one of the main channels of communication for the organizations.

Amongst other digital channels of communication, *social networks* seem to be amongst the most effective channels that have brought maximum benefits to the organizations. They involve a large number of groups from different segments of the society, especially younger generation. The younger generations are the ones who can act as the ambassadors of the organization and affect other older generations including their family members for fund-raising. On the other hand, since the charity organizations are involved in social

activities and provide social services, this channel seems to be able to communicate most effectively with almost all the segments of the society.

E-mail marketing campaigns are also effective tools of communication for the organizations. Customers and target groups assist to the distribution of the e-mails and it can extensively reach different target groups.

Table 5 – Common Ranking of the tools used by the organizations

Effectiveness	Tool
Very effective and beneficial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Radio - Participating in Exhibitions and Fairs - Charity Bazaars and Performances - Social networking - Website - Alliances with other corporations
Somewhat effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Word-of-Mouth - Holding Seminars - Newspapers - Magazines - E-mail Marketing Campaign - Electronic Newsletter
Not effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotional Programs on TV - Banners - Printed Newsletters, Leaflets, Brochures, etc.

Conclusion

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the following conclusions can be stated:

- Each market segment has its own communication channels, through which NPOs conduct their marketing communication. There are some statements, which are targeted through Digital communication tools, while some other segments require the traditional channel of marketing.
- The modern digital channels have advantages such as targeting a larger society, being faster, easy access, more cost-effective, and complying with the requirements of the green world with minimum carbon footprint.

- The digital world and all its benefits have not resulted in the traditional tools of communication to be forgotten, even though the modern digital channels have some advantages over the traditional channels
- There could still be some segments that would communicate and respond better to the traditional channels of communication and would still be more effective in some segments of the market.
- Channels/tools of communications that provide two-way interactions are among the most effective channels of communication, either traditional or digital.

6.3. Implications for Theory

The purpose for this research study has been to *explore* how nonprofit organizations promote their brands in a way that it leads to fund-raising and gaining donations. The aim was to *describe* the way the NPOs can meet the objective/benefits or promoting their brand through tools of communication. The process started by reviewing theory on the subject. This has been done through primary and secondary data. The primary data have been collected through arranging interview with the relevant managers of the organizations and conducting interview(s) with them as well as attending some of the events that were held and organized by them. The secondary data were collected through studying documentations such as their published articles and interviews with other organizations and press, their newsletters, biannual activity reports and presentations, etc., in both hard copies and electronic versions. Through the findings we came up with and subsequently the conclusions we reached, we have been trying to *explain* the process that NPO go through to promote their brand to gain donations. The process starts with sending out a message through communication tools that are divided to traditional and modern/digital and ends with the attraction which leads to fund-raising for the organization.

6.4. Recommendation for Practitioners

List of suggestions to management based on data and findings:

- Marketing promotion seems to be a vital element for the survival of an organization, especially for NPOs that are depending on the donations as their financial resources. Specialized team(s) is recommended to be dedicated to the specific promotional activities, so that their concentration on the activities could end with the effective and beneficial results for the organizations.
- The message is one of the main elements of the communication. Designing a proper message and customizing one that matches the targeted segment could lead to a fruitful and beneficial result for the organization. Using a unique message for different segments might lead them to the failure of the communication.

- The organizations should not be afraid of trying new tools. Practitioners are recommended to welcome the modern tools and be flexible in utilizing the new tools in their communications. Each emerging tool attracts some specific sectors.
- However, the digital world and all its benefits do not mean that the traditional tools of communication to be forgotten since it is still effective in some segments of the market. A combination use of both digital and modern is recommended to be utilized for the most effective results. An example is using the traditional tool of holding a seminar and having a physical attendance of the customers while presenting it live electronically for those customers who have not been able to attend physically.
- It is very important for the organizations to be able to build trust in their target groups when they communicate since the trust can be the main factor for achieving an effective and long-term fund-raising result for the organization.

6.5. Implications for Future Research

As mentioned before, the area of this research has been on the brand promotion of NPOs to attract donations. We have found out that it can be studied in a greater extent or to be considered from different aspects that could be considered for future research studies:

- First and foremost, as we have been limited to a qualitative method, we suggest a quantitative study on marketing communication of NPOs from which more precise data could be collected and analyzed, hence the results can be complementary to our research.
- The type of message that is communicated with each target group can play an important role in the effectiveness of the communication. Compatibility of the message with the targeted group could be an area to be studied.
- Factor effecting trust-building in communicating with target groups could be another area for next studies.
- Another area for further research could be the assessment and evaluation of the advantages or disadvantages the traditional vs. modern/digital tools.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: The Interview Guide

Based on our conceptual framework and the research questions, we came up with the following interview guide questions:

Respondent:

1. Name
2. Position within the organization
3. Background

Background to promotion of the NPO

1. When did you first start promoting the organization?

RQ1: How can the objectives/benefits of promoting the NPO brand be described?

2. Do you have any objective(s) with promoting the organization's brand?
3. Do you have any corporate-related objective(s) of the followings with promoting the organization?
 1. Establish relationship with new customers
 2. Convey a message
 3. Test a new segment of the market
 4. Create brand awareness
 5. Maintain relationship with customers
 6. Affect the corporate image
4. If the answer is yes to any of the above items, please provide explanations.
5. Do you have any product-related objective(s) of the following with promoting the organization?
 1. Increase short-term fundraising and collecting donations
 2. Increase long-term fundraising and collecting donations
6. If the answer is yes to any of the above items, please provide explanations.

RQ2: How can the tools (media/channel) of promoting the NPO brand be described?

7. Do you make use of traditional media of the following as the channel of communication in promoting the NPO brand?
 1. Advertising on TV
 2. Advertising in the radio
 3. Advertising in the newspapers
 4. Printed newsletters/ Leaflets/ Brochures, etc.
 5. Exhibition
 6. Seminars

7. Any other medium
8. If the answer is yes to any of the above items, please provide explanations.
9. Do you make use of digital media of the following as the channel of communication in promoting the NPO brand?
 1. Website
 2. Social networks
 3. E-mail
 4. Electronic Newsletter
 5. Any other medium
10. If the answer is yes to any of the above items, please provide explanations
11. How do you compare the feedback/result of the traditional and digital media?
12. Do you have any future plans for promoting the organization's brand and marketing communication?
13. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding promoting the organization's brand and marketing communication that we have not thought about?