Exploring Digital Marketing Strategies toward Inbound-Outbound Techniques: A Qualitative Analysis of Turkish Startups

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Article Information	Abstract
	Startups often fail due to the lack of successful marketing strategies as it directly effects their business growth. This paper aims to explore the awareness and the propensity of digital marketing approach in technology-oriented entrepreneurship toward inbound-outbound marketing techniques. In this regard, a qualitative analysis is adopted to two selected startups through case studies. Data is collected by in-dept interviews and documentary analysis is used considering qualitative nature. The results are presented toward content analysis as data-treatment technique. The empirical evidence obtained identifies that the digital marketing implemented by startups is quite low, moreover, the importance and the advantages like running cost and customer value creation are not recognized yet. The study also releases that traditional marketing is preferred within digital marketing and traditional marketing feeds and even captures both inbound and outbound marketing techniques. The contribution of this study is to propose an integrative and holistic model for entrepreneurs with the combination of traditional and digital marketing approach. The model can be accepted as a useful tool to improve the marketing management competencies of startups and guide the marketing activities concurrently.

INTRODUCTION

Recently digital technological development and extensive usage of internet forced marketing strategies to be reviewed or adopted. Following that improvement, inbound and outbound marketing showed up as the latest strategies of this new marketing approach. Academic research (Ryan & Jones, 2009; Zhao & Zhu, 2010; Hernández et al., 2010; Florès, 2014; Yang et al., 2015; Patrutiu-Baltes, 2016; Weinberg & Pehlivan, 2011; Tiago & Verissimo, 2014; Opreana & Vinerean, 2015; Balu, 2015; Kumar & Reinartz, 2016; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Kannan & Li, 2017) subsequently focused on that latest marketing concept. However, in practical side it seems not very clear to define and differentiate inbound and outbound marketing techniques, therefore some activities are listed in gray zone (Bleoju et al., 2016).

Digital marketing techniques are based on cost saving business model comparative to traditional marketing and thus marketing managers tend to prefer this new approach to minimize marketing budget (Ho & Dempsey, 2010 ; Tiago & Verissimo, 2014). It is blessing for entrepreneurs as well, since seed-funds are very limited and not easy to access. Startups as technology-oriented entrepreneurship have their unique business models (Shontell, 2014) so it is difficult for them to manage the marketing plans via standard and traditional point of view. Moreover, business ideas of startups are generally actualized with technology (Graham, 2012; Robehmed, 2013) and a startup team is formed by technology-oriented individuals. All over that, it seems tenable to adopt the digital marketing techniques that are more relevant to technology compared to traditional marketing.

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Furthermore, there is a big issue for startups as they are missing something which is vital for them to be survivable and sustainable. Since they keep on continuing without "a good marketing plan" it is inevitable for them to fail rapidly in short notice (Baker & Sinkula, 2005; Querishi et al., 2017; Hills et al., 2008; Picken, 2017).

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the digital marketing efforts of selected two startups and to observe their propensity to adopt toward inbound–outbound marketing techniques. It is aimed to make a deep understanding for both approaches through their advantages on running cost or customer value creation (Ryan & Jones, 2009; Zhao & Zhu, 2010; Weinberg & Pehlivan, 2011; Yamamoto, 2012; Tiago & Verissimo, 2014) In doing so, it is also observed whether the propensity to these ma are differed in two models or not. The examination aimed in this research can be accepted remarkably crucial for startups striving to be scalable with a limited marketing budget. The main issue is to examine digital marketing level recognized and to provide an awareness of this new marketing approach to startups. Regarding this issue, research questions are listed below:

RQ1: Do startups use digital marketing techniques (outbound or inbound marketing)?

RQ2: Do startups know the difference between outbound and inbound marketing? Which technique they prefer to use?

The organization of this paper as follows. First of all, digital marketing is overviewed theoretically including emerging process of inbound/outbound marketing concept. In next part, methodology and collected data are given based on qualitative research methods. Discussion part presents results which are revealed and findings are evaluated. In final part, limitations, managerial and academic implications are put forward. Suggestions are highlighted for startup entrepreneurs and further studies in conclusion.

Digital marketing has raised through the evolvement of internet since direct marketing techniques transferred to the computer environment (Scott 2013; Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán 2016). This one-side communication -outbound marketing - has turned to an interactive way after Web 2.0 (social web) has aroused due to fast growing technology (Shivalingaiah & Naik, 2009; Aghaei et al., 2012; Pattnayak & Pattnaik, 2016; Newman et al, 2016). However, this transfer did not make consumers happy and direct access was defined as disturbing way. Research of

Voltier Digital mentioned the issues as follows (Drell, 2011); 84% of people aged between 25-34 leave the website immediately when they reach an intrusive or irrelevant ad. Also, they start to unfollow the website. 200 million of US citizens informed Federal Trade Commission to register their phone number as "Do Not Call" list. 86% of TV watchers change the channel when an advertisement is appeared. 91% of e-mail users unsubscribe from a firm website that they just opted into. 44% of direct e-mails are deleted without open.

Seth Godin first called Permission Marketing in 1999 after these disrupter marketing activities have been aroused (Godin, 1999). According to these advances, he also added Interruption Marketing to the literature. In 2006, Brian Halligan and Dharmesh Shah first announced inbound marketing when social web has focused to 'content' to arrange the relationship with customers or potential customers (Halligan and Shah, 2006). It is the time when they have founded HubSpot digital agency and people were complaining about pushing marketing strategies of companies.

Inbound vs. Outbound Marketing

Inbound marketing focuses to turn the internet surfers to the brand fans first by taking their attention then providing sustainable relationship based on trust, sincerity and loyalty. Potential customers manage this process intentionally and no pushing strategy is used. The main issue is to protect interest, attraction and attention (Halligan & Shah, 2006). It is a value-oriented approach beside to increase sales and profit (Bezhovski, 2015; Rancati et al., 2015; Opreana ve Vinerean, 2015; Patrutiu-Baltes, 2016). It is also called HubSpot Methodology designed by Halligan & Shah for inbound marketing (HubSpot, 2020)

The main distinctness of inbound marketing is the way to meet the potential customers. Potentials or leads intentionally get in touch with the brand and this interaction results organic traffic. The customer is in the core to arrange long-lived relationship with the brand (Bezhovski, 2015; Rancati et al, 2015; Opreana & Vinerean, 2015; Patrutiu-Baltes, 2016). Opreana & Vinerean (2015) called it digital inbound marketing as it is impossible to apply this new approach techniques without digital stages.

Since inbound and outbound marketing have reached the place in the literature, basic qualifications are defined under each marketing approach by academic view (Goodwin, 2013; Rancati et al., 2015; Bleoju et al., 2016; Patrutiu-

Baltes, 2016) as shown in Figure1.

Figure 1. Comparison of Basic Qualifications of Inbound vs. Outbound Marketing

Outbound marketing is the way to continue traditional marketing strategies on digital environment. Its most risky side can be accepted as spending effort to the audience beside the main target market. Because of this inefficient way, the main message is shared to all beside the one targeted. E-mail, paid ads, TV, radio, print, tele marketing and cold calls are outbound marketing techniques (Goodwin, 2013).

Content is the backbone to engage with the people in this new type of marketing. Today a story is expected behind an advertisement to reveal a feeling and this feeling creates value. Especially in social media marketing this situation is observed (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016, Pulizi, 2011). Content marketing includes blogs, whitepapers, videos, webinars, podcasts, webcasts (Halligan & Shah, 2010). According to statistics, 45% of people-3.484 billion- all around the world are social media users (WeareSocial, 2019). Search engine optimization (SEO) channels are providing internet surfers to reach the results of their search and indexing. Organic traffic is coming from that indexing issue when the popularity of a brand increases, it achieves high ranks in Google search inherently. To manage successful inbound marketing techniques and to provide a durable relationship with customers, good technical infrastructure is needed and critical metrics should be measured frequently (Ölker, 2014).

It seems ads and pros of both techniques are not still taken into consideration by practitioners. They have difficulty to differentiate them and therefore a gray zone has appeared (Bleoju et al., 2016). May be the implementation of both techniques reveal the difference. In this regard, according to inbound marketing rules, content is the king and carries a special message to the targeted customer. However, in print ad, content is not designed for the one, it is for any-one else in the target market. Although it is time-consuming (but not for long-run as it creates brand value) and needs creativity, its strength is to be cost-saving at the end of the day and contributes to sustainable relationship via custom-made messages for customers. Table 1 shows classification of both marketing techniques and gray zone which has overlapping position between two.

Startups & Growth Strategies

The importance of marketing for startups is being paid attention day by day since the top failure of their business models is driven from lack of marketing applications. Blank (2006) mentions customer development process for startups as customer discovery-customer validation and customer creation. Merely a startup gets the chance to turn to a corporate company and comes to the end of execution process (Blank, 2006). Business Model Canvas (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010) is the tool to be used for communicating with the customers till the day 1 of a startup foundation (Blank and Dorf, 2012). By pivoting, startups are trying to get the best business model that this interactive process enables startup to achieve product-market fit (Blank, 2006; Blank and Dorf, 2012; Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2012; Ries; 2011). Minimum viable product (Ries, 2011) is the way to provide this communication with the customer to launch the end-product to the market and therefore this process is very important to manage for startups with very limited budget using in prototyping. However for some side, lean approach (Ries, 2011) has accepted as time consuming and delaying product launch (Ertemel, 2016).

According to giant market growth of startups like Facebook, Amazon and Google, the ranking of highest brand values of global companies has ultimately changed. Since 2016, Coca-Cola have left top three seats to this new-world companies. Coca-Cola also announced to hire a Chief Growth Officer and decided to replace the chief marketing officer role with it. This is really a big step as a global FMCG giant has been focusing on this new marketing approach.

"…It is a sign of a transformation at the brand as it moves from being a classic beverage company to a tech company…." (Roderick, 2017)

Amazon as having top growing scale has a proactive marketing approach as foreseeing customer expressed needs and moves beyond them to latent ones (Narver et al., 2004). Inbound marketing is highly preferred by Amazon and furthermore as via Amazon Web Services, the company

increases its product range by providing inbound marketing tools to startups and other firms.

METHOD

Since it is aimed to identify and explore digital marketing strategies based on inbound and outbound techniques in startups, a qualitative multiple case study (Freeman & Cavusgil, 2007; Yin, 2009) is the appropriate one for this research to investigate the phenomenon of different structured startup companies with the real-life context. Case studies with greater depth and data enable to explore the whole business process in detail. In that purpose, a qualitative research design is adopted by case studies on two selected startups. Data collecting instruments are interviews and content analysis is used as data treatment technique.

According to previous study of Şahin (2018), it was concluded that startups have weak intention to apply digital marketing strategies and need more effort to benefit from these techniques. Therefore, this study applied a qualitative investigative methodology to observe the contexts and content of the activities comprising digital marketing efforts.

Startup firm selection is the key issue as it has a crucial point of this research (Yin, 2009). For firm selection, it is paid attention to four criteria (Yin, 2009) as the firms should fit to startup definition; the firms should be accessible; the firms should have a market share and sales volume; the firm should be aware of digital marketing techniques (at least have a website) and the reason to determine these criteria is to make a pre-assessment of appropriate firms for gathering relevant information for the research question.

To obtain diversity, multiple cases are preferred to strengthen the results. Startup firms are selected from two different industries to investigate the sector affect. Startups selected for the research sample have their own success story as they pass the Death Valley and became scalable. Therefore, it is assumed that they have market volume and marketing efforts. Here success criteria is not determined strictly however product-market fit is accepted as the main and core dimension of success for a startup (Blank and Dorf, 2012)

Data Collection & Analysis

For data collection semi-structured interviews are used as it is more flexible and manageable according to unpredictable replies. Interviewees are the founders of startups as in the firm structure, the departments are not matured yet as they are still in customer development process (Blank and Dorf, 2012)

The interviews were arranged via company visits during 20 – 28 February 2020. It took approximately 45-60 min. It is aimed to get the sufficient information as much as possible therefore planned to spend time in the company after the completion of interview as an observer. This process took half an hour. As the research focus is to investigate the digital marketing techniques, data was also collected via website, social media and other digital instruments.

To get reliable results, a formal interview guide was developed and used before data collection process (Yin, 2009).

Purposive sampling is used (Patton, 2002). Semi-structured interviews are designed based on the gudielines by Smith (Smith, 1995).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Case #1:

In first case, we are analysing a startup located in one of the leading technoparks of Ankara. It is facilitating in defence sector and founded in 2015. The founder is mechanical engineer and failed with another business idea before. He is more related with technical design and production process in the beginning however recently, when they start to grow, this task has shifted to project engineers. The vision of the startup is to become the leader of the market in the area of electro-optic systems. At the moment, total number of employees are seven and 5 of them are engineers including 2 mechanical design engineers, 2 electronic design engineers, 1 optical design engineer. Founder and CEO is responsible from all staff and there isn't an organizational structure designed professionally. According to the current management style, he informs us more about the situation as below:

"*Sometimes I really get muddled as I am dealing with everything. So, I call myself as Chief Everything Officer! I check the bills, learned accounting. I control the orders and contact with suppliers. For marketing, I designed our logo, read many books about branding and I even tried to use Google AdWords, but I failed. I decided to outsource it and now a digital marketing agency is following all these issue…*"

The company has an active website however the content is not very rich. A general information about the company includes a short history and mission/vision part. A button for products and communication box are observed. There is not a whitepaper or blog about the sector or current news. Also, only Linkedin is used among social media channels.

SEO isn't be managed properly by startup as the team doesn't have time to provide any content. Digital marketing agent can give this service however it is another type of cost. Therefore, the founder decided not to pay for that as they can handle it however no special effort is spending for creating organic traffic. When searching the startup in Google, it becomes directly front. Most probably SEM enables this action.

The reply behind the reason of not considering on and underestimating the digital marketing activities is explained like that;

"..in our sector, the target market is included mostly government and the enterprises of Turkish Armed Forces Foundation. And in this market, network is very important for us as gatekeepers are very tough…"

In this regard, it seems that relationships and key people are important assets in startup's marketing strategy. To get a meeting appointment seems hard to arrange and therefore the founder explains the situation that he uses most of his time for formal visits and telephone calls.

As the target market's needs and wants are mostly announced by official tenders, the quantities of products purchased are generally in high volumes. And also, many purchasing processes are based on special agreements. They work in project-based system and implementation process can be in long terms so product delivery can take time.

In this regard, it can be said that this startup is operating in industrial market and the marketing strategy is determined based on B2B rules. However, B2B markets differ from consumer markets and therefore companies need more effort to create superior value for customers based on a good marketing plan (Flint et al., 2002)

Startup follows the traditional marketing tactics by preferring to use print-ads which are still common in digital era. The founder says:

"… we use brochures mostly, when we are going to a visit or a meeting, we take the brochures and sometimes send it by post in special days or when asked for by our customers. We try to attend international fairs and exhibitions often so in our stand we use brochures, flyers and roll-ups. It is same for national fairs and private meetings as well…"

Mass communication tools like TV or radio advertising are not preferred by the company as it costs too much. The founder also emphasizes that startup is founded by bootstrapping and no seed funding is demanded outside. And he also added that when he failed before, his previous enterprises was founded by governmental entrepreneurship support grant.

Customer type of the startup is generally related with government, however there are few private companies as well. The founder insistently repeat that customer relations are very important for them. However, they do not have marketing department and the main activity is to maintain good communication with clients. It is not inappropriate when isaid that key account manager is at the same time marketing manager and founder as well.

Case #2:

Second startup in our sample is not a technopark firm. It is located in eldest industrial zone of Ankara. Foundation year is 2015. Since that time, they keep going to grow and now become a team with fifteen members. It is facilitating in digital platforms as an internet startup and its sector is e-trade. In this e-trade website, the product range is wide as included many electronic materials and equipment. There are approximately 4000 different products. The brand is also available via Android and IOS devices. The founder also told the story of the company.

"… the main starting point was to create a marketplace for the products that we manufactured ourselves. These products were robots and robot kits at first. Then we added Makeblock Sets, MicroBit Sets and others. Those are all education sets for children for applied education in schools and workplaces…"

According to that reply, we assume that the target market is children. However, the founder found this comment deficient.

"… the elder people who like to have this type of products as a hobby are also our target customers. Therefore, not only the students from primary schools to university, also whole people related with our robot kits are in our focus…"

Startup is a good example to B2C firms although they service raw materials to manufactures in defence sector like a supplier. However, the manufacturers also use the website and order online but not in high volumes. The main concept is marketplace for direct consumers.

"… we would like to encourage people to go beyond their dreams. For example, they have a project, with our materials, they can make a prototype or our teaching materials make students to see the reality instead of drawing a design project on paper. We also have education sets that accelerate the teaching processes…"

For academia part, they have another website linked to the main one. Here there are blogs and contents related to education materials and

kits. No whitepapers are observed in the website as it is more preferred by the firms in a specific sector.

Social media channels are intensively used by the company since there are Linkedin, Youtube and Instagram accounts. The founder informs that they have a budget approximately 20.000 TL / per month for SEM activities. They outsource SEM and Google display ads management to a digital marketing agency firm.

For SEO, they found it very important and they are also aware the difficulty to create a qualified content. A/B testing tools for UX (user experience) optimization and its contribution to marketing is known by the entrepreneur (York, 2018). However, at the moment, they do not have a person only related with this issue and the graphic designer tries to spend time for content marketing. They do not have a separate budget for this operation and digital marketing agency don't give SEO services neither.

"… I specially care about contents, sometimes I wrote a blog or post. However, in general our graphic designer follows it. We do not have a marketing manager or department. Digital marketing is a big tool in today's world. I found old-school marketing activities redundant and no valid anymore. Everything has become digitalized and no need to spend money to attending fairs for today. We don't use TV or radio channels for marketing as well. Instead of them, webinars or podcasts are more useful…"

Although they see the traditional marketing activities unnecessary, they regularly plan visits to their customers. Those customers are generally the schools that purchase their products. So, they still use the personel selling techniques as informed that they can take a new order after their meeting.

Another tactic to make the customers feel pleasured and special is to add a little gift inside the cargo box servicing order. This gift can be an instant coffee pouch or a chocolate. Wet wipes are the latest gifts they send nowadays. E-mail marketing is still used for launching a new product or to celebrate birthdays or special days.

Moreover, brochures/fliers are put in every cargo box as its function is to inform the customer about e-invoice process. Also, for education kits, manual guides are sent with the order. Therefore, printed materials are still popular and preferred. They also make sponsorship agreements and place contracted brands on the brochures and fliers.

The founder believes that 2020 is the year to become global for the company as they did not make export till today. However, they plan to arrange the infrastructure and start the operations within this year. Berlin can be a hub point for delivery in Europe as they are still in communications with collaborators.

Comparison of Cases and Discussion

In previous part, results are released after the content analysis is completed. In this section cross-case analysis is implemented and findings are compared with each other case as shown in Table 2. Digital marketing aspects of each startup are put in appearance comparatively and results are discussed in line with previous academic studies.

Both founders in the cases are related with all marketing activities of the company as in accordance with theoretical consideration (Morrish et al., 2010). The vision of the entrepreneurs and the sector of startups affect the aspect of digital marketing activities and it seems that they differ each other. According to the results, first startup (Case #1) is far from digital marketing activities, and furthermore not only digital side but also traditional marketing activities are not intense totally.

For the latter startup (Case #2), most of the marketing activities consist of digital marketing activities. This result supports the approach of Blank and Dorf (2012) as they are defending that ICT startups have propensity to use digital marketing tools. Moreover, digital marketing activities are not in priority in Case #1. In fact, this approach is same for whole marketing activities and this negligence management function is the answer why startups fail in a short time (Querishi et al., 2017; Baker and Sinkula, 2005; Hills et al., 2008; Picken, 2017).It consists of the research design (the method, the data, the data source, the data collecting technique, the data analysis technique, the variables measurement) that written in the form of a paragraph.

Stokes (2013) added one more P to 4P marketing mix since in digital word people are getting place in the mix as 5th P. In Case #2, the founder is aware of the importance of customer interaction as they are trying to increase SEO activities. Toward content marketing, the tools like blogs, podcasts and webinars are in the focus of the startup's marketing plan. However, there is not a qualified employee who is responsible for content marketing. The graphic designer and the founder are contributing for this task together. Neither the first startup nor the second one has a marketing department because of resour-

ce allocation and cost item. They behave as an unstructured organization (Moriarty et al. 2008; Gilmore et al, 2001). In large companies, this issue is taken into consideration and followed very strictly to provide a sustainable communication with the customers (Kannan ve Li, 2017; Tankosic et al., 2016).

Both startups are still using traditional marketing strategies. Especially, the founder in Case #1 take into consideration of key account customers and relationship marketing (Grönross, 1994). To have a strong relationship with customers, mostly the founder makes visits or telephone calls regularly since network is very important for the startup in defense sector (Rocks et al., 2005). In Case #2, it is observed that the founder wants to have a sustainable relationship with the customer and performs to be involved emotionally. The little chocolate in the cargo box is directly refer to Marketing 4.0 (Kotler et al., 2016) strategies to create superior customer value (Narver et al., 2004). Print ads like brochures are used by both startups. In Case #1, the founder uses brochures in customer visits and in Case #2 brochures are sent within cargo for both advertising and product information and also used for sponsorship (Mazodier et al., 2012).

First startup has an active website as the main and core activity of digital marketing. However, the content is not very rich as no whitepaper or blog is included in the website. So, it can be said that it is an outbound marketing strategy that a one-way website is used just to push information to customer. Also SEM is a cost item in Case #1 may be it is easier to manage as getting it as a service from digital marketing agency. Unless the founder is aware of the benefits of SEO (inbound marketing) as cost saving items in long-run, he is spending more money only applying SEM (outbound marketing). However inbound marketing tools are cost-saving and value-oriented compared to outbound techniques (Bezhovski, 2015; Rancati et al., 2015; Opreana ve Vinerean, 2015; Patrutiu-Baltes, 2016).

In Case #2, the website consists of attractive information to pull the leads and get their contact information to turn this first date to a long-live relationship. Although the digital marketing activities are observed in Case #2, the interviewee is not aware the difference between outbound and inbound marketing and even didn't hear the terms before. As in practical side, the difference of outbound and inbound marketing is still in gray zone (Bleoju et al., 2016). The founder of e-trade startup is implementing inbound marketing tools – blog, content, podcast, webinar- and mentions the importance of the approach but doesn't define it formally. He also tries to create organic traffic and make an emotional relationship with the customer to turn them to brandfans (Nelson-Field et al., 2012). As in HubSpot methodology, the potential customers are first turn to customer and then, after the company can touch the heart of the customer, they become brandfans. Brandfans also directly increase the brand loyalty (HubSpot, 2020).

For today, viral marketing is managed by both companies and customers as well. A happy customer plays big role to increase the reputation of the company. When she shares her good experience with the brand, it enables to send the message by personally rather than mass communication channels that cost much to the company (Ho & Dempsey, 2010). It takes seconds to reach huge followers by a hashtag or a tweet as social media is the big gun for it. In Case #2, the founder of startup is aware of all and implies marketing tactics in this regard.

Furhermore, in Case #2, omni channel marketing is applied since the company has an online application in Android and IOS devices. This is related with the approach to conduct a sustainable brand communication and maintain customer satisfaction concurrently via different channels (Juaneda-Ayensa et al., 2016; Fairchild, 2014; Li et al., 2015)

The startup of Case #2 is defined as pure player due to the fact that it operates only in internet (Bleoju et al., 2016). In pure players to manage the operations online make them more organized and more customer oriented instead of being product oriented (Florès, 2014). This theoretical consideration is supported in Case #2 as marketing strategies are more focused to improve customer relationship and create superior value than in Case #1. Also, pure players are expected to have more propensity to inbound marketing due to their growth hacking skills (Bleoju et al., 2016) and in line with Bleuoju et al. (2016), it is also supported in our research.

When technopark effect is analyzed, it seems that the entrepreneurs never mentioned the role of technoparks on marketing activities during the interviews. Technoparks have become crucial actors of entrepreneurship ecosystem however in the research, it is observed that there is no direct effect of facilitating inside a technopark zone for marketing activities as the startup of Case # 1 which is operating in technopark has low marketing activities then the startup of Case # 2 which is located outside technopark.

Table 1. Classification of Inbound vs. Outbound Techniques

Inbound Marketing	Outbound Marketing	Gray Zone
Content marketing	Print Ads	E-mail marketing
Blog marketing	Direct mailings	Display advertising
SEO	Outbound call center	Search engine ads
Social media marketing	TV	Social media
Viral marketing	Radio advertising	Mobil marketing
Podcasts	Intrusive online ads	
Webinar	SEM	

Table 2 Cross-Case Analysis

	Case #1	Case #2
Marketing Department	No organized department	No organized department
Marketing Manager	The founder (informal)	The founder (informal)
Marketing Personnel	None	Graphic Designer
Marketing Budget	Very Low	Midlevel
Marketing Type	Traditional + Digital	Traditional + Digital
Distribution Equilibrium	Traditional marketing techniques are more intensive than digital marketing. Also, outbound marketing techniques are more preferred. Generally, startup marketing activities are not enough.	Digital marketing, especially inbound marketing propensity is more preferred. The approach of the founder is to create superior value. Traditional marketing tools are also used for CRM and brand-loyalty.
Traditional Marketing Techniques	Customer visits, print-ads, sales promotion (fairs)	Sponsorship, print-ads, sales promotion (gifts), customer visits
Outboud Marketing Techniques	website, SEM, e-mail marketing, display-ads	website, e-mail marketing, display-ads
Inbound Marketing Techniques	Social Media (Only Linkedin), direct mailing	SEO, Blogs, Content Marketing, Social Media, Viral Marketing
Technopark Effect to Marketing Activities	None	None

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The aim of this research is to examine the digital marketing approach in startups based on inbound and outbound marketing strategies. In this regard, two selected startups located in Ankara are analyzed as they are performing this new type or marketing and take marketing decisions consciously in line with these approaches.

In this regard, an empirical evidence has proved that startups are not aware the subdimensions of digital marketing. In theoretical considerations, outbound and inbound marketing tools have taken place and the tools are already defined in literature. However, in our cases, even Case #2 is implying inbound marketing strategies, startups are not familiar to terminology. Therefore, the contribution of this paper to managerial side can be accepted as the introduction of the digital marketing terms to practical aspect.

The results of the study also proved that the startups are using traditional marketing strategies together with digital marketing. In Case #1 where digital marketing techniques are comparatively low, the main tactic is to proceed the regular key account customer visits.

The entrepreneur in Case #2 has a propensity to digital marketing strategies and as a founder of e-trade startup he defends that traditional marketing is not efficient anymore, however he is still using traditional marketing techniques like personel selling and sales promotion. They make customer visits, use printed ads and sponsorship techniques on brochures and fliers. Also, in special days or access limit of shopping, they offer discounts to the customers which is one of the main traditional marketing tactics under sales promotion to sustain brand loyalty (Mazodier et al., 2012; Gommans et al., 2001).

This study reveals that digital marketing is not disported from traditional tactics of marketing as marketing promotion tools can be provided on online platforms concurrently. Since advertising is actualized on social media channels or webinars can be listed under publicity. Gray zone (Bleoju et al., 2016) can be defined as the intersection of two clusters which are outbound and inbound marketing. According to these findings, an integrative and holistic model shown in Fig.2 is developed to enlighten startup entrepreneurs about marketing strategies.
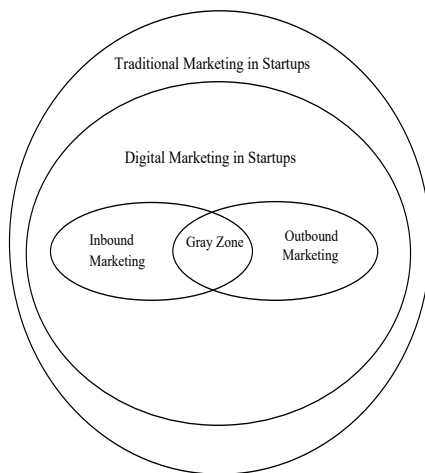

Figure 2. Traditional Marketing and Digital Marketing in Startups

This model also aims to decrease the confusion about the marketing concept for entrepreneurs and lead them to follow an integrative way while they are improving their marketing plans. Moreover, it should not be limited to guide for entrepreneurs only and should be accepted as a guide for large scale organizations. Inbound and outbound marketing strategies differ each other, however it seems difficult for some actions to determine which type of marketing it is. Therefore,

gray zone is offered for these techniques by Bleoju et al (2016) and it is useful. In line with the results, this research represents the conceptual model that traditional marketing is never given up and even capture the digital marketing activities. It can be concluded that traditional marketing is feeding the digital marketing in both (outbound/inbound) respects.

The first limitation of the research is the sample number as only two cases are deeply examined in this study. It is recommended to enlarge the sample size for future investigations to generalize the findings and to fill the research gap in startup studies.

In addition, this research will also make contribution especially to the managerial side as in practice, the entrepreneurs are not aware the concepts although they use these strategies. The main objective of the study is to analyze this awareness. This objective is achieved although the sample volume is low.

In brief, for further academic studies, it is suggested to (1) utilize a larger sample, (2) a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to get stronger and statistical analysis and (3) extend the variables to be examined since startups are lack of marketing issues and dimensions should be investigated. More future studies provide more conceptual models to lead startups in taking marketing actions.

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