Use of marketing communication tools by micro and small enterprises

A case study based on three small restaurants in Umeå

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ABSTRACT

Changing and development characterize all areas of life in contemporary world, also businesses have begun to move from traditional marketing approaches to relationship marketing which is a customer based approach. New marketing strategies and application have developed for reaching more customers and keeping existing customers. Marketing communication tools are one of these marketing strategies. However, the application of these strategies like marketing communication tools is based on enterprises’ budget. In this context, small enterprises are more influenced than large organizations as relating to high costs.

This study examines a fundamental issue using marketing communication tools by small businesses, i.e., the functions such tools to build new customers or keep existing customers. I argue that small firms face some challenges applying marketing communication tools such as, financial limitations and lack of marketing experience. In addition, the fact that small firms struggle with these limitations has been studied through this study.

A qualitative research strategy has been applied with the semi-structured interviews to collect the data for this study. In order to collect data for this study appropriate sampling strategy was used and this study includes primary data about three micro and small restaurants that are available and accessible in the environment that is in northern Sweden, Umeå. The interviews have been structured based on the previous theories identified in marketing communication tools.

To summarize, basing on analyzing findings the most used marketing communication tools advertising, Internet and sales promotion by three small restaurants and financial limitations have been most important barriers to apply marketing communication tools by small restaurant businesses. Because of this reason, small sized restaurants have not used marketing communication tools according to their needs. The results of this study also show that although the importance of marketing communication tools is known by small firms, but these businesses cannot encourage for improving their marketing activities because of challenging limitations. For improving the known potential efficiency of marketing communication tools for small firms, marketing communication tools should be used as professionally by small firms and small firms should separate budget to use these tools.

**Key words:** Marketing; Marketing Communication Tools; Micro and Small Enterprises; Applying of Marketing Communication Tools
1. INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter, it will be introduced the topic of this thesis: using marketing communication tools by micro and small sized enterprises. I will describe the reasoning behind the choice of subject and the practical relevance of the chosen topic. Furthermore, I will formulate the research question and elaborate on the purpose of this study. Finally, I will recognize scope and limitations of this study.

1.1. Choice of Subject

My personal observation about small enterprises restaurants has inspired me to write a thesis on this topic. I have first observed these enterprises when reading advertisement page about local restaurants at local newspaper. Lot of restaurants are in Umeå that its population is not over 100,000. I have realized that how they compete with each other in the small city. It could be interesting studying with micro and small sized restaurants from the marketing perspective.

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (the shortening SME will be used hereinafter) signify 99 per cent of all businesses in the European Union (European commission, 2017). It means that SMEs play major role of the European economy. They create job and ensure economic growth and social stability. “In 2013, over 21 million SMEs provided 88.8 million jobs throughout the EU” (European Union, SME Definition - user guide, 2015, p. 3). The SMEs contribute vitally to the country economically and socially. Many countries encourage them due to this contribution. Because, “Nine out of every 10 enterprises are an SME, and SMEs generate two out of every three jobs” (European Union, SME Definition - user guide, 2015, p. 3). Recently years, the importance of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises have been more understood. Therefore, EU policy focus on more SMEs to promote entrepreneurship and improve business environment for SMEs (European Union, SME Definition - user guide, 2015, p. 3). However, SMEs have many problems comparing with larger businesses, such as lack of financial resources and lack of management skills (European Union, SME Definition - user guide, 2015, p. 5). Marketing activities are affected significantly by these problems. For example, SMEs do not give enough attention to marketing activities and marketing spending is not evaluated as an investment by the owner-manager of SMEs. In addition, the owner-manager of SMEs neglect training of owner-manager and staff about marketing. For instance, many micro, small and medium enterprises have not got marketing expert or marketing communication manager lack of financial resources. Therefore, owners are usually making last decisions about business and using of marketing communications tools. Besides owners, close friends, and family members are effective on using of marketing communication tools in small organizations (Gilmore et al., 2001, p. 11). I realized that marketing communication tools cannot be used professionally and successfully at micro and small enterprises.

When searching for scientific literature on the topic, I realized that marketing communication tools and using of them by larger businesses are indeed discussed by different authors. On the other hand, I discovered that there is a lack of research on using of marketing communication tools by micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. As indicated, numerous restaurants are in Umeå, it is nice for the city, but also hard when they competing with each other according to marketing communication tools.
Because of these reasons, I aimed to show that micro and small enterprises can give good reputation to the publicity about their business for rising theirs’ sales and providing new customer and keep existing customer through marketing communication tools.

1.2. Problem Background and Knowledge Gap

According to the definition of European Commission “The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million” (European Union, SME Definition - user guide, 2015). A micro-enterprise has fewer than 10 employees and has a balance sheet or turnover less than EUR 2 million euro. A small-enterprise has fewer than 50 employees and has a balance sheet or turnover less than EUR 10 million euro. Lastly, a medium-sized enterprise has fewer than 250 employees and has a balance sheet less than EUR 43 million and turnover less than EUR 50 million” (European Union, SME Definition - user guide, 2015, p. 11).

According to European Commission’ definition a-micro business includes in the category of SMEs, hence a-micro business is identified as SMEs in this study. SMEs refer a-micro business too.

Most of businesses can be described as small business in Sweden. There are close to 70 per cent of companies have fewer than 10 employees. On the other hand, 1.5 percent of companies have 250 employees or more. These numbers reflect the small entrepreneurial companies in Sweden. These enterprises are in the service sector i.e. are construction, hotel, and restaurant (Svensk Näringsliv, 2017).

Many researchers have explained marketing communication differently. Kotler & Keller, (2009, p. 510) emphasized that marketing communications is informing and reminding directly or indirectly to customers about what marketing actions of businesses sell. It should be understood clearly which communications tools are more appropriate for their businesses for reaching their customers by marketers, because there are a lot of communication tools for businesses. The other definition of marketing communication is stated by Varey, marketing communication provides information about the business and the product to target customers (2002, p. 4).

The aim of marketing communication to inform, persuade and remind for reaching target audiences (Fill, 1999, p. 4). Marketing communication is a part of management discipline that helps to organizations to enter into a dialogue with its various audiences (Fill, 1999, p. 13). The role of marketing communication can be defined as recognized the increasing role the organization plays in the marketing process and the impact that organizational factors can have on the minds of consumers. (Fill, 1999, p. 12).

There are many researchers on marketing communication in different dimensions, each with its own mission and goal. One of them is marketing communications provide opportunity for the firms to persuade target customers about their goods and services (Yeshi, 2003, p. 4). The other definition is that marketing communications is occurred with some series of promotional activities such as personal selling, advertising, public relation and sales promotion (Slyvester, 2000, p. 11).
Marketing communications undergone changed within time. In previous, marketing communication mostly has consisted of printed media i.e., newspapers this tool has continued nowadays. With the development of industrializing, companies need to serve wider market and differentiate their marketing communication tools to compete with the competitor (Yeshi, 2003, p. 4). For example, public relations, sales promotions and personal selling. These tools have been getting important as much as advertisements as well (Slyvester, 2000, p. 11).

Although, SMEs cannot full use the marketing communication functions and the other marketing tools because of lack of professional experts, but, marketing communications is crucial for these enterprises. Also, marketing theories are not enough understandable to apply of marketing communication tools by small businesses (Walsh & Lipinski, 2009, p. 571).

Additionally, most of the theories about marketing communications in academic researches and textbooks are focused greatly on large organizations rather than small ones. On the other hand, SMEs have adapted and used marketing communications and its tools to be able to meet their needs (Gilmore et al., 2001, p. 11; Harrigan et al., 2011, p. 128).

When searching the literature on using marketing communication tools, I have faced the lack of related theories about using marketing communication tools by small businesses. Therefore, I aimed to contribute to theoretical and to provide practical contribution to owners-managers of micro and small sized businesses.

Listed above of these constraints have leaded to focus my research on practical contribution on deeper understanding to owner-manager meet theoretical. Research indicates the context of using marketing communication tools by the micro and small enterprises and how owner-manager use marketing communication tools for competing with other restaurants.

1.3. Problem Statement

Based on the problem background the research question has been formulated which is underlined below.

“How do micro and small enterprises apply marketing communication tools as a part of their marketing?”

1.4. Research Purpose

Purpose of the research is to examine which marketing communication tools that could be used in small restaurant businesses in Umeå. It could help exploring some new information about using of marketing communication tools by small businesses.

The study aims to achieve the following:

- Examine using of marketing communication tools in terms of micro and small enterprises.
- How do micro and small enterprises apply different marketing communication tools in Umeå?
- Which marketing communication tools are practiced by micro and small enterprises in Umeå?
- Are there any barriers from using marketing communication tools by micro and small enterprises in Umeå?

1.5. Scope and Limitations of the Study

As I have written this study by self, the study was conducted in a limited time that could restrict me looking for this study from a wider perspective. Because of limited time, the research has been restricted with three small local restaurants in Umeå. Additionally, convenient sampling strategy with three samples from Northern Sweden was used to collect data, which made it difficult to generalize it to the whole population. Moreover, lack of source and information about marketing communication practices of micro and small enterprises was the other important limitation of this study. Within the limited research that I have identified as relevant in the context of this study, because previous researches related to marketing communication tools have mostly been focused on large and multinational organizations.

In the marketing communications context, I have not considered any factor besides managerial perspective, where other factors like consumer behavior can also influence using marketing communication tools. The using of marketing communication tools has been limited to the context of management attitudes and micro and small enterprises. However, within these limitations I have tried to collect vast amount of empirical data that can help to make a conclusion out of it.

1.6. Outline of the Study

This study consists of eight different chapters. The chapter one includes introduction parts, it has background of marketing communication tools, the research purpose and limitations of this study. The chapter two introduces theoretical framework, the literature review of marketing communication tools and managing of marketing communication tools. The chapter three covers which methodology chosen for reaching primary data for the thesis was expressed. The chapter four is about practical method, it includes collecting data, selected sample, data processing and analyzing and ethical issues was considered in this study. In chapter five, the author presents the empirical results which obtained from the collecting data. In chapter six and seven includes analyzing and conclusion parts. Within this part collected data was discussed for answering research question clearly. Last chapter is eight, the quality criteria of the study is presented.
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section includes relevant theories that are related to research question. Starting from the general overview on marketing communication tools, and definitions about marketing communication tools used by micro and small sized businesses. The theories will go step by step to the specific points of the subject.

2.1 Overview Marketing Communication Tools

In recent years the importance of marketing communications has grown. The technological developments and customers’ fragmentation have effected this growth. “Marketing communications represent the “voice” of the company and its brands and are a means by which it can establish a dialogue and build relationships with consumers” (Kotler & Keller, 2009, p. 510).

The development of technology, communication and logistics and the diversification of demand and choice of customer lead building closer relationships with customers and understanding their demand and expectations by companies. Moreover, rapidly increasing communication possibilities cause difficulties to reach target audiences through the right channel and the most effective way, and the increasing of costs and whereas consumers’ changing and raising communication demands have accelerated the seeking on communication of companies. The result of seeking the concept of marketing communication has emerged (Kotler & Keller, 2009, p. 510). The aim of marketing communications is to inform, persuade, and remind consumers directly or indirectly about the goods and services (Kotler & Keller, 2009, p. 510). Organizations have been forced to increase number of marketing communication options (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010, p. 427). Marketing communications provide establishing a dialogue and building relationships with customers (Kotler & Keller, 2009, p. 510).

The various researchers have done the classification of marketing communication tools. According to Kotler et al., (2012, p. 374) marketing communication tools have consisted of advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations, direct marketing

These communication tools can be identified roughly the following.

1. Advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor.

2. Sales promotion is short-term incentives that encourages purchasing or selling of goods or services.

3. Personal selling is personal presentation by the firm’s sales force to make sales and build consumer relationships.

4. Public relations build good relationships with the company’s various publics and build good company’s image and other hand handle or protect company of unfavorable rumors.

5. Direct marketing connects directly with selected customers to obtain immediate response and build long-term consumer relationships. For example, direct mail, the telephone, the Internet can be used to communicate directly with customers.
Also, Kotler & Keller (2009, p. 512) divide marketing communication tools into five categories; advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing, interactive marketing, word-of-mouth and personal selling. Kotler & Keller (2009, p. 512) have mentioned that tools of marketing communications mix have been mainly advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing, interactive marketing, word-of-mouth and personal selling. The other classification of marketing communication tools has been advertising, public relations, sponsorship, sales promotion, direct mail, sales force, packaging, point of sale, retail store design or commercial offices, exhibitions and conferences, word of mouth (Smith and Zook, 2011, p. 24). Lastly, the marketing communication tools have been classified traditionally as advertising, public relations, sponsorship, exhibitions and trade fairs, E-communications, point-of-purchase communications, direct marketing communications, sales promotions, and personal selling (De Pelsmacker et al., 2010, p. 4).

In basically, all research has agreed on these communication tools i.e. advertising, public relations, direct marketing, sales promotions and personal selling. However, among the marketing communication tools Internet has been named differently by researchers. For example, De Pelsmacker et al., (2010, p. 4) has named E-communications and Kotler & Keller (2009, p. 512) have named Interactive marketing. According to in the above all literature, I examine my literature review of this study as advertising, public relations, sponsorship and exhibitions, E-communication, packaging, direct marketing, sales promotions, personal selling and word of mouth.

Figure 2:1: Framework of Marketing communication tools
2.1.1 Advertising

Advertising is any paid, non-personal communication through various media by an identified firm, non-profit organization, or individual (De Pelsmacker et al., 2010, p. 213). As a marketing communication tool, advertisement is one of the most popular tools for businesses. It is also the most visible tool as in the context of brand building, advertisement communicates how company would like to be seen by the public.

There are some risks of advertisement discussed in the literature. The first one is the difficulty of finding the right promotional mix for the companies to achieve an optimal return on investment. According to Duncan (2002, p. 508) consumers have difficulties to differentiate between mass media advertising and sales promotion or publicity and sponsorship. Experience and expertise are the major factors on choosing the right advertising tools (Peoriamagazines, 2017). Another one is the possible risk of negative effect of an effective advertisement on the community due to misinterpretation, false images, unrealistic expectations (Duncan, 2002, p. 516). For example, advertisements can promote stereotypes such as linking girls with dolls or women with cleaning supplies. These types of ads tend to dictate how should the members of these groups act. Small sized businesses could be exposed to this risk due to lack of allocated professional resources on advertising. Another important concept on advertising is the ‘strong and weak theories’. The strong and weak theories of advertising are two different views on the role of advertising. The strong theory explains that advertisements could increase the sales by selling new products to consumers who did not purchase before (Jones, 1991, p. 198). The strong theory also explains that if the company continues to advertise, consumers will continue to buy. However, the weak theory counter argues that advertising doesn’t actually make people buy a new product but reminds a customer that they need to buy a product (Ehrenberg, 1988, p. 394).

Advertisements are used to increase the consumption of the product or the services of the sender company, it is the biggest marketing tool however it is the most expensive one. Therefore, tools for advertising differ for different sizes of enterprises. The focus of this research is the micro and small sized businesses and one of the main advertising tool for them is the local newspapers. Local newspapers give a chance to get the attention of the public within reasonable budgets. At the same time, nowadays newspapers move from print to online, advertising online is getting more popular day to day (Marketingweek, 2016). However, local newspapers and media are still very effective on local society. If there is positive news on local newspapers about firm or its goods and services, it can increase sales of firm (Gurun & Butler, 2012, p. 569).

In the literature, some of the other effective advertisement tools for small sized companies mentioned which are local billboard, business name on calendars, shopping bags, pens, painted buses, posters, cinemas, balloons, even car windows (Patten, 2001, p. 83). These tools can be used effectively to create brand awareness on local society.

Moreover, the popularity of advertisements for firms results with massive amount of advertisements. That is another reason for firms to be very careful on using advertisements effectively. To be able to differentiate on the market place, firms need to understand the consumer need, offer something to consumer by building a link between consumer and the business.
2.1.2 Public Relations

Public relations have a lot of definitions and most of them are based on management concept. However, it is social science and art as well. Furthermore, rather than describing what public relations is, it is more significant to examine the functions of it. Cutlip & Center (2009, p. 24) mention that there are many definitions of public relations that are almost 500 definitions. Public relations are defined as function of management that establishes and sustains commonly beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics (Cutlip & Center, 2009, p. 21). One of the oldest definition about public relations was stated by Rex F. Harlow: “Public relations is the distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problem or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion” (Cutlip & Center, 2009, p. 24) He examined public relations in terms of managerial concept and operational concept. Based on definitions of public relations, public relation is generally the communication mechanism between customers and companies.

Also, Harrison (1995, p. 10) defines public relations and the author stated that public relations is communication between an organization and its publics and it is a strategic management tool. Public relations is connective activities with sales promotion and advertising. It aims to increase awareness of a product or service (Harrison 1995, p. 10). There are some advantages of public relations in marketing practices such as increasing brand awareness, provides acceptance and credibility for brand, cost effectiveness, clutter busting and reaching the hard to reach (Duncan, 2005, p. 309).

The strengths and weaknesses of public relations have further been illuminated by De Pelsmacker et al. (2010, p. 340). The strengths of public relations have been clarified as good citizenship, advice on important trends, difficult-to-reach audiences, cost-effective, message flexibility, crisis management and more objective. PR aims reaching difficult audiences like investors and opinion leaders that mostly avoid advertising or direct mailing (De Pelsmacker et al., 2010, p. 340).

However, this target group are usually influenced through PR activity why trying to reach them indirectly by the media exposure could be approached. PR experts help to advise companies on important trends. Public relation helps creating the corporate image and reputation to the company. PR manages crisis without so much damage to its reputation. PR provides the opportunity message flexibility more rather than advertising and sales promotions because governments mostly regulate advertising and sales promotions (De Pelsmacker 2010, p. 341). The other advantage of PR is cost-effective. The mass media is free; it provides reaching a variety of audiences (De Pelsmacker et al., 2010, p. 341). For instance, giving an interview to the local news about business and product or charity activities provide free advertisement for the business. The last and most important advantage of PR is more objective.

Because of the effectiveness of the media over marketing communications tools leads more believable in the perception of the target groups (De Pelsmacker et al., 2010, p. 341). The disadvantages of public relations have been defined as effectiveness hard to measure, lack of control, and journalists as gatekeepers. The lack of control over the content of the news is vital disadvantage of PR because, the media have some priorities and they can publish the news differently from PR department.
The other weakness of public relations is journalists perform as gatekeepers in PR. For example, if a story does not have news value sufficiently, it may not be published. Lastly, the measuring effectiveness of PR is not easy because, the amount of mass media not say so many things about the long-term effect of PR efforts on company´s sales (De Pelsmacker, 2010, p. 342).

Public relations are an improvement in communication, which helps companies and customers to exchange their ideas. Generally, organizations have representatives for communicating with the customers, but telephone, e-mail and internet can also be used for communication. Firms can also arrange meeting and conferences, which are face to face, for communicating with their customers (L’Etang 2008, p. 18). Public relations activities are mostly controlled by the families, a group of people or an owner the business in small businesses. Without the knowledge of public relations theories, several owner-managers can successfully perform public relations with their communication senses. However, small businesses need support from experts and consultants in order to perform public relations successfully as a marketing communications tool, theories and academic disciplines are very important (L’Etang 2008, p. 36). Small businesses should integrate their marketing communications activities into the management discipline methodically (Dyer 1996, p. 44).

Another way of using public relations by micro and small organizations is the understanding the media industry. Small businesses also should announce their news and let society know about their business’ news for instance, charity news (Patten, 2001, p.170-171). The local press is important for reaching society in terms of small businesses. Small enterprises have been seen public relations as a luxurious activity and understand it wrongly (Dowdey, 2002, p. 10). Since there is no way for businesses to escape from communicating with their customers, many organizations and individuals are doing public relations aware or unaware. Therefore, public relations are important for creating successful dialogue between businesses and customers. Small enterprises can use public relation activities to create a good image and reputation on society, such as, charity work, open days and sponsoring small and local organizations for instance, children basketball tournaments (Patten, 2001, p. 180). However, theories and practices of public relations for small sized businesses have not been noted exactly as academically and professionally yet. Additionally, small sized enterprises cannot very well separate their marketing communications functions from each other. Lastly, public relations can also be used as a marketing communication tools such as interviews with local media and local article replacement by small businesses.

2.1.3 Sponsorship and Exhibitions

The sponsorship of local events and charities is an important communication tool for small firms (Webb & Carter, 2001, p. 170). Some of the examples of sponsorship activities for micro and small businesses can be given as sponsoring local charities and local teams, and sponsoring educational and cultural activities (Mack, 1999, p. 25).

These activities are both cost-effective and it can affect local customers positively. Also, those activities increase morale and motivation of staff (Mack, 1999, p. 26).
The sponsorship is mostly used by large organizations, however sponsoring local events can be helpful to micro and small businesses as an effective promotional mix. Also, sponsoring local events creates a good opportunity for micro and small businesses to reach their marketing aims with less confusion than other marketing communications tools (Webb & Carter, 2001, p. 170). However, owner-managers in small businesses form the sponsorship activities (Zinger & O’Reilly, 2010, p. 29).

The other marketing communication tools are integrated with sponsorship, for example, public relations and advertising. Sponsorship activities generally consist of sportive activities, arts, education, and conversations. The aim of these activities reduces the advertisement costs and creating a positive image about business and brand name on society (Mack, 1999, p. 25).

Exhibitions and trade-shows create good communication opportunities for businesses for instance, meeting with new relations, and clients. Trade shows can be regarded as a kind of networking but they should be arranged rather well than individual meetings. Networking is a fundamental communication function for micro and small businesses. Networking helps micro and small businesses to come together and exchange their ideas, to share developments and technology news, regular meetings, and personal contacts. In addition, networking provides cooperation and sociability opportunities for micro and small businesses (Gilmore et al., 2001, p. 7). Since most of the owner-managers consider businesses exceed physical activities, they also participate in trade events. However, not all the micro and small sized business can participate in these kinds of events, because there is a hidden cost of these activities such as membership of trade events and joining fees etc., hence, some of the micro and small sized business owners prefer meeting regularly with each other informally to share their ideas and to avoid those kinds of hidden costs (Gilmore et al., 2001, p. 7).

Furthermore, exhibitions reduce the cost of advertising and personal selling of businesses. It can create a good opportunity for businesses to reach their customers. It can also be adapted to micro and small business, since there are some local events such agricultural festivals, air shows, sport events etc. that these businesses can benefit from. These exhibitions are regularly organized in almost all cities and towns every year (Gilmore et al., 2001, p. 7).

2.1.4 E-communication

In recent years, Internet has become a part of the customers’ life and it effects their purchasing decisions. Thus, E-communication has become a significant part of marketing communication tools. Internet is used as tools to monitor, report and to have a direct contact with customer. The concept of these tools includes control of posts, discussion and commentaries. In other words, it provides inexpensive feedback from customers for small firms (Sansone, et al., 2012, p. 972, 973). Therewith, small businesses should use the Internet as a new marketing communication tool very carefully, because, customers’ perspectives can be different such as men and women use Internet for different reasons, for example, while men use internet for more entertainment, women use internet for communication and interaction with others. Additionally, sometimes both the online and other kinds of advertisements annoy people (Sansone, et al., 2012, p. 975).

With the realization of Internet’s effectiveness by businesses, they have started to be more online for marketing. Harrigan et al. (2011, p. 127) discussed that there are many differences between small and large organizations. Especially in terms of marketing activities. The small businesses often cannot achieve effective and efficient marketing. However, small businesses can improve both the effectiveness and efficiency with the Internet.
For instance, small businesses can use websites, email, and other cheap software programs for achieving effective marketing. On the other hand, due to the lack of marketing and management expertise, small businesses cannot use sophisticated software programs (Harrigan et al., 2011, p. 129). Moreover, it is hard to be able to follow innovations and developments in marketing communications without marketing and management consults. Therefore, small businesses might not use Internet as a marketing communication tool very successfully, though, it is an inexpensive communication tool (Bettiol, et al., 2012, p. 227).

2.1.5 Packaging

Packaging protects the product and makes distribution easier. However, except of these functions, packaging is another marketing communication tool for businesses. It carries out several communications functions (DePelsmacker et al., 2010, p. 491). Owing to packaging, businesses can increase their sales, premium products, and values, because it provides attracting brand, identifying brand and the product, product recognition and informing consumers of price (DePelsmacker et al., 2010, p. 491).

The first encounter of the customer with the product is with the package (Kotler & Keller, 2009, p. 379). Also, packaging can be effective way on consumer behavior long after the actual buying has been made (DePelsmacker et al., 2010, p. 492). Although the effectiveness of packaging, it is still an expensive nightmare for the small firms (Patten, 2001, p. 126).

2.1.6 Direct Marketing


Kotler & Armstrong (2010, p. 514) define direct marketing as communication directly with target customers for obtaining immediate and measurable customer response. Direct marketing has main tools for example, catalogue companies, mobile text, mail, telephone and Internet. Mostly, direct marketers sell products or services via mail and telephone (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010, p. 514). Owing to direct marketing, consumers can buy products without going inside, ordering online or via telephone.

Direct marketing is used a complementary channel by many companies. For example, Lexus use mass-media advertising for marketing its cars, however direct marketing is also used as supplement communication tool. Promotional DVDs and other materials is mailed directly to target customers for informing about various models and financing (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010, p. 515). It means that direct marketing is integrated with other marketing communication tools such as advertisement. On the other hand, some companies which are deal with online marketing such as Amazon and eBay use entirely direct marketing (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010, p. 515).

The fundamental purpose of direct marketing is to reach specific consumers to inform about products and services. The other marketing communication tools such as mass-media advertising can be used for reaching target customers (Kotler et al., 2012, p. 402).
Moreover, direct marketing offers direct communication rather than through intermediaries. Hence, direct marketing is also appropriate for small firms, because small firms can have closer relationship with their consumers (Patten, 2001, p. 131).

2.1.7 Sales Promotions

Generally, most of the customers cannot distinguish promotions from advertisements. Promotion is another communication facility. Sales, price reductions, products free of charge, gifts etc. are among the promotion facilities. Promotion guarantees customer satisfaction and increases the rate of total selling. Nevertheless, there is still limitations about promotions for instance, promotions put a boundary to businesses’ financial revenues. It is a good communication tool, yet, not that profitable for companies. (Duncan, 2002, p. 584). Sales promotions are divided into two parts. First one is the “consumer promotions”. It consists of premiums, gifts, prize and incentives. The other sales promotion is the “trade promotions” which includes free merchandise, discount and bonus (DePelsmacker, et al., 2010, p. 412-422). Sales promotions provide increasing of business’ sales for a short period of time. The results of sales promotions are seen instantly rather than advertising.

Because, promotional tools are short-term oriented. Moreover, promotion campaign can be measured easier than advertising campaign. All these factors influence the increasing use of sales promotions (DePelsmacker, et al., 2010, p. 408). Promotional tools are wide area and it contains everything such as, calendars, pens, scrap-pads, key chains, T-shirts, toys for kids etc. can be used as sales promotions (Patten, 2001, p. 221).

2.1.8 Personal selling

Personal selling is face-to-face communications and it informs customers for keeping or building a long-term relationship with customers. Personal selling can be shaped according to the customers’ personal wishes and needs (DePelsmacker, 2010, et al., p. 529). Businesses have representatives in order to communicate with customers and feedbacks taken from customers have been analyzed by business to understand customers’ needs (DePelsmacker, 2010, et al., p. 531). There have been two main functions of personal selling. Retaining current customers and acquiring new customers (Duncan, 2002, p. 618).

The aim of personal selling is “to find potentially interested people, to inform them, to illustrate by means of demonstrations of how the product works, to build close relationships, to guide customers to a purchase and to offer after-sales service” (DePelsmacker, 2010, et al., p. 530). Personal selling is two-way communication and owing to its features the main advantage of personal selling is building a trusting relationship with customer. No ads or brochure can create this relationship. Two-way communication is effective to persuade customers (Duncan, 2002, p. 624).

Personal selling humanizes a brand and a company, however customers can develop loyalty to salesman rather than to the company or the brand. It means that if salesman change job, his or her customers may move with his or her (Duncan, 2002, p. 625). This limitation should be considered before using personal selling.
2.1.9 Word of Mouth

Customers are in a communication with each other every day and they talk about many products. For instance, food products, travel services, TV shows, movies and etc. (Kotler & Keller, 2009, p. 585). Thus, they influence each other as either being aware or unaware.

Westbrook (1987 p. 261) define the word of mouth as “informal communications directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services and/or their sellers”. The other definition is “oral, person-to-person communication between a perceived non-commercial communicator and a receiver concerning a brand, a product, or a service offered for sale” (Arndt, 1967, p. 190). In recent years, word of mouth is mentioned in social network context (Kotler & Keller, 2009, p. 585).

Because, Internet and technological developments create new opportunities for customers to share their product evaluation online (Chen & Xie, 2004, p. 1). For instance, text messages and email. And customers can spread around their evolutions quickly.

Some of literatures do not consider the word of mouth as the element of marketing communication tool. For example, Kotler & Armstrong (2010, p. 167) define word of mouth within public relations of marketing communication tools. Also, according to DePelsmacker et al. (2010, p. 4) word of mouth does not contain as the element of marketing communication tools. However, Keller & Kotler (2009, p. 512) consider word of mouth as the element of marketing communication tool. And this term is considered as the element of marketing communication tools for this study. Although, WOM is a consumer-dominated channel of marketing communication, but it is managed with its two particular forms by marketers (Brown et al., 2007, p. 4). These are buzz and viral marketing. Buzz marketing informs society about new product. Viral marketing encourages customers to spread goods and services, video, or written information about developed product to other customers (Kotler & Keller, 2009, p. 586).

Nothing can be reliable on customers about what their friend or family say. It is stated that word of mouth campaign is more powerful than other forms of advertising. Because, if a movie is recommended by a friend, it is more likely seen than learned about it through an advertisement (Duncan, 2002, p. 558). Also, word of mouth is more appropriate for small businesses, because small businesses have more personal relationship with customer (Kotler & Keller, 2009, p. 586).

2.2 Managing of Marketing Communication Tools

In order to study the using of marketing communication tools, it is needed to study managing of marketing communication tools. The using of marketing communication tools was examined in terms of the perspective of the manager. To define how the manager practiced marketing communication tools, relevant theories were discussed according to managerial perspective.

The managing of advertisement, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing were mainly topics related with marketing communication management (Kotler & Keller, 2009, p. 538-601).
2.2.1 Advertising Management

In order to provide the benefits from ads, marketing manager has to consider four important decisions when developing an advertising program: setting advertising objectives, setting the advertising budget, developing advertising strategy (message decisions and media decisions) and evaluating advertising campaigns (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011, p. 391).

The setting advertising objectives is important for the managing of advertising. An advertising objective has defined the specific communication task to be successful with the specific target audience during the specific period. Advertising objectives consist of three primary purposes; inform, persuade, and remind (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011, p. 392). Informative advertising has used introducing a new product, inform to consumers using of the product. It informs about changing of price to the market, and inform to consumers about the image quality. For example, advertisements explain the using of the cleaning product that is not very well known by consumers or they inform to customers explaining benefits of the insurance company. The main aim of persuasive advertising is to create brand preference, and to encourage consumer for switching to the advertised product. For example, this advertising is used to persuade customers buying the new product among similar products. Reminder advertising helps for maintaining customer relationship and keeping customers’ thinking about the product. For example, ice-cream ads except summer season provide that the product cannot be removed the minds of consumers. The other example can be given about Coca-Cola, although Coca-Cola has high selling, Coca-Cola continues its ads for maintaining product awareness (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011, p. 392).

In order to manage advertising effectively the other necessary issue is developing advertising strategy. Advertising strategy consists of two main elements: message strategy and media strategy. The message of advertisement has strong relationship between the media that deliver it (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011, p. 393). For creating effective advertising message, firstly it should be planned message strategy for deciding what general message will communicate to customers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011, p. 393). The message strategy is an important part of advertising strategy, because message should persuade to consumer about the product. The message should explain clearly to customer the benefit of the product and why the consumer buys the product. Advertisers should recognize and understand their target audiences for communicating the message effectively. In other words, it should be clutched well the meaning of the product for the target audiences. For example, the car is a functional transport that provide transportation point a to point b for some consumers. This target audience can be persuaded explaining attributes of the brand (airbag, engine, etc.) or benefits (safety, security, etc.) via advertising. Some other customers do not want just a car; they want also an image and status. For this target audience advertising message, should be clearly different from other audience. A lifestyle, the image or the identity of the product should communicate to the target audience instead of explaining technical specifications of the product. Creative effort is important for message advertising to attract the attention of consumers.

The creative concept has guided the choice of specific appeals to be used in an advertisement. Advertising appeal should be meaningful, because it is also important not to confuse the mind of consumers in the message (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011, p. 393).

The decision of using which media to communicate message to consumers is related with media strategy. For example, using TV and/or magazine for advertising. If both TV and magazine is used, it should be well planned which channels and what times or published which magazines
and which pages (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011, p. 394). Marketing managers or advertisers should have consideration about the selection process of advertising media.

Kotler & Armstrong (2011, p. 394) identified selecting advertising media into three major steps: 1) deciding on reach, frequency and impact, 2) choosing among major media types, 3) selecting specific media vehicles and 4) deciding on media timing. It is necessary to determine on the frequency and reach required to achieve advertising objectives in the selecting media. Reach refers percentage of people in the target market who are exposed to the advertisement in a given period of time (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011, p. 394). The definition of reach may sometimes change according to the kind of media. For example, Magazines or newspapers use the definition of reach for explaining their total selling. Television channels identify the reach with the concept of rating. Advertiser aims usually to reach the target market with lowest cost. Frequency refers how many times the average person in the target market is exposed to the message. To select media, it should decide on the desired media effect (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011, p. 394).

The other issue about selecting advertising media is related to choosing among major media types. In order to making media planning, it should be known the reach, frequency, and effect of each of the major media types. The media planner considers lot of factors for selecting media. The habit of the target audience influences the choosing media. The feature of the product is important also. For example, Television may be more appropriate to show the silence feature of the washing machine. On the other hand, colorful magazine may be used for the cosmetic ads campaign. The type of the message also influences to select the media. For example, direct mailing or magazine can be more effective for the message, which contains complex and detailed technical information, but the price reduction campaign can be announced on radio or television effectively with the effective way. The media planner has to take into account also the cost of a variety of media.

After deciding on the media, which is selected, the media planner has to decide specific media vehicles. For example, if newspaper is used, it should be decided on which newspaper national or local. If television is selected as an advertising media, it is necessary to decide which channel and what time is more appropriate for publishing the ads campaign. The matching is important between the target audience and advertised product.

Evaluating advertising effectiveness is the last step for developing advertising program. The evaluation of advertising effect is important. The communication effects of an ad and sales and profits effects of advertising should be measured regularly. The communication effects can be measured via attitudes test. These types of tests show after the advertising campaign whether consumer behavior change to the product. For example, remembrance of advertising, brand awareness of consumers, knowledge, attitudes, and preferences are measured. However, what sales and profits are produced by an ad campaign that increases brand awareness by 20 per cent. It is usually difficult to measure sales and profit effects of advertising in comparison to measuring the communication effect, because sales and profit are affected the other factors except of advertising like the feature of the product, price. One way to measure the sales and profit effects of advertising is comparing past sales and profit with past advertising spending (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011, p. 468).

Another way to evaluate the effectiveness of advertising is via experiments. For instance, Coca-Cola for testing the effects of different advertising spending levels, it could vary the amount it spends on advertising in different market areas and measure the differences in the resulting sales and profit levels (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011, p. 468).
Finally, many factors can affect the effectiveness of advertising, some controllable and others not. Measuring the results of advertising spending maintains an inexact science (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011, p. 468).

2.2.2 Sales Promotion Management

In marketing communications is commonly used one of tools is known as promotional product is sales promotion. Kotler & Keller (2009, p. 554) have described sales promotion is marketing tools and techniques to stimulate quicker or greater purchase of particular goods or services by consumer. The main objective of sales promotion is incentive. The company offers an incentive to customer for encouraging purchasing the product. (Kotler & Keller, 2009, p. 554). These incentives are; samples, coupons, cash refunds, price packs, premium, point of purchase, contests and games (Kotler, et al., 2011, p. 400). Samples: products are delivered to customer in real size or smaller size for testing. Sample products promote testing of new product and attract new customers for the new product. Although samples are known as the most effective promotions tools, it costs much expensive. New smell or taste can be given as an example for the sample. Coupons are certificates that give buyers a saving when they purchase specified products. The company targets purchasing of the new product for testing and purchasing again through coupons. Thus, it facilitates of brand addiction. Cash refunds are given back the amount of money to purchaser of the goods and services. The company gives sometimes sale certificate instead of give back money. In price packs customers pay less and buy more. For example; five pieces’ waffle are sold for price of four. The aim of price packs is to encourage consuming more. Premiums are incentives to buy the product and they can be goods offered free or low cost. Contests and sweepstakes give consumers the chance to win something, for instance, trip or valuable goods, by luck or through extra effort.

The manager of the company can use a wide variety of sales promotion tools based on creativity and purpose. The company that regulates sales promotion campaign should know the aim of using this activity. Through the sales promotion, the purchasing of the product can be increased and it encourages the product can be purchased once more time.

2.2.3 Public Relations Management

According to variety of definitions public relations strength and protect the image of the product or the organization and often not required payment to the media by establishing communication with both inside and outside customers (Keller & Kotler, 2009, p. 563, Kotler et al., 2011, p. 396). In integrated marketing communication, companies use different public relations tools for the different target groups.

Sponsorship, lobbying, press relations and public affairs are tools of public relations (Keller & Kotler, 2009, p. 564, Kotler et al., 2011, p. 397). Business can support financially various activities i.e. sports, arts and environmental activities through sponsorship and thus it contributes fulfilling the purpose of marketing of business. Press-relations are another important public relations tool. Through press-relations, the manager of business informs to public about its goods or services utilizing of press without paying.
2.2.4 Personal Selling Management

Personal selling is based on the communication between buying and selling. In this process, seller persuades the potential buyer for purchasing goods or services (Keller & Kotler, 2009, p. 398). Personal selling is mostly effective way to persuade customers. Seller can customize the message to customer and he can get a feedback instantly. Manager can achieve goals of the company utilizing the right personal selling strategy.

2.2.5 Direct Marketing Management

Nowadays, direct marketing is the one of the fastest developing marketing industry. Through direct marketing, many businesses connect directly with targeted consumers to obtain response and to cultivate customer loyalty (Kotler et al., 2011, p. 401). Today, e-mail and text messages, direct mail, telemarketing, catalogue marketing and Internet tools are used in order to establish the relationship with the customers directly (Keller & Kotler, 2009 p. 572).

It is very important coordinated of marketing communication tools by managers to provide effective communication with target market and to present a good image to target market.

Lastly, the previous research has shown that although SMEs have not accepted communication tools, activities that allow them to directly reach their consumers. These firms have provided reaching their consumers with personalizing their message and getting some feedback from receivers. For example, direct marketing activities and digital communication (Gabrelli and Balboni, 2010, p. 281). Because of the limited expertise of the owner-managers and the limited budget, public relations have the important role for communicating with consumer by small firms (Gabrelli and Balboni, 2010, p. 278). Public relations can be named as personal communication, because small firms often establish public relations just communicate with consumers. Personal communication can be easy and inexpensive for small businesses to apply marketing communication tools.
3. METHODOLOGY

This part has included which methodology was used for reaching and collecting primary data for this study. The aim of this part was which method was used and reasons about this study. Moreover, the chapter clarifies on my research approach and design as well as how I conducted my literature search. And I show to tie the research question and chosen methods together.

3.1. Research Philosophy

The Researcher needs to understand philosophy of his/her research for reaching primary data successfully (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 128). The assumptions form the basis of the methods and strategies applied to conduct the study (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 127). The research philosophy is examined the perspective of ontology and epistemology (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 34). Also, Bryman & Bell (2015, p. 34) investigated that ontology is an objective which is outside social actors or it is consisted of social actors’ perceptions and acts. According to Saunders et al. (2012, p. 131) ontology is classified as objectivism and constructionism these views create social entities. The view that social entities occur independent from social actors in reality is propounded by the objectivism. On the other hand, the constructionism dimension, assumes reality as socially constructed, where the impressions and actions of social actors are concerned.

The other research philosophy is epistemology. Epistemology deals with the studying of the social world and it includes three conceptions which are positivism, realism and interpretivism (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 26). Positivism is based on credible data and it contains without personal value about the study. The quantitative method is appropriate for the positivist study (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 162). The consideration of independence of reality from the human consciousness is examined by realism research philosophy. If realism is considered in light of Bryman & Bell (2015, p. 18), it is on opposition to idealism. This is because, realism has two characteristics for social and natural studies such as positivism that are use same kind of methods to collect data. In addition, the conception of existence of external reality is emphasized by Bryman & Bell (2015, p. 18).

Interpretivism, on the contrary to positivism, accents the distinctions between natural science and people. It also refers to communal researchers to have the nominative meaning for civil action (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 28).

According to the above definitions, I have adopted a constructionism ontology and interpretivism epistemology as the appropriate methodologies for collecting data and solving my research problem. Because, my research question led me to have a constructionist view on reality. Because, I looked on social actors particularly owners and managers with their relationship towards customers which are socially constructed. It is difficult to alienate the human characters from the social world and put it as an external entity. For this reason, my aim is to look on the subjective nature of human beings with a view on reality as socially constructed. Also, interpretivism indicates how different behavioral between objects and human when it is excluded the application of natural science methods. The author applied this notion of reality in her study, as well. Due to, evaluation of people in different working conditions, obtained information will be effective for the subjective meaning of my work and properly interpreting.
3.2 Research Approach

Choosing an ideal research approach is challenging. The research approach explains the relationship of theory and research in a study. There are two approaches mostly used in business research and they are deductive and/or inductive (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 23). Furthermore, except of inductive and deductive approaches, the new concept that named as abductive has become popular among qualitative researchers. Through review of literature, the deductive approach is defined to develop a hypothesis and design a research strategy to test the hypothesis. The inductive approach is defined to collect data and develop theory as a result of one’s data analysis (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 146). Both research approaches are helpful for getting primary data. However, the deductive approach is closer to a positivist approach and induction is closer to an interpretive research approach.

Deductive approach is defined as closer to a scientific research, and it contains progress of theory (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 145). Deduction is mostly preferred in the natural sciences because it contains clarifications and expectations. The deductive approach aims to show the relationship between variables. The main characteristic of deduction approach is generalization to information with data (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 24).

On the other hand, inductive approach is an alternative research approach to deductive approach. According to Bryman & Bell (2007, p. 26), the inductive approach develops concepts and follows the collection, analysis and interpretation of data to develop a theory based on the acquired results. Through this approach, researchers have a close understanding of the research context with small size samples. Moreover, the inductive approach is less concerned with generalization and has a more flexible structure for permitting changes of research emphasis as the research progresses (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 146). In addition, this approach is applied when the research is something new and excites much debate (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 146). To summarize, deductive approach deals with defining theoretical framework and hypotheses, however inductive approach is mostly preferred explaining of a new issue (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 149).

Beside of these two approaches, the abductive approach is defined as bypassing the limitations associated with deductive and inductive positions (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 27). In other words, abductive approach is a combination between the two approaches. “Abduction starts with a puzzle or surprise and then seeks to explain it” (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 27). An abductive study involves alternating engagement with the social world as an empirical source to theoretical ideas (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 27).

The abductive approach was preferred as research approach for the current study because my study started as kind of a pragmatist puzzle that I searched for explaining through theoretical framework and interviews. The previous theories were used for structuring the interview questions and analyzing of collecting data by giving a general framework. Later on, the data was interpreted for developing specific concepts because I have focused on specific work contexts to find out the using of marketing communication tools in terms of micro and small enterprises that is new and not previously conducted on specific cases that help to come up with new theories.
3.3 Research Strategy

After determining the research philosophy and research approach, it should be considered whether the study is quantitative or qualitative method. It is utilized from these two methods for gathering data refer to the research strategy accepted for the research. Although the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research is minimal but many writers have indicated major differences of two research strategies (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 37).

Both research strategies are also identified to be different in terms of ontological, epistemological and the aspects of the research approach. According to Bryman & Bell (2015, p. 38) the quantitative methods are based on objectivity, positivism and deductive approach; the qualitative methods are based on the constructionism, interpretivism and inductive approach of research.

Quantitative research is defined by quantification in the collection of data, and it is generally applied in surveys and by experiment researchers. However, qualitative research highlights words and meanings in the collection and analysis of data (Creswell, 2003, p. 179). It is a difference between these two research strategies in terms of using primary data. Qualitative research is unstructured and flexible, and it is related to personal understanding. However, quantitative research applies statistical procedure to analyze data and it is related to testing and hypothesis. The deciding on choosing research strategy is related to what kind of information is needed for the study (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 161). Qualitative research strategy is divided into five studies. These are narrative-biographical, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (Creswell, 2007, p.85). I also used the qualitative research strategy for my study to gain a rich and in-depth data and participants’ views were also included in the study. Furthermore, measurement is used at the quantitative research strategy and qualitative researchers do not use measurement (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 37). However, I did not use measurement for interpreting the data for this reason qualitative research strategy is more appropriate for this study. The other reason for the use of the qualitative method in this thesis is that it is relevant to my purpose. Using the qualitative research strategy let a deeper understanding on the how the marketing communication tools used as a part of micro enterprises’ marketing. Lastly, the study of small firms is quietly new area of social science research (Churchill et al., 1986, Brockhaus, 1987, Bygrave, 1989, cited in Gilmore et al., 2001, p. 8).

This shows a qualitative approach in where the aim is to explain rather than predict phenomena (Leavy, 1994, cited in Gilmore et al., 2001, p. 8). Because of all these reasons, the qualitative method is the best choice for this study with regards to my purpose.
After selecting of research strategy, it was decided on suitable research design that relates to the research question. Five different types of research design are defined. These are experimental design, cross-sectional or social survey design, longitudinal design, case study design, and comparative design (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 48). My research design was case-study. According to Bryman & Bell (2015, p. 67) “A case study entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case”.

When looking in my case, preferring of marketing communication tools by owners-manager in terms of small restaurants was examined. It means that this study has specific context “small restaurants”. Therefore, the case study’ features are more suitable between five types of research design for my study.
4. PRACTICAL METHOD

In this section, these methods that are used for a practical conduction of this study and how the access is acquired in the organizations with ethical considerations are outlined. This section occurs of these parts; selection, interview manual, data collection tool, access, data processing, data analyzing, ethical considerations.

4.1. Selection

In order to collect data for this study appropriate sampling strategy was used. Convenience sample is one that is easily accessible to the researcher (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p.201). This study focused on SME owners and manager who operate in business markets in the Umeå area, Northern Sweden. The participating businesses operated in restaurant business. The restaurants located in central Umeå and these were not multinational enterprises, these were local restaurants. These SMEs employed fewer than ten employees, in accordance with the European commission definition of micro enterprises. The other criterion for restaurant selection was that the restaurant had been in operation for more five years. This criterion was included those restaurants which were completing growth. Lastly, menu was the other criterion for selecting these restaurants. These restaurants defined as Pizza restaurant. Their menu included generally pizza varieties, hamburger and kebab. Theirs menu did not include alcohol. A total of three SME owner-managers were selected within these criteria.

To choose the restaurants included in the study, four criteria had to be fulfilled. First; defined as a micro enterprise. These restaurants should have been micro enterprises that in keeping with the European Commission definition of micro enterprises. And it was defined on the introduction part. Second; located in Umeå center. These restaurants located centrally in Umeå; one of them was located at a grocery market, the other two of them were located in center. Third; operate in business for more than five years. These restaurants operated in restaurant business for more five years. And fourth; serving pizza, hamburgers and kebab. The three restaurants were Pizza restaurant they served pizza, hamburger and kebab and no alcohol. It was interviewed with two owners and one manager of these three restaurants. The name of restaurants and the name of the owners-manager were not mentioned in this study to respect the confidentiality of the respondents. The restaurants have been named Restaurant A, B and C (RA, RB, and RC).

Six local restaurants were selected in accordance with the criteria. The author contacted face-to-face with a request for a research interview stating the research purpose, providing some explanations of the concept marketing communication tools and indicated the estimated length of the interview. Unfortunately, the three managers and owners of these six restaurants replied have a high commitment to contribute to the research at hand. Also, it was targeted owners and managers of the restaurants who manage marketing activities on a regular basis. They were particularly interested in the research subject because it has been relevant to their current work.
4.2 Access

The access to the organization or the individual is the most difficult part while doing research (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 393). The problem raises when the researcher wants to apply interviews through physical contact. Using obtainable contacts for reaching the researched party is considered to be easier and more successful than developing new ones (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 394).

There were difficulties in finding restaurants that have same criteria that was mentioned at the selection part in a small city. Firstly, names of restaurants were searched from web sites and advertisements pages of newspapers. Deciding on the restaurants related to the criteria was difficult. Six restaurants were appropriate to the criteria for this study. Three of six restaurants were not willing to have an interview with me because of they have had limited time and they did not have enough information about marketing communication tools. The rest of three restaurants accepted to have the interview. The aim of this research was clearly communicated to the participants for the convenience of their answer and cooperation. All our participants were open to answer questions raised that let us get the information needed for this study.

4.3 Interview Manual

A qualitative research strategy has been applied with the semi-structured interviews to collect the data for this study. After received a positive response from the potential participants, the date, the time and the location was arranged to conduct the interview at their convenience. A Semi-structured interview method was carried out face-to-face with the owners of two restaurants and the manager of the other restaurant in their respective restaurants. All interviews were conducted by both authors together and in English. Since English has not the native language of the interviewees, few issues sometimes arose when asking for rich descriptions. However, the interviews were conducted face-to-face and could observe facial expressions and gestures was very beneficial.

The interviews have been structured based on the previous theories identified in marketing communication tools. Moreover, an interview guide was used (see appendix 1) to make sure that the same thematic approach was applied in all interviews and all identified themes are covered. The interviews consisted of 21 questions that were categorized into three parts. The interview with each respondent began with general background questions to gather information about the owner-managers’ experiences with their jobs and to collect information about restaurants. Then the main questions have been raised that have been related to what the owners-manager think about marketing communication tools and identifying how micro and small enterprises use marketing communication tools as a part of their marketing.
Table 4.1: Participant Overview:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Working Experience</th>
<th>Experience within the restaurant</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>RA</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>RB</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>RC</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Data collection tool

There are many data collection tools applied in qualitative research. The interview is the most commonly preferred method in qualitative research (Creswell, 2003, p.189). Several types of interview were classified. These are; the structured interview, the semi-structured interview and the unstructured interview (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 213). The first of all is a structured interview that can be defined as standardized interview. The standardized interview is a couple of written questions that are standardized and all participants are asked same questions. The interviews are recorded. Another interview method is the semi-structured interview method that is one of the data collection tools. It means the researcher has a list of questions related to the topic that will help as an interview guide (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 481). These questions are asked to participants and their voices are recorded or written down as a note. During the conversations, additional questions can be added for exposing new information guide (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 481). And the last one is called unstructured interview or depth interview. It can be defined informal interview method. Although there are no standard questions, the researcher should have strong knowledge about research area that is needed to explore. Unstructured interview or depth interview offers free and informal talking with participants (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 214).

In the case of research, where the researcher has a clear focus on a specific topic, the semi-structured interview is more likely to be used and more specific issues can be addressed (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 483). This study has a specific focus to investigate about how marketing communication tools have been applied by micro and small enterprises and finding reasons which marketing communication tools have been preferred more often. These questions are structured based on predetermined perspectival marketing communication tools outlined in previous studies. If researcher has clear focus on a specific topic is semi-structured interview more suitable to be used (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 485). Because of all these reasons, I used semi-structured interview to gather collecting data for my study.
4.5 Data processing

The semi-structured interview method was used to collect the data in the three cases. The participants’ voice was recorded with tape and important notes were taken during the collection of data. These notes have helped to get back all the data easily for later on purpose. All the collected data was transcribed into a word document by using express dictate software that eased the transcription process.

After the transcription, the data were categorized based on the similarities of the ideas, and then the relevant issues that were related to this study were taken to the empirical part of this study. Sentences that were directly said by the participants were also included in this study to put more emphasis on the issues raised in the interviewing process. The data were processed in such a way that helped to make the analysis part more feasible and accurate.

4.6 Data analyzing

There are different theories and methods use for data analyzing. Researchers need to decide which data analyzing method is more appropriate for their research (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 544). This study is based on qualitative data analysis with categorization and unitization. The main aim of this empirical study is that summarizes primary data and makes it understandable and clear for readers.

The collected data was analyzed through the appropriate method for this study. As it is mentioned the aim of this study is the usage of marketing communication tools in terms of SMEs. The using of marketing communication tools by global businesses has been identified in the previous theories. It has different ways to analyze a qualitative data. Sekaran (2003, p. 407) have identified data analyzing as data reduction, and data display. First one is data reduction separates in three parts; data selection, coding and categorizing. The other one is data display and it defines a method of showing and introducing data. In addition, data display is used to conclude reducing data.

4.7 Ethical considerations

Saunders et al. (2012, p. 183) defined ethical issues have concerned with the appropriateness of the researcher behaviour in relation to the rights of the respondent. Ethical issues are the way the researcher should treat the people on whom the research is conducted on and the activities the researcher should or should not engage to in relation with the respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 127). Ethical issues have separated in four different stages (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 236).

- Ethical issues during designing and gaining access

In order to conduct this study, the appropriate research strategy and methods were applied for accessing available data. The owner-managers were reached directly and asked them for their willingness for this study by face-to-face. The participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the confidentiality of the data collected. The right of the participants was kept for not answering the questions or to withdraw from the interview process.
- Ethical issues during data collection

While collecting data, the necessary ethical issues that were needed to follow in research were taken into consideration. Permission was taken from participants in order to record the interview process. The data were collected in an objective manner fully and accurately including the information provided. Participants’ names and restaurants’ names were not published in the research because of ethical reasons and their request. For all participants, the appropriate time and place was used that were suitable and convenient for them. During the interview, participants were allowed to respond in their own way and take much part in the interview process.

- Ethical issues associated with data processing and storage

The collected data were processed in a private and appropriate way that can only be accessible in a right way. As there were personal data involved in the gathered data, it has been undertaken fairly and legally according to the principles stated in Saunders et al., (2012, p. 236).

- Ethical issues related to analysis and reporting

Great attention was spent to avoid any misinterpretation of data in the analyzing and reporting stage of this study. Also, the objectivity of the data was ensured in these stages including the confidentiality and anonymity of the data. According to Bryman & Bell (2015, p. 113), ethical principles that are; no harm to participants, no lack of informed consent, no invasion of privacy, and no deception at all.

- Ethical issues related to marketing communication tools

Ethics inform to the society the behavior that is right or wrong related to a certain situation. (Malloy & Fennell, 1998, p. 458). In other words, ethics are interested in that how the individual will behave rightly and appropriately in a particular situation.

As it is well known, most of the businesses are aiming to make profit. But at the same time, it is important that the profits are in accordance with the law and ethical values. In recent years, the belief has been widespread that the corporations are responsible not only to their owners but also towards the society. In this context, legislations and laws have been made to protect consumer rights (De Pelsmacker et. al., 2010, p. 626).

“Ethical issues in marketing communications originate from the clash between business practice and social concerns” (De Pelsmacker et. al., 2010, p. 609). In other words, corporations are responsible towards consumers and environment. The author discussed the ethical issue in terms of consumers in this study. Advertising, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing, packaging and sales promotion that are assumed unethical marketing communication instrument were examined in this study (De Pelsmacker et. al., 2010, p. 621).

Advertising announces goods or services to publicity for a certain fee. Today, advertisements are developed very much. It is impossible for consumer spend a day without seeing, reading, or noticing an advertisement of any product. Advertising are not just about introducing of the product. At the same time, it is presented to consumers with various sound and visual effects that emphasizes necessity of the product (De Pelsmacker et. al., 2010, p. 623). The ethical issues can be stated as stereotyping and targeting vulnerable groups in advertising (De Pelsmacker et. al., 2010, p. 608). Males and females are depicted often as stereotype in advertisements. However, in ethically women are adversely affected more. According to De Pelsmacker et. al. (2010, p. 613), there are three basic ethical issues in advertisements where women are used. The first one is the weak aspects of the woman are revealed.
In such advertisements, women need constantly changing themselves and are not happy with themselves. The second is attractiveness is defined as unreachable. For instance, A model is laid out and the woman is able to compare herself with this model. This situation can affect adversely to the pride of the woman. And the thirdly, the woman is portrayed as a sex object. This such of advertising emphasizes that physical attributes are more important than personality. Ads that adversely affect children as defined targeting vulnerable groups (De Pelsmacker et. al., 2010, p. 618).

In recent years with the development of technology, marketing techniques have also advanced. Businesses are exploring and finding new marketing methods to sell their goods in a challenging competitive environment. Direct marketing and personal selling can be give as an example of the new marketing methods. De Pelsmacker et. al. (2010, p. 624) state that the applied techniques change according to the social, economic and psychological structure of the consumers. The people who are assigned to these jobs receive special education in these subjects. They know how to sell their products and sell their products to who. However, the consumer has no education about to buy these goods. Direct marketing is one of the element of the marketing communication tools. Like other marketing communication tools, it is extremely important that it directly effects the sales of businesses. The abuse of responsibilities of sales person to the business and the customers is causing the ethical problems in this area. For instance, pressure, discrimination, Incomplete and incorrect information, selling the most expensive product (De Pelsmacker et. al., 2010, p. 624).

Public relations ensure positive relationship and maintain this positive relationship between the business and the target groups. Public relation is one of the most effective tools to show that being good, productive and corporate social responsible organization. In ethically, public relation need to maintain the balance between serving their customers and serving the whole community. For instance, bribe, providing benefits in different areas and misinformation are related issues about ethic in public relation (De Pelsmacker et. al., p. 623, 2010).

The other ethical issue related with marketing communication tools is packaging. Environmental implications, misinformation, safety for children and semi-empty packaging can be stated most important ethical issue in packaging. This unethical issues are preferred mostly to be competitive products. (De Pelsmacker et. al., p. 625, 2010).

Sales promotion is the last marketing communication tool as related to ethical issue. Sales promotion is used by many companies to compete and increase their sales. For instance, coupons, presents, competitions and prizes. However, prize sometimes is smaller than the expectation of the consumers. This is ethical practices in sales promotion that the promotion is not sufficiently available (De Pelsmacker et. al., p. 626, 2010).

As a result, marketing communication tools are affecting consumer buying behavior direct and indirectly as why people consume certain service or buying certain product. Consumer buying behavior is influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. Successful enterprises know the factors that affect consumer behavior. Communication tools represent the voice of an enterprise and by which companies can establish a dialogue with consumers concerning their products. In this study, by using marketing communication tools can the owners and manager of three restaurants inform, persuade, incite, and remind consumers of their business. The owners and manager of these restaurants can by using those communication tools provide accurate information of their services or address other issues. Since companies can affect people’s buying behavior it is important to be ethical and not to mislead consumers or give wrong information about the product.
According to the above mentioned ethical issues related to the marketing communication tools and based on the analytical part, it can be stated that all the owners and the manager of the three restaurants have used the marketing communication tools ethically. For example, the advertisements of these three restaurants do not contain stereotypes. Their advertisements mostly have informed to customers about their restaurants, their menu, their service and their price. The same ethical right approach has also seen in the direct marketing communication tool. The direct marketing or personal selling that has been used by three restaurants to inform customers about their menu and their restaurants. Moreover, these restaurants have avoided existing any pressure to customers in using this communication tool. In additionally, public relations have been preferred by three restaurants to establish good relationship with customers and three restaurants’ sales promotions have not included great prize or coupons. Therefore, it can be stated that the owners and the manager of these restaurants have managed properly the ethical considerations about the public relations and the sales promotion. Lastly, because of all three restaurants have not used the packaging, so this marketing communication tool has not needed to examine in the context of ethical consideration by the owners and the manager of these restaurants.
5. EMPIRICAL RESULTS

In this section the collected data from the interviews has been presented. A significant amount of the collected data has been reported by providing direct quotes from the interviewees.

5.1. Empirical Results for Micro and Small Restaurants

A well-organized interview question helped to collect the needed information and understand the specific situations in the selected businesses. It has been mentioned previously three micro sized local restaurants of Umeå have chosen and two managers and one owner have interviewed that have experience in this work environment. It has been started with the general questions that have been related to their education level, the current position and their experiences. The general questions helped to have information about organization. For the next section, has been relevant with the manager or owner’s attitudes towards marketing communication tools and how they challenge for using marketing communication tools.

5.1.1. Attitudes towards marketing communication tools

5.1.2. Relationship with customers

5.1.3. Applying of marketing communication tools

5.1.4. Challenges for using marketing communication tools

5.1.5. Relationship between marketing communication tools and customer loyalty

5.1.1. Attitudes towards marketing communication tools RA, RB and RC

All three respondents have expressed their organizational attitudes related to marketing communication tools.

According to owner of RA, their restaurant business has been trying to increase their sales and profits regularly. Advertising, Internet, and sales promotions are most important marketing communication tools for increasing their sales. They have used Internet for free advertisement via mail, web sites and social media. The social media i.e. Facebook has been very important marketing communication tool for their restaurant. Although they have official web sites, they prefer using Facebook as an advertisement and public relations tool.

“We have official web sites but Facebook is more effective for increasing our sales, I mostly control Facebook and regularly put new food pictures, sales promotions and news about the restaurant” (RA)
According to the owner of RA Facebook is free, easy for using and updating information and he argued that they see positive effects of Facebook in very short term. The owner of RA always shares food and menu on Facebook and take feedback from customers in shortly. He told that the customers had asked the pizza which shared on Facebook.

“When I put new food pictures on Facebook, our sales increase in very short term” (RA)

They have preferred sales promotions as another marketing communication tool. Sales promotions have been vital for them and other small businesses in the region i.e. printed mugs, pens and calendars and discounts effect their sales positively. According to the manager of RA sales promotions and direct marketing have worked with together, because the restaurant A has used promotional products to reach their customers. They have given magnets, key rings and pens to their consumers. The manager of RA claimed that these promotions have worked well for communicating with customers because they have pressed their telephone numbers and logos on these promotional products. In addition, the manager of RA mentioned that print media and posters have been traditional methods to show their numbers but still very effective.

“Our phone numbers and contact information have been published on posters, billboards, magnets or pens. Customers usually order online or on phone” (RA)

On the other hand, they also use public relations too often. However, they see public relations as only listening customers for giving good image on public about their restaurants.

Advertisement has been important marketing communication tool for RB. According to the owner of RB brochures and menus are most vital advertisement tools for their business. They do not use local newspapers but they regularly distribute their menu and brochure. He told that the distribution of brochure or menu had been effective on their sales.

“If we do not distribute menu or brochure in one month, we recognize our sales decrease” (RB)

In addition, the owner of RB said that magnets, mugs and some special products have been important promotional product to reach their customers. They have also had special discounts for students.

The other marketing communication tools used effectively by the owner of the restaurant B i.e. public relations, advertisements, promotions and word of mouth. The manager of RB claimed that social media such as Facebook has been other marketing communication tool and their offers have been shared on Facebook successfully.

Although, the owner of RB has not had any academic background and professional background about marketing communication and its tools they use effectively the marketing communication tool word of mouth. According to the owner of RB word of mouth has been important marketing communication tool.
A lot of people immigrated to Umeå because of the war of Syria and most of these people have been Muslim. The owner of RB told that Muslim community have talked with each other about their restaurant, because they have served halal food that has meant it has been suitable for Muslim people. The owner of RB told that it has increased their sales significantly.

Likely RB, advertisement has been the most marketing communication tool for the RC. Brochures, billboards, and posters have been examples for advertisement.

“Promotions, brochures and discounts are mostly practices by our business more much than other marketing communication tools” (RC)

Word of mouth is also important marketing communication tool for them. Main aim of this communication tool, they have tried making consumers speak about their business. RC has hygiene certificates and their consumers have talked with each other about their restaurant has been very clean and hygienic. According to the manager of RC, marketing communication tools have been important for being successful in market place but they have used marketing communication tools separately from each other and there is no integration between marketing communication tools.

5.1.2. Relationship with customers

The manager or owner has established relation with consumer via marketing communication tools with or without experience. The owner of RA stated that they have always listened to their consumers´ recommendations or complaints face to face or on the phone. They have also replied emails of customers. In addition, the owner of RA stated that he has always been available on Facebook for answering questions, listening consumers´ complaints and responding as soon as possible.

“Facebook is useful tool for listening our consumers and it works like public relations mechanism, because we are always keep in touch with our consumer on Facebook” (RA)

The owner of RA stated that there has been high competition between restaurants and if they have not listened their consumers´ suggestions or complaints, they can have lost their consumers.

The owner of RA claimed that they have had strong and close relations with their consumers and they have been able to personalize their service for consumers. Close relations with consumers work like personal selling in restaurant business culture.

“We have always suggested new products to our consumers and consumers usually not refused it” (RA)
The owner of RB mentioned that they have always kept in touch with their consumers and he has had close relationship with consumers. Their business philosophy has been satisfying their consumers. They have used public relations of marketing communication tools for establishing relationship with their customers. However, their public relations activities have been limited with only listening customers. In addition, the owner of RB claimed that owing to close relations with consumers, he has been successful about selling new dishes to their consumers.

The manager of the RC also mentioned that they have had close relations with customers and the owner of the restaurant has used direct marketing as marketing communication tool. He has called or sent email to consumers about their new foods and promotions. Moreover, he claimed that they have always been available for listening consumers’ suggestions and complains.

5.1.3. Applying of Marketing Communication Tools by Micro and Small Enterprises

Marketing communication tools have been vital point for small restaurants. They have characterized the marketing area of these restaurants. The manager or owner of the restaurants has to use marketing communication tools for competing with other restaurants and they have used it, because the competition has been hard between restaurants. Umeå is small city and it has number of small and big restaurants. According to the owner of RA advertising has been the most marketing communication tool. Their main advertisement strategies are brochures and billboards. Their staffs have distributed brochures regularly all over the city.

“Brochures are main advertisement tools for us and if we do not distribute brochures, our sales decrease very sharply” (RA)

The owner of RA stated that the other marketing communication tool has been sales promotion; it has affected their sales directly. They have offered special promotional products and student discount.

Direct marketing has also helped increasing their sales. They have tried showing their phone numbers and email address in many places i.e. printed pens and calendar.

“Consumers do not want to go out physically. Because of this reason, publishing our contact number is important” (RA)

The Internet has been other important marketing communication tool for small restaurants businesses. It provides free advertisement via email, web sites and social media. However, the owner of RA mentioned that they have not used official web sites too much, the owner of RA claimed that social media like Facebook is more useful for them. The other most using communication tools have been personal selling and word of mouth. Owing to personal selling consumers have been able to call owner of the restaurant’s personal mobile phone for ordering food. Consumers can order their food on Facebook or via telephone.
The restaurant A have usually tried to adapt their real life to their marketing communication activities. The owner of RA mentioned that they have tried giving good image to consumers about their business. They have provided it with word of mouth. The manager of RA argued that it is free and effective. Although they have not had any academic background about it, they have just tried to let consumers speak their businesses and they have tried to provide it with their cheap and quality food. The manager claimed that they have been successful about doing this, because many local consumers have suggested restaurant A to their friends and family.

“Small businesses should focus on all kind of consumers i.e. students, children etc. and business should make consumers talk with each other about their businesses” (RA)

On the other side, they have also used public relations, sponsorship and packaging too often. The owner of RA mentioned that public relations and packaging have been very important for staying successful in the market. However, their public relations activities have been limited with face-to-face meetings and telephone conversation. Packaging has also costed extra for them.

“If we order packages with food pictures, writing or logos, it cost extra. Because of this reason, we do not use packaging as a communication tool” (RA)

They have believed packaging is effective communication tool but small businesses have usually not wanted to separate extra budget for packaging. The owner of RA stated that sponsorship activities have also not been priority for their business as much as other marketing communication tools like advertising or sales promotion. They have not gotten any charity boxes or sponsorship activities at their restaurants but they have sometimes given some charity to church or mosque. However, these activities have not been regular and formal.

The owner of RB mentioned that they have not often used local newspapers but they have regularly distributed their menu and brochures. The owner of RB argued that brochures and menus have been most important advertisement tools for their business. The owner of RB stated that internet have been second most important marketing communication tool after advertising for their business. They have used social media as an advertisement place for example Facebook. They have used Facebook and telephone for taking orders. Moreover, the owner of RB said that they have informed their customer about their new menu and offers via mobile and social media. Internet has been used mostly to reach target customers and they have preferred using social media.

According to the owner of RB sales promotion, direct marketing, public relations, personal selling, and word of mouth have been other marketing communication tools for them. They have had student discounts. In addition, the owner of RB mentioned that although discounts and sales promotions have limited their financial revenue, they have been vital for them. Because, high competition has been between restaurants in Umeå, so small restaurants cannot escape sales promotions. The owner of RB claimed that they have not gotten comprehensive public relation strategy, their public relation activities have been limited with only listening customers. Personal selling has been used basically by the restaurant B.
Consumers can personalize their orders. For direct marketing, their staffs have gone door to door for distributing their menu for informing customers.

Sponsorship activities or trade shows have not been priority for the restaurant B. However, special events and exhibitions have effected positively their selling. He told that they participated the food marketing during the culture city 2014 Umeå. Also, this participation provided recognition of their restaurant among the tourists who came for the culture city 2014 Umeå. Thus, their sales were effected positively owing to this special events.

“Exhibitions were related to the cultural city 2014 Umeå provided very good opportunity for our business. It was a good opportunity for public relations and advertisements” (RB)

The other less using communication tool has been packaging. According to the owner of RB, packaging has been very important marketing communication tool and they believe that it has affected consumers positively but they have offered discounts and promotions, because of this packaging has not been in their priorities. Although they have wanted to use their logos on packages they cannot afford it.

“Packaging is very important communication tool in restaurant businesses, logos and contact information could increase reputation and sales of the restaurant or food pictures could be also effective on consumers but it cost expensive for small businesses” (RB)

According to manager of RC, brochures are main advertisement tools for their business. They have distributed their menus regularly. The manager of RC also mentioned that they have seen social media like Facebook as a free advertisement opportunity. In addition, posters and billboards have been another important advertisement tools for their business.

“Billboards and posters are effective communication tools for our businesses. Telephone numbers, menus and promotions have been shown on billboards and posters” (RC)

The other marketing communication tool has been Internet for the restaurant C. Facebook have meant Internet for the restaurant C. They have mostly used social media to reach their consumers. According to the manager of RC creating and updating websites have been difficult and it has costed expensive.

“Social media is very useful for small businesses in Umeå. All students in Umeå have Facebook. However, increasing Facebook friends is not very easy. Our consumers are able to find our Facebook page but other local consumers cannot find it easy” (RC)
The owner of RC pointed out social media has been free for using as a communication tool but paying advertisement activities on social media could be expensive as well.

The restaurant C has offered special offers, gifts and student discount as sales promotions. The manager of RC also has stated that public relations have not used comprehensively like the restaurant B.

They tried to give good images on their society and listened consumers’ suggestions and complains. According to the manager of RC sponsorship and special events have been very vital for their businesses. But financial constraints do not let doing sponsorship activities effectively. They have always had charity box at their restaurant. In addition, they have always ready to join special events for example football matches.

The manager of RC has also agreed with the other two managers of two restaurants, packaging has been increased the reputation of the restaurant but it has costed expensive for small businesses.

“We used packaging and it was really effective on consumers. However, we gave up because of its cost” (RC)

5.1.4. Challenges for Applying Marketing Communication Tools

The main challenging has been financial limitation for all three restaurants. For example, packaging has been common problem. In addition, lack of expertise has been other challenge for using marketing communication tools.

The owner of RA mentioned that there has been some important barriers front of utilizing marketing communication tools for them and other small businesses in the region. Financial limitations have been one of the most important barriers for their business.

“We are not able to use packaging as a marketing communication tools because of it costs expensive” (RA)

On the other side, finding new consumers has been very difficult in small cities compared to other big cities. Moreover, reaching new consumers has costed expensive for RA. They have not been able to focus on finding new consumers, because of this reason; they have tried to keep existing consumers.

According to the owner of RB, one of the biggest challenges has been that consumers have not cared about any marketing communication tools and they have just focused on price.

“When we try to sell our goods and services, consumers focus only price and it makes difficult to focus marketing communication tools for small businesses. Because of this reason, our adverts focus always for showing quality and cheapness” (RB)
Financial difficulties have been main barrier front of using marketing communication tools for RB. However, they have tried to benefit from marketing communication tools, because lots of small restaurants have been increasing. The owner of RB believed that marketing communication tools have been important for them for competing with other small restaurants in Umeå.

The manager of RC criticised that micro and small sized restaurants cannot apply marketing communication tools very successfully without marketing expertise. The manager of RC mentioned that they have not had marketing communication background and experience. It has made difficult to organize using marketing communication tools.

“If we have marketing communication background or expertise, our business will be more successful. However, we cannot afford it financially” (RC)

5.1.5 Relationship between Marketing communication tools and Customer Loyalty

Loyalty has been very vital for all three restaurants. It has been difficult to find new consumers in small city and reaching new consumers has costed expensive. Because of these reasons, they have tried keeping their existing consumers. The manager of RC mentioned that they had given free toys or candies to children for providing consumers loyalty. Also, the families like these small gifts as well as the children. It has meant sales promotions have been helped.

“Free gifts for children is very effective for increasing our sales because when we give free toy or some candy to children, their families start to be loyal consumers for us” (RC)

The owner of RB mentioned that they have given promotional products to special customers. It has provided consumer loyalty for their restaurant. Moreover, the manager of RA claimed that owing to close relations with consumers, consumer loyalty has been provided.
6. DATA ANALYSIS

In this section, the empirical findings from the qualitative data have been analyzed. Two main themes have been developed: using of marketing communication tools in terms of three micro and small restaurants in Umeå, and determined barriers from applying marketing communication tools by micro and small restaurants in Umeå. The aim of this section has been analyzing reduced data and compared with existing theories for drawing conclusion in next section.

6.1. Using Marketing Communication Tools in terms of Three Micro and Small Restaurants in Umeå

Marketing communication tools have consisted of nine components. These are Advertising, Public relations, Sponsorship, Trade shows and Exhibitions, Internet, Packaging, Direct Marketing, Sales Promotions, Personal Selling, and Word of Mouth (Keller & Kotler, 2009, p. 512). Three local restaurants in Umeå have been examined according to using of marketing communication tools as a part of their marketing.

6.1.1. Advertising

Local newspapers have been effective advertising tools for small businesses for reaching local consumers. Moreover, billboards, printed calendars, shopping bags, pens, bus stops, posters, directories, cinemas, balloons, even cars’ windows have been suitable for advertising by small businesses (Patten, 2001, p. 83). Local newspapers have not been often used for advertisement by these small restaurant businesses in Umeå. The managers and owner of these restaurants claimed that local newspapers have not been cheap and successful to increase their sales and number of customers. However, brochures and posers have been most important advertising tools for these restaurants. The two owners of restaurants have given free presents to the special customers such as mugs, pens and calendars. However, they have used printed calendars, mugs and pens very limitedly because of its high cost. On the other side, other advertisement tools such as, cinemas, bus stops, cars’ windows have not been used by small restaurants in Umeå. In addition, social media has been preferred for cheap advertisement place by these three restaurants.

6.1.2. Public Relations

Small businesses should publicize their news and let community know about their business on news (Patten, 2001, 171). According to Dyer (1996, p. 44) small businesses should involve public relations for creating good image on community. For example, sponsoring small and local organizations such as children basketball tournaments or supporting charities.
Patten (2001, p. 180) claimed that local channels have been important to increase quality of public relations of small businesses. Based on the findings, these three small restaurants have not been successful for showing their promotions, new products, awards and charity news on local news or newspapers. This doesn’t necessarily mean that they do not perform any of these activities. For example, the restaurant B has used local charity channels giving charity to Church and Mosque to take attention of these communities. However, the restaurant A has not been successful for showing its charity news to society on news.

On the other hand, during the time I have spent in these restaurants, I have experienced the close relationship between the owners and the customers; the owners were engaged with their customers through Face-to-Face or phone conversations, or through social media. The focus of these restaurant owners is to listen their customers’ suggestions and complains and this is the main PR activity they do successfully.

Based on these findings, I could conclude that these micro and small restaurants have very limited PR strategy due to the difficulty of gaining visibility of the costly activities they perform. Therefore, they focus on customer satisfaction to achieve good reputation on the community.

6.1.3. Sponsorship, Trade shows and Exhibitions

Local charities, sponsoring local teams, educational and cultural activities have been most popular sponsorship activities for micro and small sized businesses (Zinger and O’Reilly, 2010, p. 29). Exhibitions and trade shows have provided good communication opportunities such as meeting with new friends and consumers. Trade shows a kind of networking but it has to be planned well rather than individual meetings (Gillmore et. al. 2001, p. 7). During the interviews, the two owners and the manager of the restaurants have shared their common belief in the strong impact of these activities on the brand recognition and new customer acquisition.

These companies have not sponsored any local teams or charities as well as they have not been part of any educational and cultural activities. During the interviews, the restaurant owners and the manager have mentioned the high cost of the sponsorships and the strict budgets they could spend on these activities. One of the restaurant manager has mentioned their attempt to be one of the sponsors of the local football team, but they couldn’t afford the cheapest sponsorship package.

The similar problem is observed with the trade shows and exhibitions. Again, one of the restaurant owner mentioned how the European culture city 2014 Umeå provided new customers and extra profit for their business. Since then they have been very eager to attend trade shows, but they do not know how to plan and attend the right tradeshows for their business. I have observed the similar concern of the other restaurant owner and manager. I can conclude that the strongest reason under the low attendance to trade shows and exhibitions is the lack of marketing knowledge and lack of access to the relevant expertise.
6.1.4. E-communication

Internet has made traditional marketing communication tools reachable on digital place for small business i.e. cheap feedback from consumers via emails. It could be also used as a public relations and direct marketing (Harrigan et al., 2011, p. 129). Based on the results of the interviews all these three restaurants in Umeå have mostly used social media and emails to advertise and inform their consumers. During the interviews, the owners and the manager of the restaurants stated that they have had official web sites but they have not preferred for using their web sites as a marketing communication tool. It has been more expensive than social media i.e. Facebook. Based on findings, I could conclude that Although, these three restaurants have not had professional expertise for using internet professionally, the owners and manager are able to use internet efficiently.

6.1.5. Packaging

Packaging is a kind of advertisement tool for businesses and it fulfils several communication functions. For example, packaging attracts brand attention, identifies the brand and the product (De Pelsmacker et al., 2010, p. 491). The aim of packaging is to increase sales, premium products, values and customer convenience (Patten, 2001, p. 126). The manager and the owners of these local restaurants have not used packaging as a marketing communication tool. During the interviews, the restaurant owners and the manager have mentioned the high cost of the design and production of the packaging. However, they think that packaging can increase reputation of the businesses. I can conclude that the main reason behind the lack of packaging is the lack of design knowledge and lack of budget.

6.1.6. Direct Marketing

Direct marketing has provided that consumers can buy products without going out, they can order their orders online or via telephone their orders (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010, p. 514). Direct marketing has been a part of marketing communication mixes. Main tools of direct marketing have been advertisements, mobile texts, print media, posters, mail, e-mail etc. (Patten, 2001, p. 131). All three local restaurants have been using brochures, menus, posters, billboards and social media channels to communicate their contact information such as physical and e-mail address and phone number. In addition, using the advantage of being small sized firm, the owners have close and good relations with their loyal customers and they have been using this opportunity to inform these customers through one-to-one talks or phone calls on their consumers about their promotions, new menus or new meals.

6.1.7. Sales Promotions

These three local restaurants of Umeå have used sales promotions as a marketing communication tool for increasing sales. Sales promotions are divided into two parts. First one is the “consumer promotions”. It consists of premiums, gifts, prize and incentives (De Pelsmacker et al., 2010, p. 412).
The other sales promotion is the “trade promotions” which includes free merchandise, discount and bonus (De Pelsmacker et al., 2010, p. 422). The owners of the restaurant A and the restaurant B have used trade promotions by giving free presents to the special customers such as mugs, pens and calendars and also by giving special discounts for students and loyal customers. At the same time, the two owners of restaurants argued that these promotional products cost expensive and it cannot be afforded by small businesses and they have also used printed calendars, mugs and pens very limitedly. On the other side, the manager of the restaurant C has preferred consumer promotions by giving small presents i.e. some small toys or candies to children before leaving the restaurant. Based on these findings, I could conclude that these small size restaurants have different sales promotions for different kind of customers.

6.1.8. Personal Selling

Personal selling has been highly effective communication tool because it is adaptive to personal requirements of customers. It has been different from other communication tools because it has been a dyadic communication tool which means that business and consumers on both side are involved in the communications (Duncan, 2002, p. 624). Spending some time with these local firms, it has been very easy to observe the proactive relationship between the restaurants and the customers. These three local restaurants of Umeå have been using the advantage of being small and local very wisely and they have focused on creating good relations with local consumers, therefore they have been able to personalize their service for their loyal consumers.

6.1.9. Word of Mouth

Word of Mouth within this context is consumers giving feedback about their experience to their network, simply which is as simple as telling a friend or a family on how much one likes the product or the service. This marketing could be supported by way of several of activities such as, viral, blog, social media that enable companies or consumers to communicate with consumer and marketers (Investopedia). It has been very strong marketing tool because nothing can be more effective on customers then what their friends or family say (Duncan, 2002, p. 558). Nevertheless, word of mouth has not been anymore only the oral communication between people, as the developments in telecommunication has made online tools also a place for word of mouth i.e. text messages and e-mail (Chen & Xie, 2004, p. 1).

I could conclude that these three restaurants of Umeå have been aware of the importance of WOM. Even though they have not used any professional expertise or consultancy, they have built different WOM strategies to increase the number of their consumers. For example, the focus of the Word of Mouth strategy of the restaurant B has been to make the Muslim community talk about restaurant serving food permissible for Muslims to eat, which is called “halal food”. Also restaurant C have emphasized the effectiveness of the Hygiene. Consumers have suggested the restaurant C to others because of their hygiene. According to the owner of the restaurant C, consumers have played vital role about losing or reaching new consumers. Another example is the word of mouth strategy of the restaurant A, which is to spread the positive message on the price-quality value that they deliver cheap but high quality food. According to the manager of the restaurant A, they have been successful on this strategy as the new customers visiting the restaurant have mentioned that they have come because they heard about Restaurant A serving cheap but quality food.
6.2 Determined Barriers in terms of Using Marketing Communication Tools by Micro and Small restaurants in Umeå

Financial difficulties have been main barriers for using marketing communication tools for all three small restaurant businesses in Umeå. For instance, using printed pens and calendar etc. for advertising.

The owners of the two restaurants argued that it has costed expensive and it cannot be afforded by small businesses. Nevertheless, the restaurant A and the restaurant B has also used printed calendars and pens very limitedly. They have given these promotional products only special consumers. We could see another clear financial barrier for packaging. Although they have observed that packaging has been very effective marketing communication tool, they cannot afford cost of packaging.

On the other hand, lack of expertise has been other barrier for them to use marketing communication tools effectively. All these three local restaurants have had official web sites but they have not preferred using it as a marketing communication tool, because, these three local restaurants have not had professional expertise or consultancy to use Internet professionally. Managers and owners of three local restaurants have shaped the use of Internet with personal experiences and senses. The other example for lack of expertise has been word of mouth. These three local restaurants in Umeå have not had any professional expertise but they have tried to use WOM unprofessionally to increase their consumers.
7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

In this chapter, has included answering of the research question of this study. The main aim of this chapter has been that summarizing the results of this research. In addition, this chapter has been concluded recommendation for future research.

7.1. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to gain deeper understanding of the usage of the marketing communication tools as a part of their marketing by micro and small sized restaurants. Therefore, this study was conducted as a multiple case study executing three semi-structured interviews of the owner-managers to get an insight on how these local restaurants use marketing communication tools. The gained knowledge served as a basis for answering the research question of this study: How do micro and small enterprises apply marketing communication tools as a part of their marketing? The gathered qualitative data was analyzed using thematic network analysis.

There may be some similarities and differences between micro and small restaurant businesses on the way they use marketing communication tools. These three restaurants have mostly preferred advertisement and internet as their marketing activities. Moreover, advertisements have been the most common communication tool for all three restaurants, such as using brochures, posters and printed menus as an advertising tool. Also, the manager and owners of these local restaurants have perceived and used some of the other marketing communication tools which have been categorized separately in this paper for the purpose of advertising. For example, the marketing activities under public relations and sales promotions have been practiced as advertising activities. The second most commonly used marketing communication tool in micro and small sized restaurant businesses is the internet. These three restaurants have used online communication channels i.e. emails and social media very actively to advertise and to communicate with their consumers. The other most popular marketing communication tools could be list the exhibitions and sales promotions i.e. the European cultural city Umeå 2014 and football matches of local teams.

Marketing investments or innovations to grow are not possible without adequate finance for all companies but particularly for micro and small sized companies. In this research, the findings have indicated the difficulty of allocating finance as one of the main obstructions to develop an effective marketing plan and therefore using wider range of marketing communication tools for the micro and small enterprises. Due to financial barriers, micro and small restaurants have not used marketing communication tools according to their needs. For example, all three restaurants agreed on the importance of using of packaging on branding but they haven’t separated extra budget for it. In addition, public relations have been important part of their marketing, however, small local restaurants cannot use public relations comprehensively. The managers and owner of these three restaurants have always listened to their consumers face-to-face or on the phone. However, they have not able to publicize their activities on newspapers.

The impact of financial constraints also effected in sponsorship activities. Therefore, sponsorship activities of small restaurant businesses in Umeå have been very limited and unstructured. Word of mouth has been also important communication activities for small restaurants. All of these three restaurants have tried to build a positive message for their
consumers to spread about their restaurant businesses. Although, lack of expertise and knowledge about marketing communication, WOM can be used successfully by small local restaurant businesses.

Lastly, personal selling has worked as public relations in small restaurant businesses. The managers and owner have always tried to have good relation with consumers.

### 7.2 Recommendation for the Further Research

There were some limitations in this study. One limitation was that the semi-structured interview with three samples of managers and owner of the restaurants was used to collect data. In order to have a better position for generalizing the findings of the results, a wider sample has been required instead of a small sample that was used for this study. Another limiting aspect was that this study was investigated specific business sector like restaurant business and the restaurants selected in this study were limited geographically with Umeå. The research question and objectives aimed for finding use of marketing communication functions by micro and small sized restaurant businesses of Umeå. The selection of the restaurants from different places can help to acquire scattered views for the further study. A wider perspective of the subject can be included in this study if a questionnaire with a larger sample could be used.

In addition, the previous researches helped for examining about the research question and objectives. However, there has not been too much specific investigation about the using of marketing communication and its tools applied by small restaurants. The previous researches have been mainly focusing on multinational enterprises which face totally different barriers and concerns on the usage of the marketing tools than micro and small enterprises. Also, the existing relevant previous researches have been usually generalizing the term small business. Small business is a complex business and management discipline and it includes hundreds different sectors. Hence, further researches can discover the similarities and differences about the use of the marketing communication tools between different types of small businesses and more precisely further study can investigate how the local small business of different types can increase the amount of their consumers by using marketing communication tools.
8. QUALITY OF THE RESEARCH

In this section the quality of the research that is its credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity in qualitative terms will be outlined.

8.1 Credibility

The acceptability of the research by others, where the research is conducted in principles of good practice and occurrence of respondent validation to the findings entails the credibility of the research (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 400). To conduct the study, the author has applied the necessary rules and requirements needed to do a research. The findings of the results from the respondents have sent to my interviewees to make sure that the information they give is in a coincidence with results obtained from the study. Based on that, the analysis and conclusion of the paper portrayed. Also, using respondent validation technique, using triangulation technique is recommended for the credibility of a study in qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 401). As mentioned at the methodological part of this study used semi-structured interview technique was used to collect the data that restrict the data to only one source and it weakened the quality of the research with respect to this issue.

8.2 Transferability

In qualitative studies with small sample size, deep description of the studies context to give a wide range of information about the finding is defined as the transferability of the research (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 402). The author showed the detailed of the using of marketing communication tools by micro enterprises with detail descriptions of the marketing communication tools. This helped to understand the issue by others. The author expressed clearly the processes of how the data were collected and analyzed in order to reach into a certain conclusion for this study.

8.3 Dependability

It is called dependability to adopt an "audit" approach to keeping a complete record of all phases of the study. (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 403). While conducting the research, the author kept all the information and approaches used in the study that could be accessible whenever needed. These were the problem formulation, selection of research participant, interview transcript and the analyzed data. These records helped me to investigate the necessary steps to carry out this work.

8.4 Confirmability

The researcher should be as objective as possible (values and theoretical inclination) to find out the result of the research (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 403). The author tried as much as possible to keep the research from her own personal values. Furthermore, in order to relate the findings to previous theories, the theories were used appropriately.
8.5 Authenticity

This criterion concerns the broader political issues of a research, and there are different criteria in this category (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 403). This study is based on the viewpoints of the restaurant owners/managers involved why the author have ensured the fairness of this study.
REFERENCES


Internet Resource

APPENDIX 1

Interview Questions

General questions

Position (Owner or Manager)
Educational level
Work experience
Number of years within the restaurant
How many employees within the restaurant

Starting questions

What is your attitude towards marketing communication tools?
What do you communicate with customers?
How do you create relationship with customers?

Main questions

How does your restaurant business use advertising as marketing communication tool?
(Advertising: Newspapers, direct mail, catalogue, technical reports, videos, and branch magazines)
How does your restaurant business use public relations as marketing communication tool?
(Public relations: Media relations/publicity, employee/member relations, community relations, special events)
How does your restaurant business use sponsorship and exhibitions as marketing communication tool?
(Sponsorship and Exhibitions: Sport teams, cultural programs, arts, education, select the right shows and exhibition)
How does your restaurant business use Internet as marketing communication tool?
(Internet: web-site, social media i.e. Facebook)
How does your restaurant business use packaging as marketing communication tool?
(Packaging: Specific design and printed bags)
How does your restaurant business use direct marketing as marketing communication tool?
(Direct Marketing: Catalogue companies, mobile text, mail, telephone)
How does your restaurant business use sales promotion as marketing communication tool?
(Sales promotions: Premium, price reductions, gifts, competitions and sales promotions)
How does your restaurant business use personal selling as marketing communication tool?
(Personal Selling: Face to face sales calls, meetings, telephone sales calls, conference seminars)
How does your restaurant business use word of mouth as marketing communication tool?
(Word of mouth: Oral, person-to-person communication)
Do you have any other alternatives that they can be used replacing them?
What is the effectiveness of marketing communication/ is it really necessary for your business?
Do you compare effectiveness of marketing communication tools? If you do, which marketing communication tools are more appropriate for your enterprise?
Are there any differences of using marketing communication tools year by year?
What are the biggest challenges for using marketing communication tools?
Do you have any marketing communication experience as owner-manager?
Do you have any written marketing communications strategies or plans for using marketing communication tools to achieve your marketing goals?

Do you have any training programs to your staff or employee for using marketing communications tools effectively? If yes, Why? What? If no, Why not?

**Concluding Questions**

What do you think is the aim of marketing communication tools?
Do you personalize product and service to customers?
Do marketing communications tools help to do it?
Do marketing communications tools increase customer loyalty?