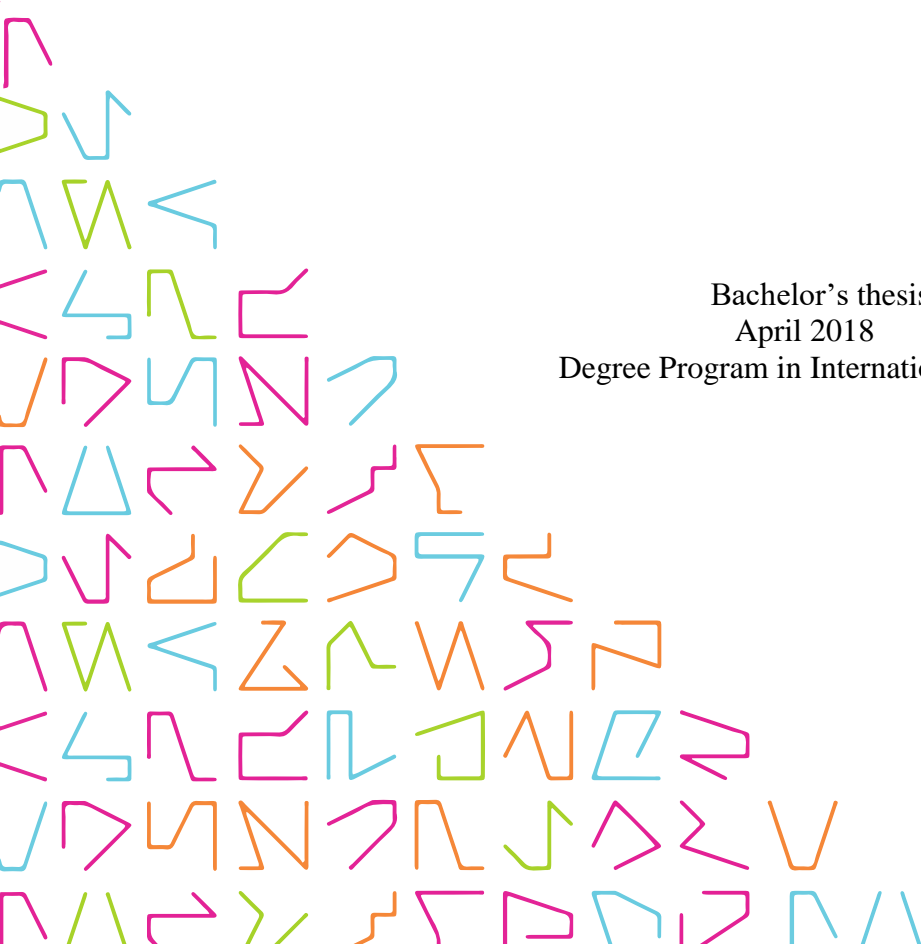


STUDENT AMBASSADORS

Working & how they influence others

Abubakar Tariq

Bachelor's thesis
April 2018
Degree Program in International Business



ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tampere University of Applied Sciences
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Abubakar Tariq:
Student Ambassadors
Working & how they influence others

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The study aims to explore a new term, which is named after Student Ambassador Program in the geographical location of Finland. This is a new trend in Finland, and at this instance, only a few universities have adopted this program. This study aims to find the workability factor of Student ambassador program and its implementation in a particular organization.

In this study, a qualitative research method is used to carry research and interviews were conducted to get the in-depth understanding from experts on the issue at hand. There is a limited amount of data from previous researchers available on this topic, and it required a lot of work to carry on research. The respondents in the interviews were 05 in total. The researcher used their knowledge and experience to get the full insights.

This research provides a full insight into Student Ambassadors program and about making its structure. The effects and benefits of Student Ambassadors program for an organization as well as for students. The factors which can affect the performance and workability of this program has been identified in this study.

The research fills the chasm to get the necessary understanding of this program. Finland is a vibrant country with a lot of momentum to adopt new things, primarily which can affect the market and its environment in a very positive way. The student ambassador program requires a lot of effort to implement, but at the same time, it is beneficial as well. In comparison with the efforts to benefits, the benefits ratio is much higher for the organizations and students. There are few suggestions in this study as well to polish the operational capability of the prescribed organization, and there is detailed information about structuring this program. As far as concerned with the benefits and advantages of this program, students will undoubtedly recognize this program, and the organization will get its exposure countrywide on behalf of bright students.

Key words: Student Ambassadors, Student Tutors, SCIL, Finland

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GLOSSARY or ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

TAMK	Tampere University of Applied Sciences
SA	Student Ambassadors
SCIL	Smart Campus Innovation Lab
P	Participants (1,2,3,4)

1. INTRODUCTION

The topic of this thesis is about student ambassadors, their working in the educational environment and their influence on people. For a long time, universities in Finland are using “*student tutors*” as their representative and role models. The trend is changing now because of the new needs and duties of previously working student tutors. “*Student ambassador*” is a new term in educational institutions. This program could be joined by anyone, like students in Schools, Colleges and Universities. The “*Student Ambassador Program*” is a leading prospect for students who are devoted to serving and representing Colleges, Schools & Universities. Student tutors are mainly concerned with the university tours, information about the starting of studies and some specific matters about the university in general. “*Student Ambassadors*” mainly concerned with the duties, designed explicitly by the respected institute and act as a face of that particular institute. There are some other matters also involved in their interest of getting into this leadership program. In general, SA Program and *Student tutors* are same in a perspective but the scope and benefits are far more different in Student Ambassador Program. In America, the UK and other European countries, the universities are also offering this program as a paid job to raise their interest and to support their living (Bristol, 2017).

1.1 Student Ambassador Program in Finland

In Finland, this trend is new and still under consideration for different universities. At this instance, there are just a few universities, which are using this “*student ambassadors*” program. The good thing is that this trend is emerging now. Finland is a most attractive choice for international students for their studies, because of its quality education and excellent living standards. So, there are many students, who show their interest in being a “*Student Ambassador.*” At this stage, the universities are not paying anything to “*Student Ambassadors,*” except for the tours and activities outside the campus but it is still an attractive offer for the students to add stars in their profiles with most professional experience, as well as the fulfillment of their credit hours. In Finland, there is a platform, which is already running this “*Student Ambassadors Program.*” The “*Ambassadors network of South-West Finland*” is a working body and managing Student Ambassadors. Currently, there are approximately 25 “*Student Ambassadors*” are working and their goals include, spreading kind words about Finland, making people to invest In Finland, providing general information about Finland and all the information about studies related

matters. They have an apparent mission to promote the region as a business environment and study destination to their home country (Network, 2017).

1.2. Impact of Student Ambassador Program

The “*Student Ambassador Program*” has long-term effects on the institution as well as on student’s career. This program helps them to keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date and more advanced. Students can get a lifelong learning experience, polish their communication skills, management skills, etc. These kinds of skills could help a student in his future professional life because it has become a mandatory requirement in the knowledge economy. The world is advancing in almost every field. So, it is impossible for employers to hire the people, who do not have modern skills to execute their tasks and work-related matters. In this scenario, just the degree cannot help to ensure the future of one’s professional life but there are things like, strong communication skills, higher confidence level, teamwork, management, leadership can help anyone to ensure their future’s professional life safety. The “*Student Ambassador Program*” plays a vital role in a student’s life by making him aware of his/her abilities, potential and intensity of getting to understand towards his/her work. In this program, students show their commitment to their work, which surely helps a student to get a better understanding of professional life before even starting it. Regarding institution’s point, it also enables the institute to polish its image and shows the quality of education through their student ambassadors. In Finland, we have an international standard educational level, which makes students come here for their education from all over the world. So, every student has the different educational background, based on their studies mode and curriculum. In this situation, some students feel more difficult to get used to “Finnish education” and the systems by which they run their operations, some of them do not have enough confidence to take part in activities, which can flourish their confidence level and make them more confident and ethically strong person. This factor may cause a consecutive loss in performance of a student, and it further leads to a big dent in institution’s performance level. As being a Student Ambassador, a student can counter all these problems, and even the institution can get more benefits by showing the world that we have these students with these qualities and they are confident, team leaders, managers, etc. The participation of students in this program enables them to show their commitment to their work and their future. By this, an institution can also raise its face value because If their students are more competent, then the image of a university will surely get more exposure.

1.3. Difference between student Tutors and Ambassadors

Student ambassador program is same in a sense as “the student tutor program.” There are no much differences in these two terms. In Finland, most universities are already running this student tutor program. Most of the universities are running this program directly, and some of the universities are running this program through their student unions. The primary duties and roles in the student tutors program are to guide new students, arrange tours within university premises, provide solutions for the new students and make them comfortable in the new environment.

Student Ambassador program is same as the student tutor program but hold superiority in some benefits. In student ambassador program, students get more and more benefits regarding their personality making, confidence building, presentation skills, communication skills and much more. In short, students act as a face of the institution. In student ambassadors program, students do the same job as in student tutors program but perform some extra duties as well. Some of the critical responsibilities and roles of student ambassadors are as follows.

- Arrange information session for new students.
- Make them understand the surroundings and make them absorb the new environment.
- Resolve the issues regarding studies.
- Help the students in any issues.
- The most important thing is to act as a face of the university and strive to make a better image of the university in front of stakeholders.
- As being a role model and ambassadors of the university or institution, the ambassador should inspire others.
- Through their better communication skills, they need to spread kind words about their respective institution.
- Though this student ambassador program carries additional tasks as compared to student tutors, so it’s not wrong to say that they are also working with a marketing staff of the university or institution.
- Just because of these extra tasks and duties, while they are also studying in their university will polish their skills because besides getting the bookish knowledge they are even getting practical experience.

So, the main difference is about workability and practical benefits that students and institutions get. The students get many benefits from personal aspect as well as from

professional aspect. Student tutor program is limited in scope, but the horizons of student ambassadors are vast.

2 RESEARCH PLAN

2.1. Introduction

In this modern age, education has become more sophisticated and fruitful because of new teaching ways and the factors that have effects on the learning of a student. Education has become a mandatory part of one's life because, without basic education, no one can survive. "*Student Ambassadors*" act like student leaders as well as the face of the respective institution. This concept has already been running successfully for most of the European countries as well as in the UK and America. In Finland, it is a quite new approach to getting involved with the students in a deeper way. Most of the universities in Finland have traditional "*Student Tutor program*". Since this is a new approach in Finland but the trend has on its way, and now the universities have started to recognize this program to help students and to get more recognition among other universities through able students. The "*Student Ambassador Program*" is also helpful and beneficial for the students because of its contents that allow students to raise their confidence level, polish their skills, multiply their learning and to get credits against their studies.

2.2. Choice of Topic

The researcher started his internship at "*Floworks*" which is part of SCIL (Smart campus innovation lab) network at Tampere University of Applied Sciences. SCIL used to design new development projects with the collaboration of different stakeholders to benefit higher education consortium. At this instance, SCIL is creating a lot of development projects, especially the "*Tampere 3*" project. During the practical training at Floworks (TAMK), the researcher got to know that the SCIL will probably hire some students as a "*Student Ambassadors*" to get the international level exposure and recognition among the Tampere 3 community. The researcher got the topic and started working on it. They offered this unique issue to the researcher and wanted him to do thorough research on it.

2.3. Introduction of SCIL

Smart campus innovation lab (SCIL) is a living lab and an open source development community which is providing development projects with the collaboration of professionals from different fields, educators and students from various degree programs.

SCIL offers development projects to students to improve their skills and enhance their learning. By using learning experience from SCIL, students can prove their notable existence in their professional careers.

2.4. Background & Development of Topic

The educational trend has moved to another era. All universities and colleges are more concerned with their face value and reputation along with the quality of education that they are providing. Nowadays, students are traveling to European countries from all over the globe to gain higher education because of European education system. Finland holds a prominent position in studies among other European countries because of its quality and state of the art education system. The fact is that the entire world is facing tough times regarding economy, especially in Europe we can see a lot of countries, which were previously providing free of cost education, have now implemented certain fees to counter the costs. In this scenario, there is need to make education more smart, attractive and beneficial for students. In Finland, this is a new approach. There should be clear guidelines about this program and the structure. There should be defined roles, duties and responsibilities of students and how they can polish their skills through this program. Shortly, almost all the universities will use this program to get the benefits out of this program.

2.4.1 Aims

This study aims to find the concept of student ambassadors, the process of being a Student ambassador, their working and influence on people and to make a detailed structure of implementing this program at *SCIL*. Moreover, this study is also aiming to find out current needs of Student Ambassadors program and underlying motives behind the idea. The effects of Student Ambassadors Program will be analyzed as they relate to the geographical location of Finland. The following sub-questions will be answered during this project:

- What are Student Ambassadors?
- What is the process to become a Student Ambassador?
- What is the difference between *Student Ambassador Program* and traditional *Student Tutors*?

- How will the people from different backgrounds perceive this program?
- What are the main responsibilities and roles of Student Ambassadors?
- How the Student Ambassadors, influence students and other people around them.
- How the *Student Ambassador Program* could be more beneficial for SCIL, instead of following the traditional *Student Tutors Program*.
- How the *Student Ambassadors* carry their operations within the SCIL?

2.4.2 Objectives

The objectives of this research are pursued in a step-by-step framework, where each step is related to the next one. The levels are as follows:

- Critically analyzing the available academic literature to understand what is currently known about Student Ambassadors.
- Describing what exactly is Student Ambassadors Program and its valuable and constructive effects on the people and respective institute. Conducting interviews to collect the primary data about the issues at hand.
- Critically analyzing the primary data using qualitative research method.
- Finding the answers to research questions and providing appropriate conclusions and recommendations for the enrichment of literature.

2.5. Initial Research Task

This project will explain that how can we make “*Student Ambassador Program*” into a working structure and how it will benefit the *SCIL* as well as students. The most important thing is to make a real-time structure for *SCIL* to get the *Student Ambassador Program*. One more thing is to define the operations which will be carried out by Students and *SCIL*.

2.6. Initial information about Data

A questionnaire was constructed to get the necessary information out of people who are already working as “*Student Ambassadors*.” The researcher interviewed five “*Student Ambassadors*” from different universities across Finland. Specifically, two participants from “*All Bright Tampere*” because they have plenty of people working already in the same field and they have relatively more experience. The interviews were conducted flexibly, for example, four participants filled out the questionnaire via email and remaining one student was able to give his answers in person.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Technique

Qualitative research is “a field of inquiry in its own right” that “privileges no single methodology over any other “ (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Research techniques differ by the topic for which it has been conducted. The researcher used qualitative research method to do the research. The reason behind using this method is to get a better understanding of the topic. The study requires the specific and detailed perception of the issue. Data collection is most important part of the research to get the full awareness about the chosen topic. The qualitative research method is mainly used to acquire the experience story of a specific group. It does not contain numbers but the data in its purest form. There are several types of qualitative research approach. Observation and interviews are the main courses of qualitative research approach besides some other types. The qualitative research tends to provide information as according to researcher’s understanding. This is why this research method considered as soft, and it could contain multiple interpretations. In observation approach of qualitative research method, the researcher used to observe its target group without letting them know about the observations. In this case, the researcher immediately records the data. In interviews, the researcher used to make a set of questions which could be structured or semi-structured. It means that the questions could be pre-defined or could be changed or add new concerning the situation or based on ground reality. The interview method can be applied to get the information from an individual, and it could also be done by focusing a group (Solutions, 2017).

3.2. Data Collection

There are many data collection methods in qualitative research method. It explains the type of data and collection method. The researcher used interview method to extract data. There are many types of interviews but the main difference is with their terminologies (Cassell & Symon, 2004).

The researcher organized semi-structured interviews to collect data. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher can add additional questions, whenever needed. In interviews, the participant can easily express their opinions attitude towards the specific topic. Through an interview, a researcher can quickly get the data in the precise and natural form. The researcher used semi-structured interviews to extract the data. In a semi-structured interview, a researcher can ask any other questions regarding the topic. So, it does not always stick to the pre-defined structure. In this project, the researcher used some

pre-defined questions that need to be answered by interview respondents, but besides that, there were also some different questions. There was a reason to use semi-structured interview due to the diversity of educational and working background of the interview respondents. As there were 05 respondents of the interview in which all have the educational background and 01 of them is having a different working background and serving voluntarily as an Ambassador.

There are three essential types of interviews. Structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews differentiate each other by their structure. In the structured and semi-structured interviews, some pre-conceived questions and ideas need to be discussed with the interviewee. Unlike structured interview, the semi-structured interview is followed up by other questions, rather than pre-defined questions. In unstructured interviews, there are no predefined questions, and it initially starts with asking a question and rest is followed by the response of the first question (P. Gill, 2008).

3.3. Target Group

The fact is that this thesis has a unique topic and it was challenging to narrow down the people for an interview because of the interview, requires only topic and field, concerned people. The researcher contacted numerous different “*Student Ambassadors*” from different universities and from various European countries. The researcher made contact through an email, especially to those who are residing out of state, from various universities and are different nationals. The researcher asked every participant about their concerns on showing their identity, but almost all of them had some concerns regarding their names and institutional background for the interview reference. This step was taken to ensure the confidentiality issues which may further cause problems, but this step has successfully finished. The researcher did not use their names and institutional backgrounds to protect their identity. However, this process went well, and the researcher acquired the handsome amount of data about the topic.

3.4. Interview Prototype

This study mainly refers to “*Student Ambassadors working and their influential role*”. So, the interview questionnaire was made especially for concerned persons. The main and the most important thing in this part of qualitative research is to design a valid and

efficient research questions. These questions lead to data collection through their answers (Monique Hennink, 2011).

Summer holidays caused many problems while the researcher making contact with interested people because there are lots of international students are studying here in Finland, and most of them are spending their holidays away. The questionnaire contained five fundamental questions that ensure the minimum wastage of participant's time. The questions include the most basic information about their working, the process to become a Student Ambassador, their duties and their influential role among others. There are explicit steps that need to be taken before making an efficient, effective and understandable questionnaire. The steps for making efficient questionnaire includes basic understanding of research method, basic knowledge about the *Student Ambassador* program in other countries to get the answers about this program, etc. The interview consists of open and close-ended questions, etc. (Pew Research Center, 2017).

3.5. Procedure

The process starts from research process that leads to data collection method. The participant's availability was a big issue during this task because of the summertime, and people are spending holidays. So, the questionnaire was a best option to execute this work. Although, people took extra time because of their busy schedule during their holidays the interviews were successfully organized. The researcher conducted five interviews across different countries and different occupations. The data extracted according to participants convenience, and it was clean and free from any partiality and favoritism.

3 RESULTS & FINDINGS

In this chapter, the researcher will explain the results and analyze the data collected through interviews. The researcher carried 05 interviews from different people who are studying and already working as *Student Ambassadors* at various universities. There is also one interview with a person from the different organization but acting as an Ambassador for a city.

3.1. Student Ambassadors

Student Ambassadors are part of student unions and act as a role model for other new and prospective students. The interviewees respond this question in the following way.

“Student Ambassadors are current students at a university that help out prospective students with any questions they might have related to their studies, the university, the city, or even student life.” P1

“Student ambassadors at TUT, commonly known as “teekkari” ambassadors, are students who travel to various schools, garrisons and study fairs to tell what it is like studying at TUT. These students are paid modest wages for this type of marketing plus the ambassadors get valuable experience of performing in front of an audience, while the university and potential applicants benefit from the positive student perspective in university marketing. The point is to tell your own story of how you came to choose TUT and what the studies have been like so far as well as giving the interesting general information about the university”. P2

“Student ambassadors in my university are representatives of students governed by the student union. They represent in school’s work groups (for example Developing education workgroup), welfare groups (Student welfare group) and they arrange events for students to participate in”. P3

Student Ambassadors are all about the help that other students get as well as repute for their institutions. In the current scenario, the educational institutions are all about their face value and the quality of education that they are providing.

3.2. How to become a Student Ambassador

The researcher asked different students about the process to become a student ambassador. Almost all of them have followed the same procedure, but there are exceptions that depend on their institution's internal policies. The procedure has been explained in the answers.

“At my university, one can become a student ambassador by being asked by the program directors for this position (as this happened to me), but also by just emailing the International Office telling that you want to volunteer and want to help out the university.” P1

“Any student of my university is eligible to work as a student ambassador. The requirements for the job are participation in ambassador training during autumn semester, some experience of studying at TUT and a positive attitude towards representing TUT to potential applicants. Most of the presentations and fairs are in Finnish, however, and alas fluent Finnish is often an additional requirement for ambassadorial duties”. P2

“You can become a student representative by two ways: Either you can join in on an active campus group, which services that campuses students and they keep open an office where you can buy overalls, merchandise, and memberships for the student union. The other way is to get elected to the council of representatives. Each year there is an election on all campuses, and anybody who is a member of the student union can become a nominee. You can also get on the board of the student union, but it's rare to get there without being a representative or campus active”. P3

“Becoming a Tampere Ambassador is quite easy as after one fills the form online. It only requires the applicant to answer the questions which eventually gets published online along with their profile”. P4

“You can just ask the concerned office to join the team of Student Ambassadors. There is one thing you need the most before getting in, that is passion. P5

There are different ways to become a Student Ambassador in different institutions. Some of them filled an online form, some asked their institute's director for this program, and some of them joined student unions to join this program, but one thing is common in all

of them which is about following the same procedure for taking part in this program. The procedure is about volunteering for this program which shows their interest.

3.3. Communications & Technological approach

This section will present the proposal that Student ambassadors are taking to carry on their communications with other ambassadors, their institutions and with the help of different technologies. The respondents have their own experiences which are presented in the following way.

“We mainly use email. So, our emails are provided on the website, and a prospective student can email us with any question they might have. However, if in the conversation over the email someone wants to speak via the phone to you, that is possible too. However this is completely up to the student ambassador, and if they are comfortable doing so. Also, all the communication from the university to us as student ambassadors is via email too, and we sometimes have meetings to discuss several student-related topics”. P1

“All information regarding potential ambassador gigs is communicated via email. There is no instant messaging group for ambassadors to date, although a WhatsApp group is planned for the upcoming academic year to ease communication. Working as an ambassador is highly independent work, though, and therefore extensive communication between ambassadors is not necessary unless there is a presentation requiring more than one ambassador at a time”. P2

“We use mobile phones, computers (mostly laptops) and tablets. Also, pen and paper if we are brainstorming something. Our communications go through e-mail, calling or a chat service (google hangouts). Sometimes we use Facebook if we discuss with someone who has not activated their Google services (we offer a google account)”. P3

“The communication channel is mostly informal. We make use of social media very often. Facebook group and LinkedIn has been the most used platforms by Tampere Ambassadors. Additionally, there are official events where the ambassadors come together to meet new ambassadors and share their journey”. P4

“The technological approach of our job is not so formal. We often use basic communication channels like, “WhatsApp” and “Facebook” to communicate with each other. P5

As per information provided by *Student Ambassadors*, they are all communicating with each other informally, apart from special events and conditions. They are using the most common way to communicate which is social networking and it has proven to be useful as well. The basic communication channels are cost effective, time-saving and efficient and available for everyone within or outside the institution’s premises.

3.4. Duties & Roles

Student Ambassadors have specific roles and responsibilities. In the following, the interview participants wrote their responsibilities and functions as assigned by their institutions.

“I think that our duties are to promote the university to international students that want to join, but also to answer any questions and to help them out, or to connect them with the right people in the university.” P1

“Student ambassadors are representing TUT, so their highest duty is to present the information TUT wants the potential applicants to hear in an interesting and motivating way. However, bringing the personal story and student perspective to the presentation is almost equally important for ambassadors. The nature of presentation depends on the environment: on an upper secondary school visit, the presentation is often a lecture-like event where the ambassadors stand in the front of a classroom and answers questions amidst PowerPoint, while presenting at a garrison or a study fair the job primarily involves maintaining a stand and handing out advertisement material while answering passers’-by questions. Thus, the roles of a student ambassador vary from a lecturer with a PowerPoint to a promoter at a stand”. P2

“The main duties are representing at school’s different work groups and giving services to students. The roles can be divided as such: campus active, council representative, board representative, tutor, employee. Every role does a different thing, as campus actives do more events and the board focuses more on the workgroups. But you’re interested you can ask and apply to do pretty much everything”. P3

“We need to serve the institute and students in a way that could benefit both. It also includes arranging information sessions for students to create the full chart of guidance for new and existing students”. P4

“Our university has assigned us different duties which are modified to counsel students. It comprises that how we can show our university to the rest of the world? It can only happen by acting as a helping hand for students and the university. Effective study counseling for students is a key role”. P5

The main duties and roles of “*Student Ambassadors*” are about students and about the image of their institution. The interviewees were almost the same in their answers. There was a minor difference among the duties and responsibilities but it is completely depending upon the situation and demand of the concerned authorities.

3.5. Influential Role of Student Ambassadors

This section will present the information about the prominent role of student ambassadors. How are they influencing the people in the real world?

The respondents, which are already working as student ambassadors and helping other students as well as playing an influential role.

“When it comes to working environment, ambassadors mainly influence their audience with their personal experiences of university selection and studying there. People are interested in hearing what other youths of roughly their age think about studying at TUT. The same method of influencing works with people around them in the non-working environment as student ambassadors often are students with highly positive experiences of an attitude towards TUT and therefore like to tell others what it’s like at TUT”. P1

“They give support and help when asked about school policies and things about the student union. Other students see them as active members of the school and student union. We influence by inspiring to be an active member of your school”. P2

“Word of mouth has been the prominent way for influencing outsiders about possibilities Tampere region carries for them. There are blogs written by ambassadors sharing their own experiences of Tampere. A few ambassadors travel globally performing their professional duties, they also use the same platform to promote Tampere region in

those global events. The aim is to create a buzz about Tampere around the globe to open new avenues of growth in Tampere region”. P3

“Our job is to guide other students and play a vital role to benefit our institute. This may lead our job status to a state of inspiration and influential for other students”. P4

“Help and support for the students and being a role model for them in terms of performance and leadership”. In my opinion, “this defines our influential role in a best way”. P5

The interviewees, focused on “help and support” for the students. Most of them believe to influence others in terms of their leadership skills, supporting and helping nature.

4 SCIL STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

4.1. Student engagement in Higher Education

Finland is a prominent country among the European countries and holds a good position among other Scandinavian countries. The education system is unique in Finland because of its three main languages are spoken across the country (Gustafson, 1967).

Finland was remote agrarian and industrial state back in 1950's but its has faced a transition to become a model knowledge economy by focusing on education for their developemnt (Sahlberg, 2007). Finnish and Swedish are two main languages are widely expressed in Finland along with the Sami language. Finland has its freedom of choice of education. People can choose their education freely as well as their language of instruction. It means that they can choose among different languages in which they want to learn. There are Finnish and Swedish language schools at all levels of education. The Finnish government holds the authority over all the schools and educational institutions and even those sustained by other countries. In Finland, the child starts its education from early childhood education and care. The actual education starts with pre-school education and at the age of 06 years (Early childhood education and care, 2017).

There are 26 universities of applied sciences and 14 general universities in Finland. In all universities and universities of applied sciences, 154,700 students are studying (Tarkoma, 2017). It shows that Finnish education system is unique and a huge number of students are coming here from all over the world to get their degrees, and more international students are willing to seek their degrees in Finland.

The following figure shows the mobility of International students from different nationalities is still interested in Finnish education even after the implementation of fees.

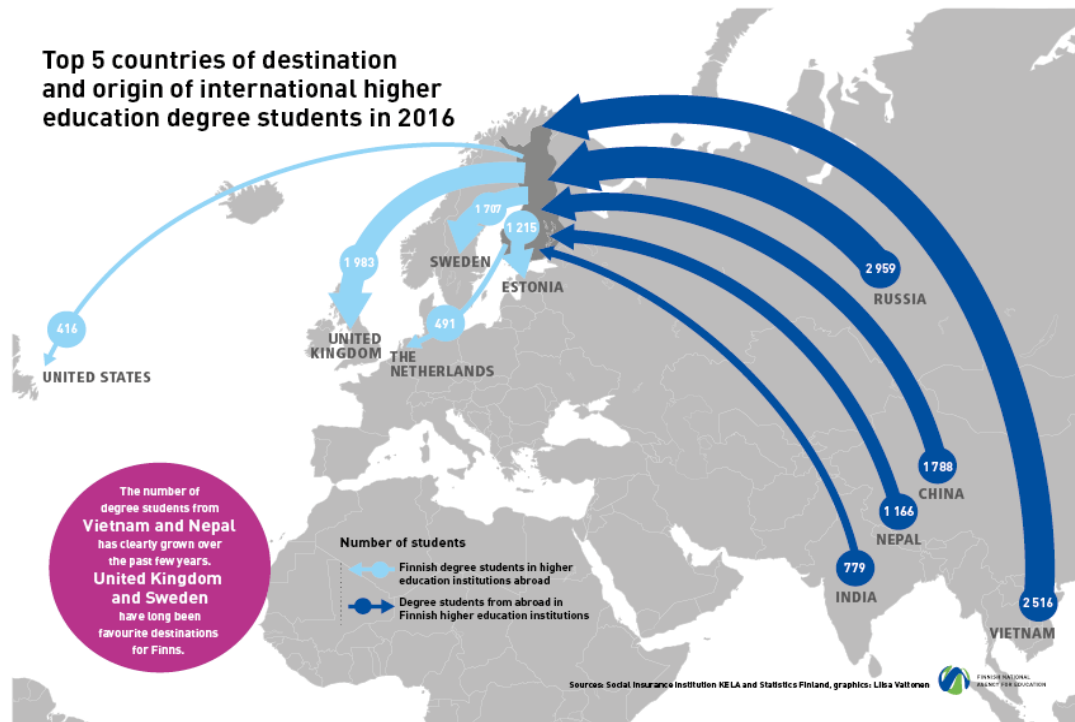


Figure 1. Student's mobility in Finland (Education, 2017).

The figure shows the level of interest for study in Finland by International students. There are top five countries by volume of students which are moving to Finland for higher studies. Before 2016, there were no study fees for non-European students, but the decision of implementing fees has come into force after 2016. The figure presents the data statistics of the year 2016 which is righter after implementing fees (Mansikkamäki, 2017).

Finland has an international environment and welcoming nature. In this scenario, *Student Ambassador Program* can play a vital role in student's academic life and professional life. In each university, there are plenty of international students, and they are already taking part in student tutorship, and it could be more beneficial for *SCIL* as well. *SCIL* can get much more benefit from all these students whether they are from Tampere University of Technology, University of Tampere or Tampere university of applied sciences. There is another Tampere City-based organization "Talent Tampere" which is already using ambassadors to promote the city outlook and to get the international exposure worldwide. This organization is working on the same principle by using more international work team. It includes students, professionals, people in business, educators, and people from different fields (Tampere, 2017).

The students from different countries create a diverse culture and an international environment. Due to their different backgrounds, they think in different ways, and everybody has its ideas. By taking in more international students along with local students can create a global environment at *SCIL*. It will spread around the world because of the global students.

4.2. Recruitment & Duties of Student Ambassadors

There are a lot of students who are studying at Finnish universities, and there are also plenty of international students. Undergraduate students are selected once in a year after an entrance test and masters students in the same way. *SCIL* can recruit students right after they start their studies. It depends on students entirely if they want to join or not because it is a voluntary job. By this job, they can get a lot of benefits for their professional and academic lives. The management of the particular department contact students themselves to ask them about their interest to join this program or duty via different channels. In other cases, interested students could invite management to join this network. *SCIL* will follow the same track by advertising about the available positions for *Student Ambassadors* and will hire them about knowing their purpose and interest to join this program.

Student ambassadors act as a face of organization or university. The primary duties are as follows:

- Present the information to the audience that *SCIL* wants them to listen.
- Depending on the situation, act as marketing and sales team.
- Promote *SCIL* image to the society, educational environment, and the other organizations, if needed.
- Spread *SCIL*'s name in Tampere three community or even outside it.
- Become aware of every service that *SCIL* is offering to its clients.
- Prepare to present *SCIL* on various platforms.
- At the same time, students can even take part in different projects.

4.3. Marketing Plan for SCIL

A marketing plan consists of several different shorter plans, and after compiling all the compulsory shorter plans, a business can get its detailed marketing plan. A marketing plan carries more importance because an efficient marketing plan runs business (Westwood, 2016). In a business, the management should get the idea about their

customers, their needs and their behavior towards the product or services. This is a mandatory step of evaluation because, for business, nobody can predict the tone and level of appreciation by its customers. There are just a few things that need to be taken care of before evaluation your customer's needs and to act as according to their expectation and satisfy them (Luther, 2001).

In the marketing plan, the marketing resources are used to achieve the objectives of marketing. It seems a straightforward job, but it is a complicated process because of the uncertainty of supplies that varies from business to business. The marketing plan is a process which consists of different points regarding the business. Firstly, an organization should carry out research outside and within the organization. Secondly, the SWOT analysis helps business to know its strong and weak points as well as risks and opportunities. Thirdly, this level refers to make some assumptions about the deliverables and achievable in future. Fourth, after making some assumptions, there should be a specific marketing strategy by which a business can get clear directions and further implement its operations. There could be more than one marketing strategy.

4.3.1 Organization and Services

Smart campus innovation lab is a living lab and an open source development community. At *SCIL*, different projects are designed to benefit the higher education community with the help of educators and students (Floworks, 2017).

The services offered by *SCIL* is in the form of projects. *SCIL* will provide students with a bright chance to enhance their skills and act as the face of *SCIL*. By this job, they can participate in a higher education community efficiently, and they will get enormous benefits, regarding communication skills, study points, confidence build up and most important of all is a good sign in their profiles.

4.3.2 Competitive Advantage

The competitive advantage is huge in Finland for this particular field because of the scarcity of working bodies and organization which are already taking this kind of initiative. *SCIL* is a vibrant and spontaneous organization which is keen to train students with their development projects, and in this instance, there are not many organizations in the market of the same mode. Besides, there are few organizations which are already using *Student Ambassador program*. So, it creates competition for *SCIL*, but the best

thing about the SCIL is its development project which is a competitive advantage in the market.

4.4. Marketing Plan Contents

4.4.1 Mission Statement:

The mission is to hire dynamic students to act as *Student Ambassadors* and to get the recognition across Finland. SCIL offers a wide range of development projects to benefit students and higher education. The mission is to enable the students to build their personality by involving themselves in different projects and gives them the best shot to polish their communication skills while working as *Student Ambassadors* and get the recognition across the entire country. It includes, enhancement of the national and international image of SCIL and to create awareness in Tampere 3 community as well.

4.4.2 Marketing Strategy

The company's performance could be measured by its sales and market shares. Sales and market shares could be improved by valid and workable marketing strategies (Wernerfelt, 1987, ss. 337-346). The marketing strategy act as a comprehensive plan when combines all the actions. There are many marketing strategies by which SCIL can get its name on the top of the market, and it will be word of mouth. Following are different and concerned marketing strategies for SCIL.

- Interact with customers

Interaction with customers is the core thing of marketing strategies. With the direct communication with customers by any means always helps businesses to promote their outlook on the market.

- Collaborate with influencers

Identify the pre-available data about the competitors in the market and process the data to get the basic idea about your competitors. In Finland, there are just a few working bodies for *Student Ambassadors* program.

- Get Employees Involved

This is a new era, in which businesses are always growing fast, which involves itself in leadership. The organizations which follow the old traditional method of managing their staff ever go down. Employees can take part in the betterment of the organization because of everybody its different idea a level of thinking. Sometimes an idea can change the future of the organization, and it could generate in any mind. The employees, who have freedom of expression at the workplace, they always prove their benefits and always work like their own.

- Help customers to solve problems

In modern times, customers are everything for a business or an organization. If the customers are happy and satisfied with the product or services, then the business will boost up.

- Content Marketing

Content marketing is a modern tool to get in touch with your customers by telling them about your stories through articles.

- Email Marketing

Most of the big companies are using email marketing tactic. It gets the attention of the customers. It should be eye-catching and precise.

- Direct Marketing

Direct marketing includes direct communication with the customers through different channels, texts, fliers, email, etc.

- B2B Marketing

The most important marketing technique that will be more useful for SCIL is business-to-business marketing. Through this method, SCIL can get in touch directly with different businesses, companies, organizations and can make and design projects as per their needs.

4.4.3 Target Market

Smart campus innovation lab is designing various projects. Since it is creating projects, the target market of SCIL varies from project to project. The target market of SCIL

consists mostly of students, professionals from companies, teaching staff as well. SCIL will get more of the market by taking part in different international events and conferences.

4.4.4 Competitive Analysis

At this instance, the *Student Ambassador Program* is entirely new in Finland, and just a few universities are using this program to run their specific operations. Unlike those few universities, mostly universities in Finland are using old traditional Student tutorship program. About the competition in the market, SCIL will not get through competition as these things are beneficial for SCIL, other universities as well as students.

4.4.5 Unique Offer

SCIL is more engaged with students, company's professionals' other stakeholders as well. The unique point about the SCIL that it will enable the students to get engaged in the additional study related activities while they are studying regularly. Besides, this could be interesting for students because they can even earn credits for this job.

4.4.6 Promotional Plan

The prescribed target market will be reached by different marketing channels. Firstly, it will be done by using different platforms to introduce the organization and plans about the stakeholders. Secondly, making students and professionals, more curious about the SCIL's *Student Ambassador Program*. After this, people will get the information about benefits for being a part of SCIL's program.

4.5. SWOT ANALYSIS

The SWOT analysis always helps a business to get the necessary idea about the market and industry. It includes the weaknesses, strengths, opportunities and the elimination of threats by effective forecasting.

4.5.1 Strengths

- Providing students benefits for their study life.
- Getting the dual job done by students especially from marketing and sales perspective.

- Contacts and links with professionals and other stakeholders.
- Expedient position of being an organization which is going to hire students under *Student Ambassador Program*.

4.5.2 Weaknesses

- This program's success depends on student's interest.
- Students can show interest only on extraordinary offers like in which money involved.
- Many students are interested doing voluntary work, but the question remains the same on the money side.

4.5.3 Opportunities

- This new trend in Finland which proves itself a significant opportunity for *SCIL*.
- A significant opportunity to get recognition across Finland through students.
- Students have raw mind, and sometimes they have unusual ideas to put in action.

4.5.4 Threats

- Lack of interest in students for joining this program.
- Increase in competition across Finland.
- Poor marketing could prove itself as a threat.

To conclude this, the researcher finds out that there are so many strong points and benefits in this program for students and *SCIL* as compared to weaknesses and threats. There are also some imminent threats which can cause minor problems in the future. There are some uncertain threats which cannot be predicted, but the damage could be minimized by effective forecasting.

4.6. SA PROGRAM IN NETHERLAND

There are many other countries in Europe which are already using this “*Student Ambassador Program*.” For this instance, the researcher is taking an example of Netherland. Netherland is a well-known country in northwestern Europe famous for its tulips, canals, architecture, history and statistics in education (Agency, 2017, s. 01).

The researcher took a university as an example organization which is already using student ambassadors program.

4.6.1 Fontys University of Applied Sciences (Netherland)

Fontys is an applied sciences university with a total number of 44,486 students. At this instance, they have 13 student ambassadors from different countries which form a diverse culture and with divergent thinking and creativity level. Their tasks are same as to guide new students but they are having a unique “Purple introduction week.” This specific week is specially designed for new students and make them meet new people around them. New students often have difficulties in communicating others because most of them are from different backgrounds. So, this week is a full of opportunity for them as well as the high idea to get to know their student ambassadors (Student Ambassadors, 2017). Although, the *Student Ambassadors* in Fontys University are guiding students and arranging information sessions, making communication better and effective for new students makes them looks like traditional Student tutors, but they have better skills in a way that they are acting as the face of their university. As mentioned earlier about the duties and roles of *Student Ambassadors*, these are just a minor part of their job. As Student tutors have a limited scope in contrast with *Student Ambassadors program* which has a broader scope.

5 DISCUSSION

Student Ambassadors program is a new trend in the world which is storming especially in America and Europe. In most of the European countries, this program is already getting huge success. The trend is storming because of its advantages, specifically for universities, organizations, and students. In this modern era, education has become compulsory and is all about its quality (Ylonen, 2010).

The current economic situation of educational institutions is not very well around the globe. There were many educational institutions which were offering free education earlier but changed their policies to meet their operating costs. It does not mean that the institution's policies should affect the quality of education. Each university and organization is concerned with its face value and eye-catching technique to attract students. This caused a new boom in this trend and laid the foundations for this program

In this program, students are acting as the face of the respective institutions and collecting their benefits as well. Students benefits are enormous regarding their impact in future because it helps students to gain practical communication skills, personality building, study credits and in some specific cases some paid incentives as their part-time job. Besides, these benefits and advantages, there is some limitation as well in this program (Gartland, 2014).

It mainly concerned with the interest of students for joining this program. It will only get success if it gets enough participants in the form of students. It is a tough job to attract and make students to change their minds. There are some particular situations and offers, which can cause students to change their minds because most students are not interested in voluntary work. The voluntary work is good and beneficial in only certain conditions because, in this mode of work, students can only get experience and knowledge about handling general public during open days, efficient management and much more but no money is involved in voluntary work. Some students find such offers attractive which are engaged with money matters because by this they can support their living. Besides, getting valuable experience and knowledge about all this program and its operations.

5.1. Future Work

The current volume of data on this topic is insufficient, and there is a lot to do in this field. The recommendations for the future research or work is to research national and

international level to get the full out of this domain and program. Smart campus innovation lab can get more and more benefits by adopting this structure of student ambassadors program. SCIL would get more exposure among the business and professional community because of its active student ambassador program. SCIL needs to make this program attractive and beneficial enough for students to join. Finland hosts a lot of international students and Tampere is one of the most vibrant and culturally diverse cities in Finland, and there is a huge number of international students, which are already studying in Tampere based universities. SCIL can get benefits by making international students a part of their projects and this program. The most important thing is to get the full attention of students as well as other stakeholders. Students usually need some paid incentives to make their living, and some of them stay away from any voluntary work. So, a paid package will help students a lot to meet their expenses, and they will get out their full potential and energy to execute their duties and job.

5.2. Strength

The student ambassador program in Finland is a new trend, and few universities are adopting it. The number of universities which are already using this program is quite a few, and this is a strong point for SCIL's student ambassador program. The limited number of competition in the educational market will help a lot to lay the foundations of this program and to run it successfully.

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APPENDIX

1. What are student ambassadors?
2. How you can become a student ambassador?
3. What kind of technology you use in your working or how you carry communication among each other (student ambassadors)?
4. Highlight the duties and roles of student ambassadors.
5. How the student ambassadors influence the people around them?

Name:**Gender:****University:**