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**What triggers the user to click for the first time on a social media advertisement? Customer-based study for pm2am Student Trips**

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Business and Culture

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## **Thesis abstract**

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*This study is done for the tour company pm2am Student Trips to find out what makes the first trigger to click on social media advertisement. The study is focused on a company operating in B2C online business sector and the questions are asked from already existing customers. The goal is to find out about the advertising preferences of the customers to gain better understanding and to improve social media advertisement strategies of the company. In this study the researcher interviewed customers using a combinations of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The answers gave information to analyse more successful social media marketing campaign for the company from both business and customer perspective.*

Keywords: social media, marketing, advertising, online, B2C

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## Opinnäytetyön tiivistelmä

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*Tämä tutkimus on tehty matkailualan yhtiölle pm2am Student Trips. Tarkoituksena on selvittää mikä saa tekemään ensimmäisen klikkauksen sosiaalisen median mainokseen. Tutkimus keskittyy yhtiöön joka toimii B2C online markkinoilla ja kysely on tehty olemassa olevalle asiakaskunnalle. Tavoite on saada selville mitkä ovat asiakkaan preferenssi markkinointiin, jotta saadaan parempi ymmärrys asiasta ja täten voidaan kehittää yhtiön markkinointistrategiaa. Tässä tutkimuksessa haastattelija käytti laadullisen ja määrällisen tutkielman yhdistelmää. Haastattelun vastakset antoivat tietoa, jotta yhtiö voi analysoida tuottavia sosiaalisen median markkinointikampanjoita.*

Asiasanat: markkinointi, mainostus, sosiaalinen media, online, B2C

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## TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>B2C</b>	Business to customer business model. Providing products or services directly to a customer.
<b>Click</b>	an Online marketing model, which creates a direct link to for example website. Used as a measurement for social media marketing and usually generates a single cost from a single click.
<b>Impression</b>	Impression means when ad located online is viewed or re-acted. Can be used as a measurement tool on online marketing.
<b>SEO</b>	Search engine optimization

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to give an overview of the thesis. It defines what will be covered in thesis and what will be excluded. Moreover the company which the study is made for will be introduced alongside with the research question. This analysis was made by a researcher who is doing an internship at the concerned company. This person's duties are at the marketing department which supports doing the study in an efficient way and from a specialized perspective.

The study is about social media marketing. Social media marketing is an important part of today's marketing, and almost every company needs it to their operations to create the most efficient marketing campaigns. The topic of this thesis is to analyse what makes the triggers the user to click on the social media advertisement for the first time. Study is done for the company pm2am Student Trips which is a tour operator in Germany. The idea is to find out from already existing customers what made them click on the company's advertisement in the social media. For this goal, the researcher used a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods and created a questionnaire for pm2am customers. It is interesting for the company to find out about customer preferences for advertisement because all of their marketing campaigns run on the Internet.

For the researcher, the topic is interesting and comes together with the work. The experience in pm2am student trips marketing operations and the use of social media marketing tools give a great support to analyse the topic. Also, the researcher can use the results for the further the commissioning company's and his own personal development in the field of marketing.

## 1.1 Research question

The research question is agreed with both parties, the researcher and the concerned company. With this study it is meant to do a combination of quantitative and qualitative research about online and social media marketing. The research question is what makes the first trigger to create a click in marketing. In this case main marketing tools are analysed. These tools are Facebook Business, Instagram and

Google AdWords. All of these channels provide a great way of advertising. To make results more specialized the data will be gathered from already existing customers who have done the final purchase decision. However in this study only the first step is analysed. Most of pm2am student trip customers find out about the service through Facebook. As it is the main marketing channel for pm2am the data for evaluation is available from already existing sources and from customer base. The existing source of data means information provided by Facebook such as customer demographics and behaviour.

It is important to solve this question for pm2am to create more efficient way of marketing. As mentioned before pm2am uses social media marketing as a main tool and getting the first impressions is one of the most important parts of creating a marketing plan. As a huge amount of raw data can be generated using various tools online, it is important to approach the question from personal and emotional level. That is why the question, what makes you make the first click on advertisement online, will be the interest of pm2am.

## **1.2 Point of view and narrowing the research**

In this study, the target audience is focused on an already existing customer group which has already done the purchase for pm2am student trips product. The demographical background is not taken into an account and all of the interviewed people are aged between 18 and 35. All of the interviewed people get the same questionnaire and the same researcher to help with answering.

This questionnaire is about social media advertising in Facebook, Google AdWords and Instagram. The advertisements used are for the people who are not part of the retargeting group. That means that the first impression of the trip happened through the advertisement. Also the first engagement of the customer happened through a click on the advertisement which is the main target analysis in this research.

### 1.3 Travel industry

The travel industry is one of the most stable business fields in the markets. On the other hand, travel industry is one of the most competitive marketing field. According to Google's own statistics presented by Miller (2012), the travel and tourism industry in 2011 created \$2.4 billion dollar revenue. This lead to be the third biggest industry to invest in marketing in social media. When only talking about Google advertising, it is clear that gaining the visibility over the competitors is a challenging task for smaller tour operators. Information and interactions are the most important factors for businesses in travel industry. In today's world the customers is tend to find information and experiences in social media. A basic user uses different sources to find out about them from different sources in social media before making the final purchase decision. The information provided by the company in advertising, or website and event page in Facebook in the case of pm2am student trips, is used by the customer to select and evaluate the travel business and destinations. As Sigala and Gretzel (2017) state about customer behaviour in their study,

Through their online actions and using images and language that shape experience meanings and values, these actors affect the way of tourism offerings and destinations are imaged perceived, produced, consumed and evaluated after consumption.

### 1.4 Company introduction

pm2am GmbH & Co. KG is a tour operator which is specialized in organizing student trips for students and young professionals. Their trips take place in Europe, and they have brought over 40,000 customers (pm2am Student Trips [ref. may 2018]) to different locations, according to their website. It is a medium-sized company, in spring 2018 employing 5 full-time employees and 7 interns as part-time employees. Their business model is B2C online sales, but also merchandise is sold offline during trips. pm2am uses their own websites booking system to manage bookings. As previously mentioned, the company puts lots of effort on the advertising in social media. The biggest marketing channels for pm2am are social media and online marketing such as Facebook and Google. Above mentioned channels has proven to be the most efficient tools to reach customers. They have an international customer base. This

means that people who use the pm2am tour service have different backgrounds. As the company has not collected any demographic information for actual purchases, the international separation can be done according to Facebook page actions. At the moment pm2am student trips has over 90 000 page likes. The largest customer groups come from Germany, Netherlands and Belgium. (pm2am Student Trips. ref. 2018) The demographic data is based on Facebook Analytics data gathered in 2018 and on sales in 2017. This does not mean that all the travellers are from previously mentioned nationalities, but the most of the people are ex-pats, currently living in a new country. Moreover the marketing is concentrated to previously mentioned areas. pm2am has a limited customer group and there are various reasons for these limitations. According to their own website, their target customers are aged between 18 and 35 years because of their policy to keep the age difference low ([pm2am Student Trips ref. 2018]).

## **2 RESEARCH METHODS**

### **2.1 Theoretical background for the research methods**

In this study the researcher has decided to use a combination of a qualitative and quantitative method. This is because of various reasons. As the goal is to find out the preferences of the pm2am Student Trips target customer group, it is helpful to get relevant data from two perspective, in emotional level and in collective way. The decision has been made together with the company manager and a researcher. Even though the main target is to gather as detailed answers as possible, the researcher aims to get answers for the survey from as many customers as possible to prove the validity of the study. The researcher analyses the answer after receiving it and makes the comparison to other answer results to create preference groups. In this chapter both research methods, the qualitative and the quantitative, are introduced and explained why it is important to use it in this study. However, the chapter defines the differences between both methods.

The questionnaire was done to an answers sheet created by the researcher. The questionnaire included 9 open-ended questions which were answered by the help of an interviewer. The interviewer helped customers to answer the questions to get more relevant answers and to help if there was a confusion with the questions.

#### **2.1.1 Quantitative research method**

Quantitative research method is one of the two mostly used research methods with qualitative research method (Mujis 2010). That means in most of the cases that the data is based on statistics gathered by a researcher using different survey methods. Muijs stated the quantitative research method following way: "Quantitative research is 'Explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics).'"

The aim of the quantitative research is to explain a certain phenomenon in measurable or common categories that can be applied in to study and this way to emphasize relationships between claims, theories and results (Golafshani 2003, 597). Simply this means that the research is based on explaining a certain phenomenon and it is measurable mathematically. Golafshani (p. 598) also states in his research article that researchers method involves the “use of standardised measures, so that the varying perspectives and experiences of people can be fit into a limited number of response categories to which number are assigned.”

In the case of this study, the goal is to find out the customer preferences for social media advertising. The question is what makes the first trigger for the customer to click on social media advertisement. The mathematical explanation makes the difference between quantitative studies; that is why statistics does not matter in that case. pm2am student trips wants to find out with the researcher also the emotional level why do they click on company’s social media advertisement and why not. The survey used by the researcher can be counted partly as a quantitative because it collects also statistics of the customers such as age and nationality, but moreover it collects answers in a paper sheet in a collective way. This is because the quantitative research is necessarily collected to analyse results mathematically. The researcher can then use the results to compare the results with customer demographics provided by Facebook Analytics and customer company data. The analysis can be done using different mathematical tools such as Microsoft Excel.

### **2.1.2 Qualitative research method**

The researcher has decided, as mentioned above, to combine both ways of research. In this survey qualitative research is done to get a deeper understanding of customer preferences in social media marketing. Qualitative research uses an approach that seeks to understand a certain phenomenon in context-specific settings (Patton 2002, 39). This means that the results of the questionnaire, in this study focusing on social media advertising, are not based on statistical analysis. Compared to quantitative research the difference for the results is to seek understanding and illumination of social media user behaviour and preferences (Hoepfl 1997). That

gives more information from emotional level compared to statistical approach with quantitative research. Even though the answers are gathered in a survey based questionnaire, with the help of an interviewer and right formed questions makes the study lean also to qualitative side. In the world there are various ways and purposes of doing qualitative research. One of the focuses is as Guest, Namey and Mitchell (2012) highlight in their book: "Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world."

Even though the quantitative and qualitative methods have various differences, also qualitative research is based on data collection.

### **2.1.3 Reliability of research methods**

In this chapter, the researcher introduces the validity and reliability for quantitative and qualitative research. The mentioned factors are analysed to support claims stated in the research (Taylor 2013, 2).

The validity in research focuses on close analysis of logical statements and the empirical evidence to determine if they support theoretical claims. Simply this means evaluation of arguments and evidence to determine if they support stated research results. The validation process is done to cut out possible disagreements which can effect on their claims and that the results can be trusted (Taylor 2013, 2). This is an important factor in the research because the purpose of theory is to explain a certain phenomenon which needs to be supported by commonly accepted theories. In this study the researcher focuses on finding out what makes the first trigger to click on pm2am student trips social media advertisement. The researcher has decided to use marketing theories such as 4 P's and 4 C's of marketing and also SWOT analysis to analyse business marketing from both business perspective and consumer behaviour perspective. Taylor (p. 4) describes the connection between practice and theory the following way:

To test causal connections, researcher must have ways to assess each of the constructs. The development of assessments begins with a set of definitions – of the constructs, of the behaviours and tasks which will

demonstrate each construct, of how those behaviours and tasks will be elicited from examinees, of how responses will be scored and of how scores will be interpreted. These are arguments underlying an assessment.

These factors to from validity for this study will become clearer as the researcher analyses them in future chapters. The researcher opens up more the pm2am student trips practices and also the customer practices and goes deeper in research methods used for the study. It is important to find the connection between claims and theories and to understand them to analyse the results gathered from the interviews. Taylor (2013, 11) calls this supporting research claim Internal validity where the investigation is expected to have relationship between identified logical arguments and empirical evidence.

The reliability comparison between quantitative and qualitative research can be defined the following way. As Golasfhani (2003, 298) borrowed the study of Joppe (2000) who states reliability in his study:

As far as the results are consistent over time and an exact representation of the total population under research can be considered as reliable and if the results of a study can be performed with a similar methodology, then the research method is reliable.

This statement means practically for this study that the number of people interviewed must cover the reliable amount of pm2am student trips customers. Moreover as mentioned in tools used for the questionnaire, the researcher uses tools provided by Google Analytics and Facebook Analytics to cover the reliability for the target audience. This can be done by comparing demographical statistics to the results of interview and to prove that the results are provided by the exact target audience. In this case in the questionnaire the nationality and age is asked and these information can be used to cover biggest customer groups from demographic and age segments.

A reliable qualitative research explains a situation that would be mysterious or confusing without it (Eisner 1991, 58). Compared to a quantitative study, which focuses on a "purpose of explaining", qualitative research focuses on "generating understanding" (Stenbacka 2001, 551). Even though the concept of reliability in qualitative

research is considered irrelevant according to Stenbacka (2001), there is still factors which should be considered. Patton (2001) stated a question for qualitative research to be considered by a researcher. One of them is to define should the findings from an interviewed person to be taken into account. This simply means that are the answers relevant or trustworthy for the final analysis. In the questionnaire for pm2am student trips customers, there is questions to solve this problem. One of the questions aimed to find out if there was a generated click for social media advertisement in the first place. With the help of such question it was important and useful to not pay attention for the answers provided by a person interviewed, who was not in a situation which is crucial for the analysis to understand the target phenomena.

#### **2.1.4 Validity of research methods**

Validity is the second important factor to prove the righteousness of the research. Winter (2000) stated in his research that even though there is a traditional way to analyse validity in a positivism way, there is a defined theory for validity. The results of a quantitative research have to meet with some empirical concepts such as universal laws, evidence, objectivity, truth, actuality, deduction, reason, fact and mathematical data. As Golasfhani (2003, 298) refers to Joppe (2000) stated the following to determine validity in quantitative research:

Validity explains whether the study truly measures that which it was supposed to measure or how trustworthy the study results are. Also, does the research method allow you to reach the goals of your research object? Researchers can decide the validity by asking several of questions, and will actively look for the answers in when studying others.

As mentioned before, the main target is to find out what makes the first trigger to click on a social media advertisement for pm2am student trips customers. The questions, to which this study will focus more later on, are generated to find out reasons for this certain phenomenon. The other factor what might be affecting on the validity of this research is the "construct validity", introduced by Wainer and Braun (1988). This basically means that what is the role of researcher involved in the actual interview. Also this concerns the data which is gathered and how it is gathered. In the case of the study for pm2am student trips, the researcher may not effect on the

results with involvement in the questionnaire. As this study is a combination of a quantitative and qualitative research the involvement is necessary. Even though the researcher helps pm2am student trips customers to answer the questions, it is only in explanatory way, not advisable or recommendable way. This way it doesn't reduce the validity of the interview results.

The concept of validity in qualitative research doesn't have a certain way of guidelines. They are more based of the certain kinds of processes of the certain projects (Winter 2000). Therefore the validation refers to the same kind of methodology than in reliability analysis, not having certain relevant concepts. On the other hand, Creswell and Miller (2000) state in their study that validity is affected by the researcher's perspective and decisions of validity in their research. This means decision making based on for example quality and trustworthiness. Stenbacka (2001) states that this is a crucial part for the quality of the research and this should be solved by the researcher to analyse factors as a part of a proper research. It comes hand in hand with the validity for quantitative research to decide what makes the proper validity for the research in this matter. For this idea Patton (2001) stated that "Triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods. This can mean using several kinds of methods and data, including using both quantitative and qualitative approaches." The researcher uses the both methods to prove the validity by asking different kinds of questions to collect data for both research methods, as an example demographic questions and also qualitative open questions. The aim of these both efficient methods is to get a better understanding and results for the research question.

As already mentioned, the researcher needs to plan and use right tools to prove the validity for the research. With tools is meant the demographic data for analysing the interviewed customer group and how did the researcher effect on the research. The trustworthiness also comes from the situations created by the interviewer that all the interviewed people were in a similar situation and analysing the same phenomenon, clicking on the pm2am student trips social media advertisement.

## **2.2 Theoretical background for marketing**

In this chapter, theoretical background is given to support analysis in this study. It helps to understand more goals of this research. Theories used in this chapters will concentrate on marketing and competitive product or service perspective. As mentioned before the goal of this study is to give pm2am better understanding of their competitive advantages and giving a customers the idea and information of their benefits received through purchase. Moreover these help to make a comparison with already existing practices and data with the data received from the questionnaire.

There will be three different theories used to support the final analysis. The first one is SWOT analysis to analyse and prioritize business goals and, further on, helping to create business strategies for achieving them. The second one is the Four P's of Marketing. This analysis is used to tailor marketing to use business unique selling points to reach competitive advantage over competitors. The third tool is the Five C's of marketing. Mentioned method is used to give more understanding of customer needs. It differentiates from the Four P's that it gives a deeper understanding from consumer perspective but also supports it for more detailed analysis. In this study they will be evaluated separately. The questionnaire gathers data from already existing customers and both Four C's and Four P's evaluates results from different perspective. As previously mentioned, C's are more from customer perspective and P's are more business oriented. The comparison between these two helps to create a strategy what pm2am student trips want to deliver and also focus more on what the customer wants to receive.

### 3 THEORIES USED TO SUPPORT RESEARCH

In this chapter, theoretical background is given to support analysis in this research. It helps to understand more goals of this research. Theories used in this chapters will concentrate on marketing and competitive product or service perspective. As mentioned before the goal of this research is to give pm2am better understanding of their competitive advantages and giving a customers the idea and information of their benefits received through purchase. Also these help to make a comparison with already existing practices and data with the data received from the questionnaire.

To understand aspects of social media advertising is it relevant to understand the definition of marketing. For business marketing is an important part of the operations. Marketing is a process which gives company visibility for its products and at the same time creates value for the product. The value creating is aimed for the audience and delivers the values what the company wants to show from its products or services. Companies must not focus only on the product itself but also for what the company wants to give as a benefit for the customer. These can be done delivering certain value for example through pricing. The marketing strategy should not only be one time operation, but the company should keep up with creating value for its products all the time and through that creating value for the company (Silk, 2006). Mr. Silk (2006) also states that marketing strategy involves two important activities: selecting target market and specifying marketing activities to gain desired position in the target markets.

To understand the relevance of this research, it is important to understand what social media marketing is. Peters (2010) explains in book that social media marketing as a concept can be defined following way:

Social Media Marketing is utilizing the best social media network sites, blogs, articles and publications to build your online marketing campaign. It is an extension of your entire marketing department that impacts every aspect of a company's business. Social media is an exchange, which helps people find what they need. It is not a one-way push or a broadcast mechanism to get people to buy from you as the old days with a mere press release. Social media promotes interaction and thus relationship building.

For pm2am student trips social media provides the most effective tool for marketing as the company operates in online B2C market sector, where trips can be purchased on their website. Most of the pm2am student trips marketing takes place in social media networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram so all the mentioned aspects are relevant for the company's marketing operations.

There will be three different theories used to support the final analysis. The first one is SWOT analysis to analyse and prioritize business goals and, further on, helping to create business strategies for achieving them. The second one is the Four P's of Marketing. This analysis is used to tailor marketing to use business unique selling points to reach competitive advantage over competitors. The third tool is the Five C's of marketing. Mentioned method is used to give more understanding of customer needs. It differentiates from the Four P's that it gives a deeper understanding from consumer perspective but also supports it for more detailed analysis. In this research they will be evaluated separately. It is relevant to understand both perspectives to compare the company marketing strategy and customer preferences to improve the company performance. The questionnaire gathers data from already existing customers and both Four C's and Four P's evaluates results from different perspective. As previously mentioned, C's are more from customer perspective and P's are more business oriented. The comparison between these two helps to create a strategy what pm2am student trips want to deliver and also focus more on what the customer wants to receive.

### **3.1 SWOT analysis**

As previously mentioned, SWOT analysis indicates a framework to plan and achieve goals. It consists techniques to analyse strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of businesses. It gives a good overview of internal and external factors of the organization. For an organization it is important to gain knowledge and identify all the factors, both positive and negative, in their operations. The analysis also identifies models which are the best way to use company's resources and capabilities to perform the most efficient way in the market company operates (Ifediora,

Idoko & Nzekwe 2014) SWOT is made as an environmental analysis and thought as one of the most crucial parts of marketing plan. It is commonly accepted strategic management tool which is used internationally in various kinds of business marketing operations (Pickton & Wrights 1998).

Because there is a strong competition and changing markets in tour company industry, it is important to analyse SWOT for pm2am to become and stay competitive in a long run. The challenge is to analyse what customer wants and perform well with competitive advantages to maintain company growth. Also it gives an overview from already existing resources and gives the company a clear idea of the vision and the mission.

### **3.1.1 Strengths**

Strengths are the internal factors which make it possible to accomplish in organizations mission. These factors make it possible to sustain the business and keep operations running. Strengths are internal qualities which effect on efficient performance inside the organization. These qualities can be for example financial resources or specialized and committed employees. Mentioned factors are not always concrete things but great advantage can come also from knowledge and behaviour. Strengths are considered to be crucial in the execution of successful project. (Ifediora et al. 2014).

pm2am student trips have created their brand a good reputation as an organization specialized in organizing trips for students and young professionals. Already existing customer experiences and loyal customers create a good mouth-of-mouth marketing tool. Especially international communities created by ex-pats, such as Indian communities, create lots of potential and existing customers. Another strength is the location of operations. The company's office is located in German region North Rhine-Westphalia which has a central location in Europe. Moreover in that German area is a high population and easy access to markets in Belgium and Netherlands. At the moment most of the customers board the tours in those areas. Location also provides a fast and easy access to different destinations in Europe, as the way of

travelling is made by bus. Also every single bus needs one employee to join as a teamer and it is not expensive to transport them to departure cities.

One of the biggest strengths is the experience of the company in organizing trips and knowledge of travel destination. Company has operated already three years and has created many well managed trips. With that knowledge pm2am owns a great knowledge to satisfy the customer's needs and find the best solutions in trip management to create an affordable and enjoyable way of travelling. Also due to years of operations the company has already started to gain partners in trips such as accommodation providers and bus transportation companies.

As previously mentioned pm2am wants to offer an enjoyable but also affordable way of travelling. One of the biggest unique selling points is the pricing of products. Compared to other big tour operators, pm2am offers a cheaper option without cutting too much from comfort. That is one of the factors which attracts lots of customers to purchase the service.

### **3.1.2 Weaknesses**

Weaknesses are factors which affect in negative way to make better performance to reach full potential of business. Definition of weakness is also that it is a factor which is not operating with wanted standards created by business plan. These kind of factors are defined as weaknesses only if they can be put under control and can be eliminated or minimized. As an example problems with decision making and narrow product range can be defined as weaknesses (Ifediora et al 2014).

Even though pm2am is an experienced tour company are they still having existing weaknesses in their organization? As they have operated only three years there is lots of room for planning of further developments in their operations. The first weakness is that how easy it is to copy pm2am products. Even though for example existing partners are a company secret, program, destinations and pricing information is easily available for competitors. It has already been noticed how new competitors have copied products and they are notable similar. To prevent similar product range the company has started to plan wider selection of offers and aiming to be the first

one offering new certain kinds of tours in Europe. There is limitations visible for new products because as pm2am travels by bus it is now possible to visit certain countries and keep it comfortable for a customer to travel and also keep the pricing competitive with other methods of travelling. Another weakness concerning trip planning is that almost every trip has to be managed individually. Building a new trip is time consuming and prices can differ compared to previous similar trips. Even though pm2am has already existing partners for example accommodation provides might be different. This is caused by seasonable availability and pricing of different destinations.

pm2am also has internal organizational weaknesses. The company's gives an opportunity for many interns to do an internship in their company. They give a good chance for students to develop professional skills and also company receives eager and skilled employees. But on the other perspective all the time changing personnel requires lots of training for newcomers. The company uses their own methods for different tasks but most of the personnel share the same duties. pm2am loses highly skilled personnel because of this recruiting method and needs to sacrifice time and resources for training a new employee. It requires lots of time for one employee to adapt to all the tasks and company knowledge to represent it through customer service and on the trips. The huge amount of office employee are with a contract for three to six months. It is time consuming in a daily basis and in a long run to be all the time available to guide and control the whole work in the office.

This leads to another difficulty in the office. The internal communication in the team is not in the highest efficient level. pm2am's team is not big and work is done in an open office. Still the lack of daily or weekly meetings and information from decisions prevents the whole office from having a complete understanding of company's current operations and projects situation. Managing tour projects is hectic and without setting a complete understanding of projects creates confusion amongst employee. This can lead to a missing goals of a team and can effect on teams performance. The lacking information flow from managers can cause employee to not work the most efficient way. As an example if the employee is not aware of all matters for a certain trip, it can cause lacking information for marketing and delivery of the product is not the most suitable one. This also leads to a false advertising.

### 3.1.3 Opportunities

Opportunities are external factors which create positive chances in company's operating environment. Business should be planned to take the most out of these benefits to have more profitable results. Adapting and planning based on those factors can create a competitive advantage over competitors. Opportunities can be found for example from changing markets and technological innovations.

Defining opportunities helps to achieve business goals. It gives a good external overview for planning and makes a project desirable to achieve (Ifediora et al 2014).

The travel industry is a never ending service sector which has a large customer base. Travelling is a highly valued free time activity and in today's world it has created a lifestyle trend which is visible for example in social media activities and blogging. Moreover these information sources has changed the habits of travel industry customers from more experience focused than just advertisement based (Sigala 2017). Also huge increase in globalization has created more potential customers in European markets. As pm2am is specialized in organizing trips for students and young professionals, these markets are creating lots of opportunities for business. For years the largest customer group has been expats, people currently living in Europe but originally from outside of Europe. These people are mostly students and interns. People staying in Europe are actively changing and that leads to lots of potential people who might find pm2am trips attractive. That gives an effective way to reuse plans of already existing trips and to keep up organizing them over and over again.

One of the most effective ways would be cooperating with student organizations but to get a working network it needs lots of effort from both parties. Already existing students and every semester arriving new exchange students would give a good customer base. Especially arriving expats have a habit to discover Europe a lot during their semester and many of them have chosen to use pm2am services.

pm2am student trips has a great opportunity for growth with adding new destinations. Even though their category is including various European countries, is there still room for new destinations. Europe is a large area and lots of places and events

are reachable by bus. In the company there has been different one time trips which has been popular and these trips have worked as a good promotion for the company. Also adding new destinations make these trips also attractive for loyal customers to come back and purchase the service even more. Going to new destinations and building new kinds of tour packages give also competitive advantage over competitors.

### **3.1.4 Threats**

Threat is an external factor which affects a company's operations and profitability in a negative way. They can be already existing or may arise in a near future. Threats differentiate from weaknesses that they cannot be controlled by the company. This causes a situation that the company needs to be ready when threat arises to affect the business. This can be done with strategic planning ahead. It is important for every business to prepare plans for this because threats can make the business unstable and can cause the end of all business operations.

Threat can appear in many different ways. It can be a rapidly changing technology, changes in markets, substitute product or sudden lack of raw material which can cause unsuspected costs. As previously mentioned businesses should prepare plans to avoid negative effects on the company. These negative effects may come with for example bad public image or the lack of production due to the amount of supplier provided raw material (Ifediora et al 2014).

pm2am may face different threats in the future. As the company is providing easily copied trip packages it is fair to estimate that there will be a high competition also in the future. It has been seen that competitors can copy ideas from other companies. In travel industry different kinds of tour packages cannot be copyrighted so it is important for pm2am to keep up with their popular trips and managing new kinds of trips to keep the interest of customers. At the moment there is only few notable competitors in the same geographical area, but as all of them are growing it is important to keep the competitive advantage as the biggest student trip operator.

What comes hand-in-hand with competition and similarities in trips is the price war. As mentioned above pm2am student trips share similar tour packages with other companies operating in the same market. This leads to a competition with price. It has been visible in the market that different tour operators gain attention with prices. Price is an effective tool for competition. The biggest threat is that how low the prices can be brought. There can be a situation in the future that the competitor finds a way for cheaper trips. This is a big threat especially for popular trips pm2am has. Different companies use different partners and the costs per trip can differ a lot. pm2am needs to keep maintaining suitable partners or keep searching for cheaper options to have the same or even lower prices, without affecting the quality of the trip too much. Competition is not always about the price itself but the value delivered for the money customer spends on a product. This is explained more detailed further on in the research. As mentioned before the customer purchase decision is based more and more on the experiences and information found in social media channels (Sigala 2017). pm2am Student Trips has addressed the basic necessities for its customer group and operates delivering most value with the lowest price.

This study is analysis form marketing perspective so it is really important to analyse marketing threats for pm2am student trips. A big threat for the company is how competitive marketing, especially travel industry marketing is. It is the second biggest SEO marketing industry in Google according to annual spent money on ads last few years (Miller 2012). It is really difficult to gain front page location in google or even on the side of the page because there is gigantic companies which can use SEO the most efficient way and they have resources to pay for it. They also perform well with keywords and gain lots of visibility. pm2am only uses at the moment Google remarketing campaign which markets the company as a banner advertisement when a certain person has visited pm2am website. It is an effective way to market for potential customers who already have the knowledge of the company but it is a poor tool for attracting new ones as the company cannot effect on in which websites the banner ad is landed and due to strong competition (McCabe 2009, 267). As Varndell (2015) states in his study, most free Internet traffic is caused by search results. It requires lots of traffic and perfectly optimized key wording to be found in the first 3 pages of Google. SEO marketing is a tool pm2am Student Trips should invest more resources and further development to grow it as the company grows.

pm2am student trips focuses its marketing almost fully to Facebook marketing. Facebook Business is a great tool to market events and gain engagement to its page. Tool gives a good chance to target the audience in an efficient way and follow up important statistics. pm2am student trips uses and develops its marketing campaigns actively and relies on it. It is not only for campaigns to advertise tours but also Facebook page is the main link to bring people on the website and to booking process. Only relying in one marketing tool brings a threat for the future. Even though Facebook has changed a lot it is still the biggest social media channel in the World. Users attitude for it have changed rapidly with the changes for the service. Within these changes Facebook has created an effective tool for companies to advertise their products and services. The tool gives an unlimited chance to advertise and it can create a spam on users feed, on a negative side. That is something what pm2am student trips should bring to careful consideration. The spam can be caused also by external factor such as competitors. Similar advertising from too many providers can cause a negative image of tour operators. In this study the attitude towards social media advertising is analysed as it will be a big part of the questionnaire.

### **3.2 The Four P's of marketing**

4 P's marketing mix is one of the most popular commonly agreed marketing tools. Even though it has been stated that the marketing mix needs further development, it is still used as a base for most of the marketing analysis. Four P's is built from product, price, place and promotion. They are still used even though today marketing mix is analysed more from customer and personal perspective to get better overview from marketing operations and a making product competitive. Marketing mix is also used to reach the target market, group of people who will buy your product or service (Marshall 1999, 58). With explanations of marketing mix this chapter will also go through analysis of pm2am student trips with marketing mix.

### **3.2.1 Product**

A product is a product or service which you are providing for your customers. Its physical outlook, features or the usage makes it competitive over the competitors' products. Differentiation is also made for example with quality, brand or package (Duermyer 2017). pm2am student trips product is tours to different European destinations. The company has tailored products especially for students and young professionals aged between 18 and 35. It is a competitive advantage over competitors because in many of them they have trips for all of the ages. It attracts younger target group people to purchase the product. Also pm2am student trips has experience for many years to manage trips with experience and that time has brought long term partners to provide cheap prices and well running operations.

### **3.2.2 Price**

Price in marketing mix means that how the pricing is done and decided. The company needs to price to product the way that it stays competitive and at the same time keeps up profits (Duermyer 2017). It includes for example seasonal pricing and discounts.

pm2am student trips use typical pricing strategies for travel industry. The company provides budget travelling around Europe and prices itself are comparable cheap to other methods of travelling. Most of the trips are done by the bus which is the cheapest transportation method for touring. Also multiple day trips accommodation is done in dorm hostels mostly so prices are not high. pm2am uses early bird selling strategy which means that if the customer purchases a package a certain time before the trip, there will be a discount. Early bird prices are used as an effective marketing strategy to give a customer a chance to save with travel costs. The similar pricing is with excursion tickets during tour. pm2am student trips has negotiated prices for each excursion and tickets are available for purchase online. If the customer decides to purchase an excursion ticket online, there will be a cheaper price than during the tour when the ticket is more expensive. As mentioned as an example, pm2am also has seasonal prices. These prices are usually during high seasons such as New Year's Eve and Easter. The company keeps up with the latest price competition and

tries to deliver the most value for the price paid. A good tool to keep up is to include enough to a certain price.

### **3.2.3 Place**

Place means that where the company or organizations sells and delivers its products or services. It defines also how customers can reach them. Consumers appreciate products which are easily reachable and it creates a competition in the markets. When planning competitive selling and delivering strategy, a definition for place includes for example selling places and logistics (Duermyer 2017). In most of the cases the product delivery is referred to physical stores, but as pm2am student trips operates almost fully online, it can be said that the company delivers its products through website.

As mentioned in previous chapter pm2am student trips is focusing on online sales. All the product catalogues for trips and excursion tickets can be found from the website or Facebook page. The company is using their own booking system which makes trip management easier. The website also gives a customer a good way modify the booking. pm2am operates almost fully through a website and Facebook page. All the trip and company information is provided through those channels and as a support for customer service there is telephone hours to deal with different situations. The booking for trips happen fully online as all the needed traveller information goes automatically to company's booking system. Buying tickets offline or through telephone is not a method to purchase products. pm2am student trips gives customers also various ways for online payment. The same system works for customer also as a refunding channel. If for some reason customer want to cancel a purchase, it is easy to do through the same booking system. Once a customer gets used to the system, it is easy to come back to purchase another time.

Not all sales for pm2am student trips happen online, but it gives a customer a chance to modify the trip with buying excursion tickets also during the trip. These excursion tickets vary between different destinations and these tickets are possible to purchase with cash or a card. It gives a traveller more time to plan and get familiar with excursion before final decision making for a purchase.

### 3.2.4 Promotion

Promotion means the methods how the company advertises to its target group its products. Promotion methods are also used to info customers about its features and possible benefits such as discounts (Duermyer 2017). To create the most suitable marketing it is crucial to acknowledge where the target market group is. The main idea is to show potential customers that why they need the company's product and what is the value delivered with the price a customer pays for the product. Usually business marketers combine the promotion and placement to reach their target audience. Promotion is more than only selling and marketing. It consists various factors which may effect on company's competitive advantage. It can include for example public relations, media and communication.

pm2am student trips use different methods to compete in promotion. As mentioned before the company uses online and social media advertising channels for promotion. The biggest method is the usage of Facebook and Facebook Business. Facebook Business provides a tool to market to target group by showing advertisements in Facebook feed. Campaigns done with this method reaches a remarkable amount of potential customers. Features provide tools to target people both geographically and demographically. Facebook is used also in a regular way by managing the company's Facebook page. pm2am tours gets the biggest visibility by creating events. It is an effective way for engaging travellers. As the pm2am student trips Facebook group is the second biggest in its market field with more than 80,000 followers, the reach can be efficient. Also regular posting on Facebook page creates engagement and visibility for the company.

Even though Facebook is the biggest promotion tool for pm2am student trips, it uses other channels also. The company gains visibility over competitors also through Google remarketing campaign, which were explained before. It creates engagement to already existing customers. Another method to inform already existing customers is sending newsletters to email. It is an effective way to reach them to tell information about special campaigns and upcoming trips. Special programs for only creating newsletters makes products look attractive and appear just tailored for customers.

Promotion strategy is not only about marketing. pm2am student trips pays lots of attention in delivering information to customers. Previously mentioned channels work as main information channels when it comes to trip information, company information or practical information. Facebook is not only used for travel info, but it works as a second customer service channel with chat. Most of the customer's service is done via telephone, which is still the most suitable information source for customers. pm2am student trips also take or of public relations and creating a community. To create and engage people to its social media pm2am posts pictures actively on Instagram and to Facebook. It is effective way to engage with posting pictures from trips and especially from travellers. It causes lots of traffic to the page.

pm2am student trips has also announced their going green aims. They have decided to make the office more environmental with reducing energy consumption. Also they have announced to use only environmental friendly bus transportation to bring people to different European destinations.

As this study is about social media marketing, the promotion creates one of the most important theory base. pm2am student trips uses it as a main marketing platform. The main channels are Facebook, Google and Instagram where the first step in purchase decision, the click, is made. In these channels you can create an advertisement where the customer can click the way for more information and booking with a direct link. pm2am student trips use the advertising for the certain trips, not promoting the website or Facebook page itself. The first step in the most important one because it is a tool to create visibility for the trip. It is important to analyse the customer preferences to make the first trigger to click the trip ads.

All of the social media marketing tools used by the company use the basic method when advertising for people who have not yet visited the trip page, not in Facebook event page or company's website. The advertisement includes visuals such as a picture or a video and there is a direct link for the potential customer to click. This click is the most important way to create engagement between customer and the trip offered. Google Adwords, Instagram and Facebook Business offer different kinds of campaigns to market also for people who are already engaged with the trip pages but in this study those marketing campaigns are left out and not taken under the analysis.

### **3.3 Marketing mix of 4 C's**

In this study, the marketing mix of four C's is used to support the marketing mix of four P's. As the original model of four P's has been used internationally for decades, the newer method of 4 C's works as an updated version for it. The Four C's consists from customer/consumer value, cost, convenience and communication (Mukherjee 2016, 22). These factors makes the marketer to think more of customer's interest than business oriented thinking

Especially for internet marketers the new marketing mix has become a more efficient way for analysis. pm2am student trips uses advertising mostly online so it is important to analyse different perspectives of marketing. In this chapter new method is introduced and how it supports the research. It gives more detailed analysis from customer's perspective which will provide a reliable theory base to analyse how to make potential customers to click on the social media advertisement.

#### **3.3.1 Customer/Consumer value**

As previously mentioned the marketing mix must focus on customers and their values. Mukherjee states in his book to follow certain strategies to deliver more value to potential customers (2016, 23). These strategies can be adapted to pm2am operations to develop marketing campaigns. pm2am Student Trips has addressed the basic necessities for its customer group, delivering most value with the lowest price and the community of students and young professionals to travel to different European destinations. The biggest value for the customers is to see as much as possible with the low cost. As pm2am strategy is to create budget trips using own sources and partners to provide reasonable pricing for trips. The company pays lots of attention on analysing feedbacks received after every trip. This data can be used to develop both trip itineraries and service from the trip team leader, also for customer service. Usually the feedback includes also some criticism and they must be taken under the consideration when thinking further developments.

pm2am is providing student trips, so it is important to create an active community around it. The company uses tools such as Facebook posting and blog on their

website. After a customer has engaged the trip event in Facebook, pm2am provides information for the travellers to deliver more value for the trip and also more value from the customer perspective. This is an efficient way to offer more for the customer which has engaged with the company. Also there is always Facebook and Instagram posts after every trip demonstrate the thankfulness to the customers for participating. Social media channels are the best tools for doing it. Through those channels is the best reach for everyone. According to company's feedback the potential customer values real experiences.

Mukherjee (2016, 23) states in his book three different ways to offer more to customers.

1. Give customer the same quality/quantity of product/service but bring down the cost.
2. Keep the same expense, however give more value for the product.
3. Increase the quantity/quality but bring down the cost.

pm2am student trips follows the combination of the first one the third one. The company is all the time searching for ways to bring the cost down by creating longer and better partnerships with partners, such as hotels and excursion providers. With lowering the prices the customer can receive the same service but with the lower price, without affecting on profits. On the other hand pm2am student trips wants to increase the value for the product while bringing costs down. This happens with the same partnership agreements with subcontracting. The company's way to give more value is also offering more excursions for trips. That way the customer can tailor its trip more suitable for the preferences valued.

### **3.3.2 Cost**

When thinking from the business point of view, the cost of a product or service is the amount of money the seller asks in exchange the product to a customer. Companies need to take it under the consideration that the price is not the overall cost but just a part of it. The product or service provider needs to determine the overall

cost such as how much it costs for a customer to get the product. Also customers tend to calculate the benefits provided by the product or service and how long it takes to use the product. Usually in online sales the price turns into a cost. As pm2am student trips is an online sale company, the cost for the product is itself the price. This can be achieved by detailed marketing. pm2am uses social media marketing tools to market only for the certain areas in Europe. Facebook marketing is a good example to provide such detailed targeted marketing. When advertising in Germany, Belgium and Netherlands the cost for the product doesn't rise, and if rises not remarkably to effect on purchase decision. As previously mentioned pm2am student trips picks up people from certain cities by bus and marketing to these certain areas can result lower cost for a customer. Also carefully targeted customer group can create more value for the customer that compared to another group. In comparison a Switzerland trips for German nationals and ex-pats living in Germany.

There was also an example from Mukherjee (2016, 23) in his study to divide different kinds of purchasers to three different groups. These examples give a better idea to identify pm2am student trips customer bases sorts of purchasers.

1. Status-conscious customers need top notch products or benefits and will pay for the cost of the product or service. They characterize products and services as a status symbol and keep up with the latest trend and are willing to pay high costs.
2. Convenience-conscious customers will purchase product or a service they find useful at the moment. They will pay additional as long as their purchase implies convenience.
3. Budget-conscious customers purchase products or services that is affordable for them. They will keep up with their financial plans. They are a population which need more esteem for their cash. They tend to go for lower-cost products or services. (2016, 24)

As pm2am student trips strategy is to provide low cost tours to students and young professionals, the company's biggest purchase group is budget-conscious customers. Most of the travellers are students which do not have high income and are not luxurious travellers. This kind of purchase group tends to be price focused when

making purchase decisions and that way have ended up to be a customer for the company. That is part of the pm2am student trips strategy and the target market lies within these purchasers.

### **3.3.3 Convenience**

In today's world the customer appreciates the convenience. Companies need to follow up and study the habits of the customer when they are making purchases. This is for example if they prefer stores or online shopping. It has been a trend in travel industry already for a long time that most of the tourism booking takes place online. Internet is a good way for a customers to compare prices and search for more information. Convenience effects also on previously mentioned overall cost. Easier for the customer gets an access to the product or service, more likely the final purchase decision is made.

pm2am student trips provides an easy access for its products. The company uses full B2C online shop for its travellers to go through trip catalogue and make the purchase on the same page. It makes it easier for the travellers to manage the booking. The same page also serves as a possibility to manage booking later on if some changes appears. pm2am student trips has as a strategy to offer as straight forward buying process as possible. As a part of the company's products, excursions are offered to the travellers who join the trip. These same excursions can be bought both online or during the trips. Excursion tickets booked before the trip will be under the same booking.

The same convenience approach takes place also in social media marketing for the company. While using the advertisement, pm2am wants to give a direct link for the travellers to go for more information and to booking page. The trip itinerary and prices are on the same page in the website where the link leads customers. The link is visible in the social media advertisement. It is a comfortable way for the traveller and makes it more trustworthy to click an advertisement again. Companies must continuously search for the better approach to connect the potential customers to products or services.

### 3.3.4 Communication

The last factor of 4 C's marketing mix is communication (Mukherjee 2016, 25). It differs from 4 P's promotion that in this case the company delivers value to customer's through communication. Communication has been stated as one of the most crucial factors for marketing. It doesn't only mean promoting actively of the company's product or making promotional posts on social media but engaging customers in conversations. For the customer who feels comfortable communicating with the company it is easier to make purchase decisions later on. This leads to constant brand awareness which is crucial for the for a sustainable pull strategy (Mukherjee 2016, 25).

pm2am communicates with people using different customers favoured social media channels. The company has a relatively large follower audience in Facebook, more than 90,000 likes, and growing audience in Instagram. In Facebook pm2am student trips focus mainly on two things in Facebook which are promoting products directly and building a community. Building a community is important for the company because the image of the company makes regular customers and also creates efficient mouth to mouth marketing. As previously mentioned pm2am posts pictures and posts after every trip to show experiences for the customers and also showing thankfulness for the people who participated on a trip. Also some Facebook posts are used to create emotions and engagement for the followers. According to individual interviews, customers value trip experiences a lot. For the research it is crucial to find out if the customer preference is to see these experiences in advertising or are the preferences more destination focused.

For pm2am student trips Instagram creates the best platform to build a communicative community around the brand. Instagram is a platform where people can share pictures and videos online. Pictures posted on company's account is not used mainly for the advertising but showing attractive pictures from trips. Most of the customers are travel oriented people and travel themed pictures are appreciated. The topic is an interest of the target audience. Also Instagram gives a good tool to share pictures of other customers. This gives a way to show experiences of the travellers and also shows interest in building a community. pm2am uses its own hashtag to

create a brand around the company. Using the hashtag provides a way find travelers pictures and comment on them. Commenting on customers experiences is a good way for individual approach.

## 4 RESEARCH

This study was done to already existing pm2am Student Trips customers. In total the researcher interviewed 75 persons, and from those 63 interviews were useful for the research. The researcher had to leave some of the interviews out from analysis because they were not answered properly or it was unclear what the person interviewed meant, as an example misunderstood answer out from topic or the person didn't click on the pm2am student trips social media advertisement. The people interviewed were between 19 and 35 years old and they came from different nationalities from different continents and cultural backgrounds. Also they were a mixture of students and young professionals who participated to pm2am trip while the interview took place.

### 4.1 To who and how?

This questionnaire was done for the already existing pm2am Student Trips customers. This means that the study is done for customers who has already made the purchase decision. pm2am student trips customers consist from students and young professionals aged between 18 and 35 years. Due to the area the company is operating in, marketing campaigns are focused in Germany, Belgium and Netherlands. The nationality of a customer is not important for this study, because the customers are from different backgrounds. Mostly the travellers are internationals living in a different country than home country, ex-pats. Only a few percentage is actual nationals from the target countries. pm2am student trips creates similar campaigns to each of the countries so there will not be divide between data between them. In the questionnaire the home country and age are asked to analyse and compare the results for the main demographic target groups. Facebook Analytics provide detailed data of pm2am customers to prove the validity of study results.

The questionnaire was made by hand to an answer sheet provided by the researcher. All the answers are filled with the help of a researcher to get the better understanding of a question and the help aims to get useful answer for further analysis. Answering takes place during the trips the customers are participating. This is

an efficient way to get access to many customers and be selective to get answers from different age and national groups. After the answers sheets are filled, the researcher writes down exact answers to a Microsoft Excel sheet to put all the answers together.

## 4.2 Questionnaire

The researcher created a questionnaire to get the needed data for the analysis. The aimed amount of interviews was from 50 to 100 and ended up with 65 answers with useful data analysed by the researcher. These interviews were done during the trips in a bus. As the study was a combination of the quantitative and qualitative research, there was nine open questions for the customer to answer with the help of the researcher (see Appendix 1 & 2). All the questions were explained to a customer by the researcher before the answering. In this chapter we go through the questions and explain why the certain questions were added to the questionnaire and what kind of supporting data it gave for the analysis.

In the beginning of the questionnaire the reason for the research was explained and answering all of the questions were asked. Also if the question doesn't open for the customer there was a possibility to answer 'unclear' and then the interview moved to the next question.

Before the actual questions there was two information for the customer to fill. The questions where the age and nationality of the customer. These questions were added in agreement with the employer of the researcher to find out some demographic statistics for the analysis. Facebook and internet pixels for the company website provide statistics of the company page actions from the visitors and with this information it is possible to cover the validity for the main customer demographic target groups. It will give more value for the results and lead to further recommendations in marketing development.

#### **4.2.1 What can you tell about you as a traveller?**

This question was created to find out to which kind of travel group the person is belonging. Also it tells to which purchase habit group the person belongs. As analysed in the 4 C's of marketing, Mukherjee invited the marketer to separate customers to three different categories (2016, 24). pm2am student trips categorise themselves to serve budget-conscious purchaser by offering low budget student trips. The idea of the question is to find out that how many of the interviewed people are a part of that certain group. The data gathered will give a better idea to which themes the advertisement should focus, should it be price oriented or not. Also the answers will tell more if pm2m customers tend to be from other target groups. Another aim is to find out that in what kinds of trips people participate, as an example to cultural trips/tours or student trips to socialize and participating to entertainment offerings such as pub crawls or party trips in general.

#### **4.2.2 What kind of knowledge you had about pm2am Student Trips before seeing the advertisement you clicked?**

The purpose of the second question was to exploit the customers interviewed people to different categories to find out about their knowledge of the company before. pm2am uses target marketing in social media to people who already like the page and also to people who are not aware of the company yet. The data gathered from here gave an idea how many are the first timers and also who are regulars customers. This information can be used in forming an image of a usual travel group on pm2am trips. Also this was a crucial part for the interview to find out if the person interviewed clicked the advertisement in the first place. It was important to find out so all the people who got knowledge about the trip elsewhere than social media advertisement were left out from the major part of the final analysis. A good example is mouth to mouth advertising from the person known for the customer.

### **4.2.3 How are you feeling about the social media advertising?**

The third question was rather general question to find out about the behaviour of our target group in social media. It is important for the company to find out the preferences of customers about social media advertising and online shopping as pm2am student trips focus in B2C online shopping. With this question the researcher and the company can get categories for online behaviour. The categories are people who tend to click on advertising, people who click them rarely and people who ignore the advertisement. Social media advertising is a great tool for companies to advertise but on the other hand it can deliver too much for a customer and create negative attitude towards them. The third question supports the answers to analyse questions numbers four and five.

### **4.2.4 What makes you click on Facebook and other social media advertisement? What would you want an advertisement to include? What makes you not click on social media advertisement?**

After the leading third question, the fourth question aims to get deeper information from the customer to find out why to click an advertisement in social media. It leads more to the research question, what makes the first trigger to click in social media advertisement. There can be various reasons behind the first click and it is crucial to find out why it took place. pm2am student trips invest lots of resources on click based advertisement and the key is to find how to create more clicks. The general idea is to find out customers preferences for an ideal advertisement. An advertisement consist from different factors, both visuals and information, and these factors needs to be put together by following the results of the study. As an example customer can prefer an advertisement which provides enough information and a trustworthy picture. Also important visible information such as price and trip destinations can be valued by the customers to generate a click.

The fifth question is created to find out what can prevent the potential customer not click on the advertisement. The marketing can be done in different ways and data gathered from this question can be used to find out ways which the customer doesn't

find appealing. pm2am has done different kinds of advertisements through campaigns and the results have been different. It is important to find methods which are not attractive for the customers and cut them away. Together with the answers from the question four this can be exploited. This question can give information about dislikes for such as spam or spam looking advertisement and factors which make the advertisement not look trustworthy to click. The answers can consist from the text information to visuals seen in the advertisement.

#### **4.2.5 Please think back when you clicked on the pm2am student trips advertisement the first time. What caught your eye?**

The sixth question leads to a second part of the questionnaire. The researcher aims to find out about the experiences of the customers who clicked on the pm2am student trips social media advertisement. In this questions the customer is asked about the first image created by the advertisement. In social media marketing it is easy to create impressions for company's campaigns but it is not measurable if the impression doesn't lead to a click. Impression means in case of social media that how many people have seen the advertisement. In the case of Facebook and Instagram the advertisement can be visible in the feed and in the page banner and in the use of Google AdWords the advertisement can be seen in the page banner or as a pop up advertisement. Usually the visibility of the advertisement is seen only from a second to few seconds so it is crucial to catch the eye of the potential customer. In this question the researcher wants to hear the experiences of the customers what caught the eye to stop and click for more information. Possible answer examples can be the visible price or the attractive picture and what was in it.

#### **4.2.6 What kind of emotions the advertisement raised in you? What made you think that this is a product you personally would like to get?**

The seventh question was created to open up the customers thoughts from the personal level. In this question basic emotions, such as happiness or eagerness, are not ask but what thoughts the advertisement caused when seeing it. The first trigger

happens by the visuals and text and the right kind of advertisement leads to a click. The first moment creates thoughts inside the potential customer's heads. It is important to understand what makes the person interested in the product. As an example the advertisement can include attractive destination for the customer preferences, the advertisement included personal experiences to which the customer can refer personal desires or advertisement triggered to think about the unplanned public holidays. The amount of the text and pictures are limited to create efficient advertisement and this can lead to a better understanding what the text should include.

pm2am customer base is mostly price oriented, as analysed in previous theory part. The visible pricing is acknowledged by the company and what to add with the basic information can lead to more engagement to trip events. This can lead to more purchase generation. To get even deeper understanding the questions number eight and nine were created.

#### **4.2.7 Was the text in the advertisement to click the advertisement? What did you find attractive to click for more information?**

To get a better understanding of pm2am student trips current advertising efficiency it is useful to hear what have the company done right in the advertising. pm2am student trips doesn't do advertisements based on a certain model so this information helps to find out success stories of the advertising. pm2am student trips use two different kinds of Facebook and Instagram advertising campaigns, engagement and conversion. Engagement campaigns aim to bring people to like the event and conversion campaigns is remarketing for the existing likers. In this study the engagement campaign is the main focus so the researcher doesn't focus on already engaged customer base. They are already aware and showed their interest in the trip. The focus is to trigger the customer to like it.

In this question it is expected to receive different kinds of answers. It is necessary for pm2am to find out the key words for the successful marketing campaign. As an example it is important to find out the importance of certain keywords such as 'stu-

dent', 'budget' 'multiday' and the price. With the information the researcher can compare the preferences of the text to the demographics and habits of the pm2am student trips customer base.

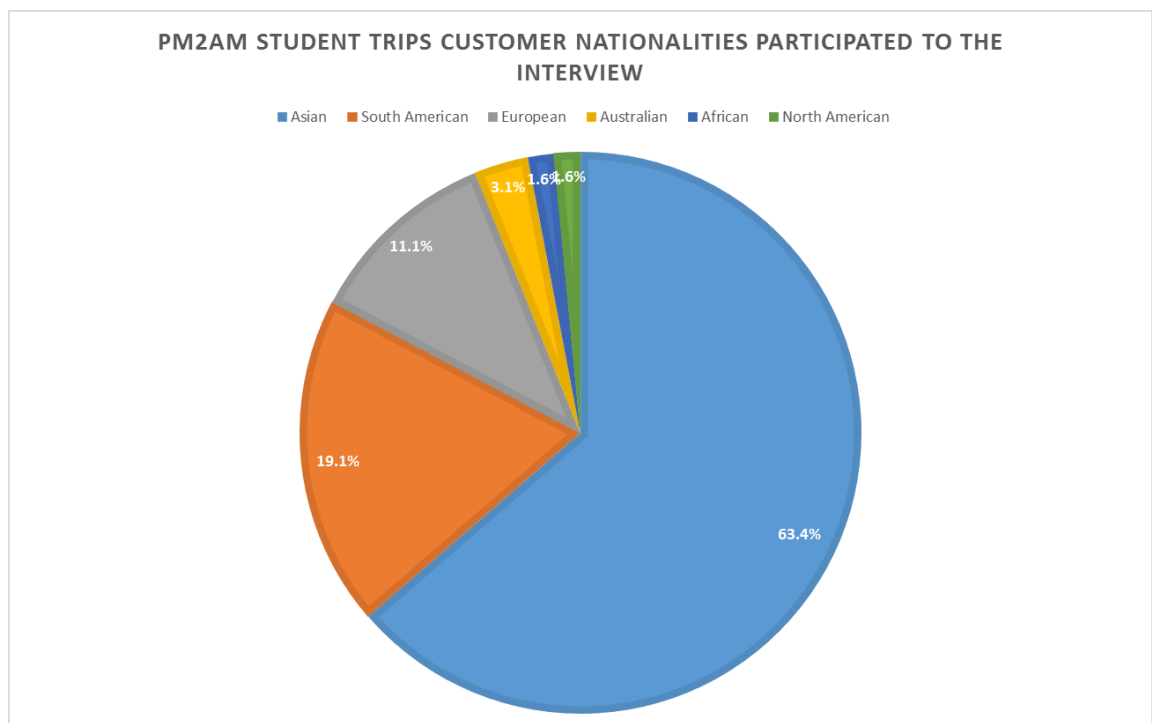
#### **4.2.8 What is the value of attractive visuals such as picture for you? What would you want to see in the picture used in the advertisement to find the product attractive?**

The ninth and the last question of the questionnaire is created with high value. The purpose of it to get an idea for customer preferences for the visuals of the advertising. The first trigger of a social media advertising happens because of the visuals. pm2am student trips has given a big importance in developing more attractive visuals to gain more engagement. Even though social media channels, such as Facebook and Instagram, provide a base for stock pictures free to use for advertising it is necessary to find out the most attractive pictures for the customer.

This question is in two parts. First question analyses how much value the customer gives for the picture. Do they find text more important and the picture is just an extra to create a better visual look. Or is the picture itself the main thing in the advertisement? This rather simple question will generate three kinds of answers: yes, no or so not pay attention. The second question is the key of the ninth question. What the customer would like to see in the advertisement. pm2am student trips use rather general stock photos given by social media channels but is it time to change the style for the advertising. With high importance the answers will give a good understanding what the picture should include. In engagement campaign pm2am student trips can use up to six different photos in one campaign so there is room for further improvements to find out the most attractive ones. To this question possible answers could be for example beautiful pictures of sights from stock photos or real experiences from previous pm2am trips.

## 5 RESULTS

There were 63 reliable enough questions for this thesis. Only the answers which were relevant for the research were analysed. As an example some of the customers interviewed had never clicked on the social media advertisement or the answers were misunderstood or unclear. The researcher sees it enough to categorise the results for quantitative and qualitative result analysis. Like mentioned earlier in this study people who answered to this research were differently aged and from various nationalities. pm2am student trips has an international target customer group and this means that the nationalities doesn't effect on the validity of this study. On the other hand the nationality and age can be used to explain how the customers interviewed represent the target audience of the company. In this research the nationalities can be divided to continental categories: 40 (63.4%) Asian, 12 (19%) South America, 7 (11.1%) European, 2 (3.1%) Australian, 1 (1.5%) African and 1 (1.5%) North American (appendix 3).



As Nationalities from Asia, South America and Europe are the biggest customer groups of pm2am student trips, according to recent company sales and website traffic on the year 2017. These people were from the pm2am student trip target age group from 18-35 and the average age on people answered were 25 years old. Age differences were various in the answers so results can be read to represent pm2am student trips whole target customer age group. Also the average age of 25 represents the most of population who participate to company's trips.

## **5.1 Analysis of the results**

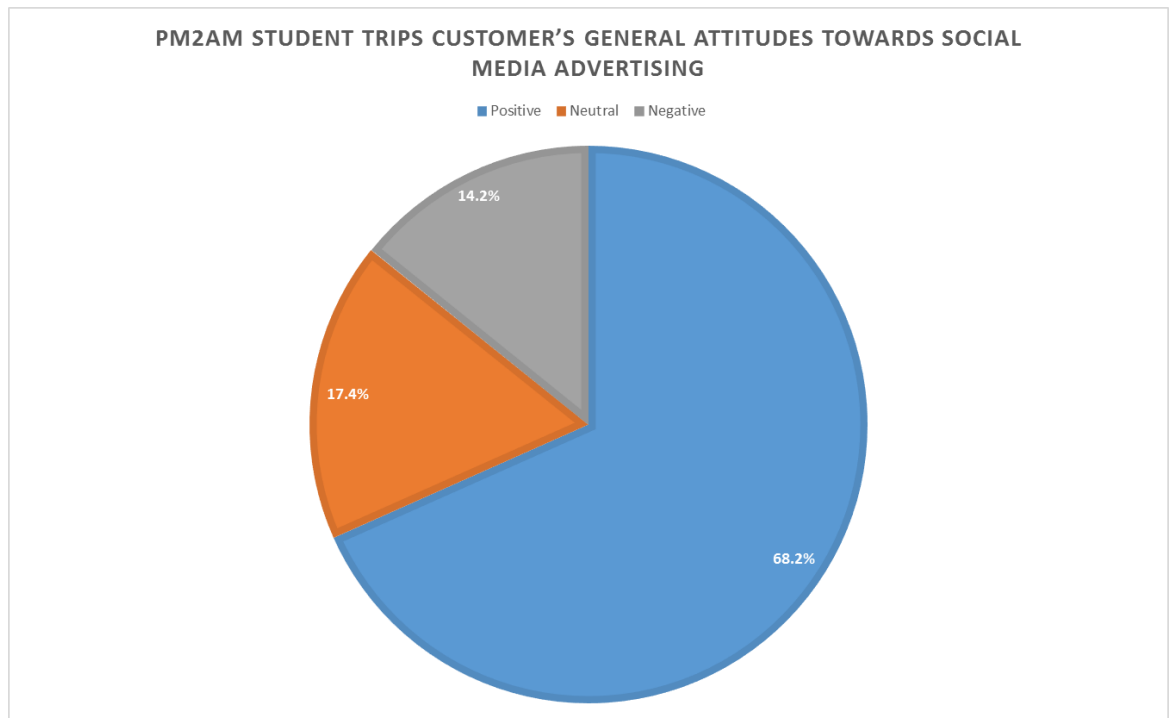
To get a better understanding of the results, in this chapter the researcher analyses the results using previously explained marketing theories. They help to understand better how the results effect on the company's marketing operations.

### **5.1.1 Customer profiling**

In this chapter the researcher goes through the main questions to analyse and to get a better understanding of target customer group preferences. As mentioned earlier, some of the questions were in supporting nature, to lead the customer and questionnaire to more important part.

All of the answers analysed are from the people who created a click to pm2am student trips social media advertisement. The answer didn't require to be new to the company, but earlier knowledge was also allowed without affecting on the analysis. The first question concerned the personal opinions of the person interviewed. The researcher wanted to find out in general what the customer thinks about social media marketing. As expected the answer were able to be out categories for example do not like or like. People who like social media advertising consists from 43 people out of 63 (68.2%) and the people who doesn't appreciate social media advertising are in total 11 (17.4%), leaving 9 persons (14.2%) in a neutral zone (appendix 4). To get a better understanding in customers personal level why this is so, the researcher combined both qualitative and quantitative method. Even though the ques-

tions asked from the customers were open questions, which refers more to qualitative interview, there were some questions where the data is collected in quantitative way. It was clearly visible that people who appreciated social media advertising, preferred information provided online.



As earlier stated in this study, in industry introduction part, people who are searching for products and services in travel sector, tend to search more for information about destinations than it used to be (Sigala 2016). The combination of visual advertising and easily found information creates more value and makes the product more attractive for a potential customer. Especially for pm2am student trips, who operates fully on online B2C markets, this is an important part to create a perfect strategy for advertising. Another highlighted reason by customers to appreciate social media advertising is the interaction. Through social media it is easy to share information about products to another possible customers for example target customer's friends. It is an efficient way to gain more visibility on social media and get an access to mouth-to-mouth advertising. As a third aspect noticed from the interviews was the convenience to purchase products online. The 4 C's of marketing explained the value of convenience shopping in today's society, people are most likely to purchase a product which is easily available and purchasing process is simple (Sigala 2016).

pm2am student trips provide and easy access for its products by giving direct links to more information through social media advertising. It is crucial to define the strategy for purchasing to run a successful project online (Duermyer 2017).

### **5.1.2 General attitude towards social media advertisement**

Next questions were created to get a deeper understanding of why the target customers click on social media advertisement and why not. The researcher wanted to understand detailed why people click on them and what makes them not to click on social media advertisements. For these parts of the questionnaire the researcher could not categorize answers based on expectations and the answers created various personal opinions. At first the researcher asked about what makes the person click on the social media advertisement and what the person would like to have the advertisement to include. Even though there were various kinds of answers for this question, there can be highlighted certain aspects. One of the most popular opinion was a relevant text. 37 out of 63 people (58.7%) interviewed wanted the social media advertisement to include relevant information about the trip. With relevant information is meant for example the travel destinations and travel time. It gives the traveller a better understanding about the product immediately. Also, as pm2am student trips target customer group is budget-conscious customers, it was not surprising to notice that many people wanted to see the price as a part of the advertisement. Budget-conscious tend to go for low cost products who deliver the right amount of value for it (Mukherjee 2016). On the other hand, surprisingly only few gave value for the visuals in the advertisement, 10 out of 63 (15.8%). The focus on the actual advertisement text and visual analysis will be done further on in this chapter.

The researcher wanted also to find out what makes people not to click on social media advertisement. Even though in previous question were asked what the customer wants the advertisement to include, it is important also to find out what does the customer doesn't want to see in an advertisement. This question created also various opinions, but one of them can be clearly highlighted. Social media advertisement should include enough relevant information. 41 out of 63 people (65.1%)

answered this way. People interviewed mentioned that they don't want to see misleading texts, highlighting without prove and a product without a value. It is important for the advertisement to create value on the first click. With this the pm2am student tips customers meant the detailed destinations and trip type for example one day trip or multiple day trip. As previously mentioned in theory part, pm2am student trips strategy is to give high value with the cheap price and this should be visible also in the social media advertisement, in this case bringing people to different European destination with a budget price. According to Mukherjee (2016), after having the clear image if the price/value strategy it is important to focus on delivering it in social media advertising. The focus on the actual advertisement text and visual analysis will be done further on in this chapter. The price is also one of the pm2am strategic strengths, according market analysis, and prices should be always highlighted in advertising to remain competitive in the markets, especially when travel and tourism sector is highly competitive in today's world (Miller 2012).

### **5.1.3 Experiences with pm2am Student Trip advertisements**

The second part of the thesis moves to the closer experiences with already existing pm2am student trips social media advertisements. This is important because it is crucial to understand positive and negative effects of the current campaigns, what the company does right and wrong. The sixth question asked to analyse the first meeting with pm2am student trips advertisement. It asked what caught the eye to stop for the advertisement. In social media marketing it is crucial to understand how to makes the potential to stop for the advertisement and what triggers the click. In marketing the value of an attractive and pointing out visuals are always a great tool. In social media marketing the visuals are done with a video or a picture. 38 out 63 people (60.3%) valued a nice picture of a destination to get the interest. Also the interesting, even though already mentioned, eye capturers were highlighted destinations with 30 (47.6%) mentions, and visible price with 22 (34.9%) mentions. The most interesting commenting was the usage of the word "student" in advertising. pm2am student trips focus on students and young professionals as a target audience so it is understandable that customers find that word attractive. It was mentioned by 11 persons (17.4%). The seventh question wanted customers to analyse

what kind of emotions the advertisement they clicked raised in them. This question caused difficulties with the people interviewed and the researcher didn't receive answers which were hoped. Generally people were excited or felt adventurous feeling when seeing the pm2am student trips social media advertisement. The researcher came in to a conclusion that the travel advertisements should be encouraging for the people to travel.

#### **5.1.4 Social media advertisement preferences**

With the last two questions the researcher wanted to achieve a deeper understanding what should be included to the visuals and text of the advertisement. In these questions the researcher asked to use the pm2am student trips advertisement, which the person clicked, as an example.

The eight question focused on the text. The researcher asked that was the pm2am student trips advertisement text attractive for you and what made to click for more information. Most of the people answered with a positive review for the clicked advertisement, 49 out of 63 people (77.7%) found the text attractive. That highlights the importance of the relevant text for the advertisement. For example people highlighted the relevance of the text, as the researcher has analysed earlier. The relevance comes from the names of the destinations and the price. According to these results the people value actual tour facts, no catchy lines or click baits. There were the main reasons for triggering a click for the pm2am student trips social media advertisement. Also some of the customers highlighted the look of a text. It should be clean, short and understandable.

The last question focused on the visuals of the advertisement. As the visual part works as a one of the biggest eye catchers, it is important to understand what makes potential customers to stop for it. People interviewed gave it a high value, 57 out of 63 people (90.4%) gives a high importance for the visuals. The answers clarifies that the visuals in marketing are the most effective tools to create expectations for the product or a service. As this is a combination of a qualitative and quantitative research, the researcher wants to find out what to include in the visuals.

There was clearly a separation to two different categories in preferences. The first half wanted to see pictures of destinations, to understand where the trip will take them and what is there for them. 30 people out of 63 (47.6%) gave high importance of the destination pics. The other half of 27 people out of 63 (42.8%) gave high importance for the experience. These people wanted to see pictures from other travellers from the previous trips. This highlights the importance of delivering experiences for potential customers as it has been stated that people purchase travel products more based on experiences than expectations created by the company. pm2am student trips already has a large customer base with lots of experiences. These can be delivered to new potential customers through both text and visuals. Strengths are considered to be crucial in the execution of successful project (Ifediora et al 2014). pm2am student trips should deliver already existing experiences even more. As previously mentioned in this study: Travelling is a highly valued free time activity and in today's world it has created a lifestyle trend which is visible for example in social media activities and blogging. Also these information sources has changed the habits of travel industry customers from more experience focused than just advertisement based (Sigala 2017).

## **5.2 Conclusion**

As a result the researcher can categorize answers to different segments. The results were analysed above and in this chapter the researcher focuses on conclusions of the study. Now when the final results are analysed, it is time to compare it to a research question and supporting theories. In this study the researcher decided to use SWOT analysis and marketing mixes of 4 P's and 4 C's. The research question was what makes the user to click on social media advertisement the first time. Nine questions (see Appendices 1 & 2) were used to get the better understanding of the customer preferences for social media marketing. With the help of these questions the researcher was able to gain valuable information for the ideal marketing operations. The researcher ended up into a conclusion that the study answered the research question with satisfactory level. It is visible from the interview results, what

are the preferences of the people from pm2am Student Trips customer group. People who use social media and click on the advertisement tend to appreciate previous experiences visible and also relevant text which always include all the needed information such as price and travel destinations. This is a marketing strategy which has not been present in all previous marketing campaigns. These customer preferences were analysed in previous chapter and will be brought forward to pm2am student trips.

### **5.2.1 SWOT analysis and the interview results**

To understand the results better from both company and customer perspective, it is important to go through the supporting theories for this study. In this part we will go first through SWOT analysis to explain company strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and analyse what the interview results can add to already existing knowledge. As analysed earlier, in SWOT analysis pages, pm2am Student Trips have a big advantage in the markets with pricing. The company has operated in the student targeted markets for years and has gained valuable information and partners such as hotels and bus companies. The price is one of the biggest interest for target customer group according to the results with 22 (34.9%) mentions out of 63. Gaining new potential customers can be also possible for the company with pricing, the results say. Moreover pm2am Student Trips hold a big customer group also in social media, with over 80.000 Facebook likes. That is one of the company strengths, and experiences can be utilized sharing the experiences of previous travellers. That can be affected also to the visual side of marketing. According to results of the interview, travellers give high value for seeing pictures from previous trips in marketing. Unlike now when pm2am Student Trips use stock photos from Facebook or Google, the company can start to use pictures from previous trips. Almost the half, 27 people out of 63 (42.8%) gave high importance for the experience in the interview when asked about advertisement visuals such as picture.

### **5.2.2 The Four P's and the interview results**

The marketing mix of 4 P's is used to analyse deeper product, price, place and promotion. It is commonly used tool to analyse more from business and personal perspective to get better overview from marketing operations and a making product competitive. Marketing mix is also used to reach the target market, group of people who will buy your product or service (Marshall 1999, 58). The first part of SWOT is product factor. It is important to know who the company target audience is. Even with the help of the study, it was clear that the target audience of pm2am Student Trips are students and young professionals aged between 18 and 35, who are interested in budget travel. As mentioned many times the target audience is really price oriented and marketing should give high importance for highlighting the price. That leads to a second part, price. pm2am Student Trips competes with the price, which the company should use internal resources to bring the price down or keep the price competitive. The third factor in SWOT is place and that is how the product is delivered (Duermyer 2017). In the interview the product placement was not analysed, but the delivering of information was. People appreciated lots if information in the advertisement and an easy access to it. The last part of SWOT is promotion. In the interview the researcher asked what people think about the social media advertising. pm2am Student Trips is full online B2C business and social media channels are the best way for advertising. As a result it is beneficial for the company to see that generally people interviewed are satisfied with social media advertising. 43 people out of 63 (68.2%) answered positively about social media marketing. They highlighted the accessibility to product information and how easy it is to share information with other people, for example sharing an event in Facebook.

### **5.2.3 The Four C's and the interview results**

The four C's are used to understand more about marketing form customer perspective. The fours C's stand for customer/consumer value, cost, convenience and communication. These factors makes the marketer to think more of customer's interest than business oriented thinking (Mukherjee 2016, 22).

The first aspect, customer value, analyses the value delivered for the potential customer through marketing. In the case of pm2am Student Trips it is relevant to understand that the company is marketing budget trips for students and young professionals. The strategy of delivering as much value as possible with low cost should be visible in the marketing also. This statement can be also supported by the fact that most of the travellers wanted to see the price and as much info as possible in the advertisement text, according to the interview. The combination of both price and destinations in marketing should be considered as a basis of trip advertising for the company. The second one is cost. As pm2am Student Trips travellers are mostly budget-conscious purchasers, it is relevant that the price is visible for the advertisement. Also the segmentation of the purchasing habits helps the company to value more another pricing strategies, such as early bird advertising and highlighting the saves for purchasing excursion tickets before the trip starts.

The third part of the four C's is the convenience. pm2am Student Trips already deliver their products in a suitable way. As the company is in full online B2C markets, they provide an easy way to access for product catalogues and booking process. Also according to the interview, the customers prefer to have an easy access for the information through social media. The last factor of 4 C's marketing mix is communication. It differs from promotion of the four P's, because in this case it means delivering value for the products through different communication methods, such as Instagram posting, blogs and in the case of pm2am Student Trips, sharing experiences. As mentioned any times during this study, the customers value previous experiences a lot. It is highly recommendable for pm2m Student Trips to find a way to share customer experiences. The company already share pictures from trips in Facebook and Instagram, but it is also valuable in advertising. That should be in consideration when thinking future marketing strategies.

#### **5.2.4 Recommendations for future marketing research**

Pm2am Student Trips markets heavily for individuals in B2C sector and gains most of the purchases through that strategy. As a recommendation pm2am Student Trips

should focus on, if the marketing could be possible through third parties. The company provides trips for students so different organizations, such as student organizations could be effective partners to get more valuable mouth-to-mouth advertising. Also that could save resources for direct marketing if the marketing is done by the third parties. According to the interview results, pm2am Student Trips customers value previous experiences from travellers and long term organization partners could provide an efficient information source for new potential customers.

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**APPENDICES**

APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire

Hi and thank you for answering to this questionnaire. This is only going to take few minutes from your journey. With your help it is possible to get important information from our travelers for research to improve our performance. There is 9 open questions below where you should answer based on your personal opinion. Please try to answer to all questions. This questionnaire is done anonymously. If a question was unclear, please write down "unclear".

Following questions are about your first impression of pm2am advertisement.

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_

What can you tell about you as a traveler?

What kind of knowledge you had about pm2am student trips before seeing the advertisement you clicked?

How are you feeling about Facebook and other social media advertising?

What makes you click Facebook and other social media advertisement? What would you want an advertisement to include?

## APPENDIX 2

What makes you not to click Facebook and other social media advertisement?

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Please think back when you clicked the pm2am advertisement the first time. What caught your eye?

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What kind of emotions the advertisement raised in you? What made you think this is a product you personally would want to get?

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Was the text in that advertisement encouraging to click the advertisement? What did you find attractive to click for more information?

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What is the value of attractive visuals such as a picture for you? What would you want to see in the picture used in advertisement to find product attractive?

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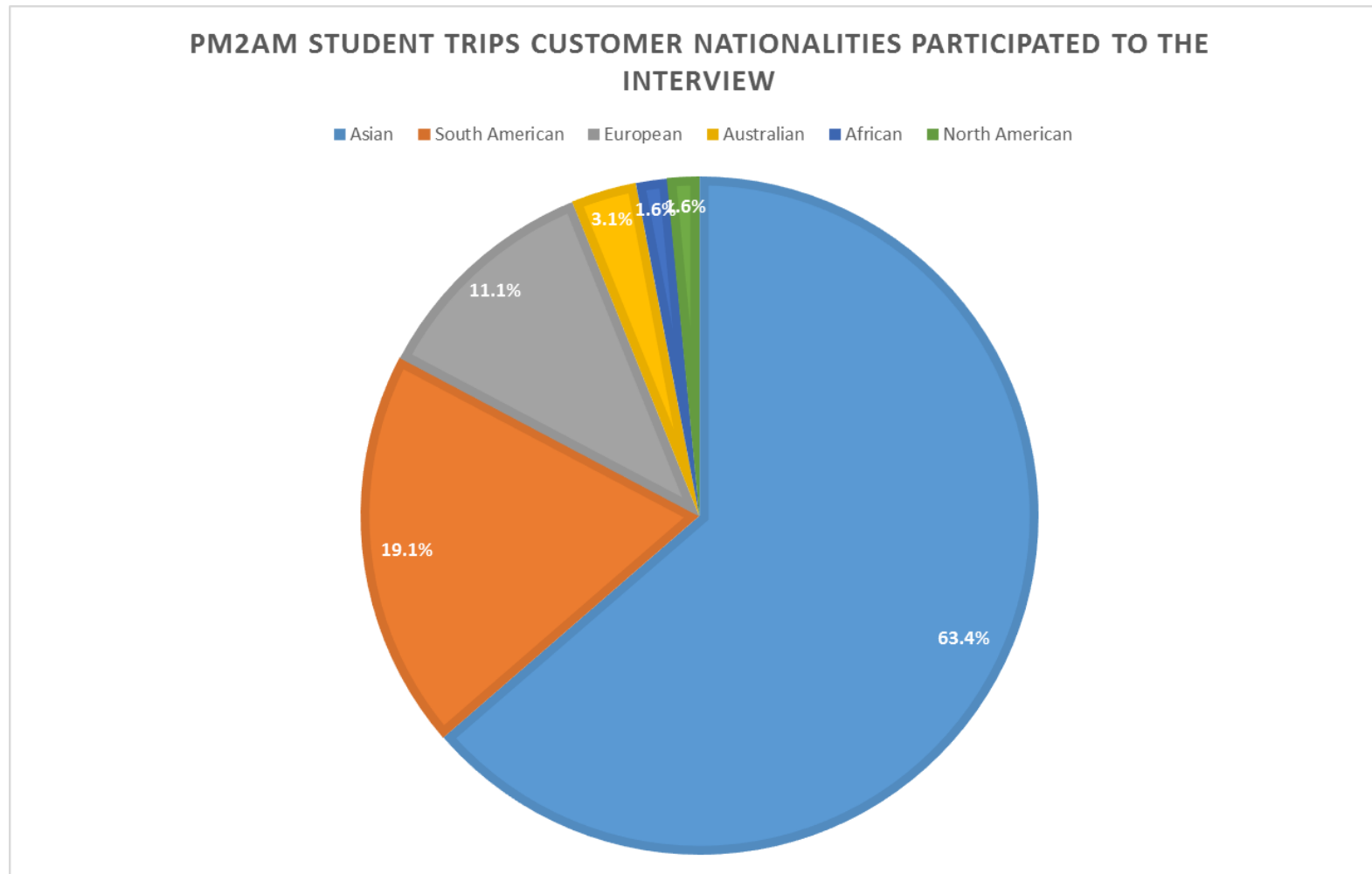


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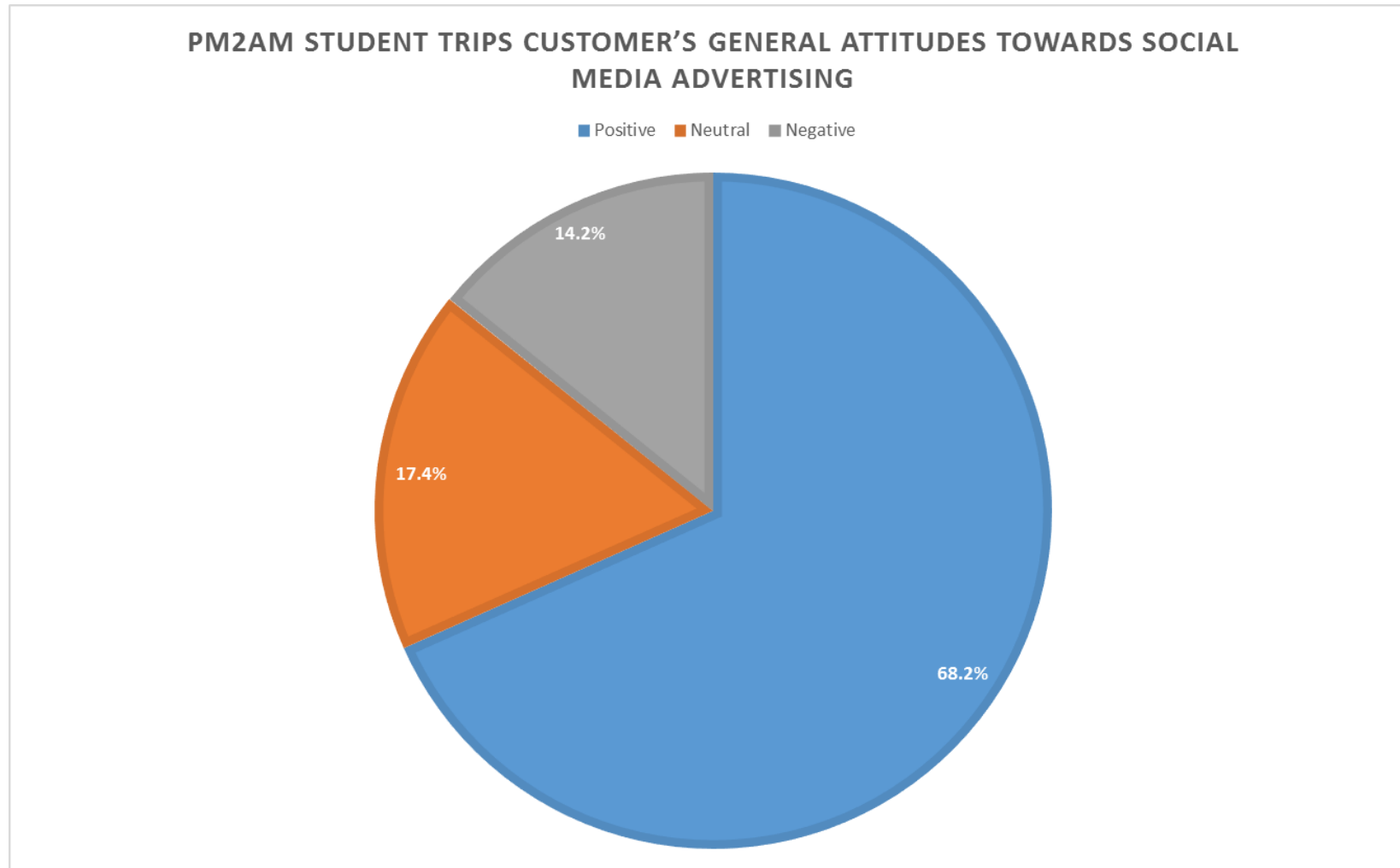


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Thank you a lot for answering!

**APPENDIX 3**

pm2am Student Trips customer nationalities participated to the interview.

**APPENDIX 4**

pm2am Student Trips customer's general attitudes towards social media advertising.