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Tiina Lustig

OUTGOING MOBILITY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ITALY

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Tiina Lustig

OUTGOING MOBILITY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ITALY

This thesis was conducted in order to find more information on the current outgoing mobility in higher education institutions in Italy. The objective was to find out what kind of bi-lateral agreements Italian universities have with foreign universities, whether they offer financial support and encourage their students towards internationalization and see the current situation of where their students go study abroad. That being the fact, what are the most important destinations for them regarding their mobility programs, and if it is a possible market for the commissioning company Asia Exchange Oy.

To receive the information, the higher education system in Italy was investigated, and a survey was sent by email to 83 universities across Italy. After two weeks' time, 30 answers were received after sending two reminders, the response rate was 36,1%. All universities that answered offered some type of study exchange programs but not all allowed a free mover exchange. The type and location of the universities varied, but majority of the regions in Italy was covered with the survey.

After the data analysis, a summary was concluded to answer the research questions. It became evident, that Italian higher education institutions offer multiple ways to support their students to go abroad. However, it is unclear if it is financially supported to go abroad as a free mover. All universities supported student mobility at least inside Europe. Besides Europe, the North American and Asian universities are also very popular destinations for students from Italian universities.

The main findings of the thesis focus on what kind would be the most beneficial institutions in Italy for Asia Exchange OY. The company is suggested ideas for the future, as they should create agreements with potential universities and promote their programs as beneficial for the students. All the information received from this research needs to be read with a critical mind, as the survey does not cover the whole market of Italian outgoing mobility. From the 20 regions of Italy, there were answers from 13 regions and most of the Southern Italy was left uncovered. Thus, the commissioner may use the information conducted from the research for marketing and other purposes.

KEYWORDS:

Student exchange, Italy, Higher Education, Asia, free mover

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Tiina Lustig

ITALIAN KORKEAKOULUASTEEN INSTITUUTIOIDEN ULOSPÄINSUUNTAUTUVA OPISKELIJALIIKKUVUUS

Tämä opinnäytetyö toteutettiin, jotta Italian korkeakoulujen tämänhetkisestä ulospäinsuuntautuvasta opiskelijaliikkuvuudesta, sekä siitä minne korkeakoululaitokset Italiassa lähettävät opiskelijoitaan opiskelijavaihtoihin saataisiin lisää tietoa. Tavoite oli myös lisätiedon saanti Italialaisten sekä ulkomaisten korkeakoulujen välisistä yhteistyösopimuksista, sekä niiden opiskelijoille tarjoamasta tuesta ja kannustuksesta kansainvälistymistä Opinnäytetyö sekä tutkimus toteutettiin toimeksiantajayritykselle Asia Exchange OY: lle.

Tutkimustyötä tehdessä oli ymmärrettävä Italian korkeakoulujärjestelmän toiminta, jotta opiskelijaliikkuvuuden tämänhetkistä tilaa voitiin tarkastella ja lisäksi luotiin kysely. Kysely opiskelijaliikkuvuudesta lähetettiin 83 Italialaiselle yliopistolle sähköpostitse. Kahden viikon vastausajan jälkeen sekä kahden muistutusviestin jälkeen, vastauksia tuli yhteensä 30. Vastausprosentti näin oli 36,1%. Kaikki vastanneet yliopistot tarjosivat vaihtoehtoja opiskelijavaihtoon menemiselle, mutta kaikki eivät sallineet free mover-vaihtoa, eli vaihtoa yliopistojen vaihtosopimusten ulkopuolella. Vastanneiden korkeakoulujen sijainti sekä tyyppi vaihteli, mutta kyselyn vastauksilla katettiin suurin osa Italian 20 maakunnasta.

Data-analyysin jälkeen tehtiin yhteenveto tutkimustuloksista tutkimuskysymyksiin vastaamiseksi. Tuli selväksi, että italialaiset korkeakoulut tarjoavat useita tapoja tukea opiskelijoidensa ulkomailla opiskelua. Tosin se, onko free mover-vaihdot yhtäläillä rahallisesti tuettuja kuin yliopistojen väliset vaihdot, jäi epäselväksi. Kaikki vastanneet yliopistot tarjosivat vaihtoehtoja vähintään Euroopassa sijaitsevilla korkeakouluilla. Euroopan lisäksi, kohteet Pohjois-Amerikassa sekä Aasiassa osoittautuivat suosituiksi italialaisten korkeakouluopiskelijoiden keskuudessa.

Opinnäytetyön tärkeimmät löydökset keskittyivät siihen minkälaisiin korkeakouluihin Asia Exchange OY: lle olisi kaikista hyödyllisintä ottaa yhteyttä Italiassa. Näiden korkeakoulujen tulisi olla sellaisia, jotka tarjoavat opintoja etenkin kauppatieteissä, liiketaloudessa sekä/tai teknillisillä aloilla. Yrityksen tulisi luoda yhteistyösopimuksia potentiaalisten korkeakoulujen kanssa ja samalla saada korostettua korkeakouluille yrityksen vaihto-ohjelmien edukkuutta opiskelijan näkökulmasta, esimerkiksi vaihto-opintojen hyväksiluvun mahdollisuutta kotiyliopistossa.

Tutkimuksesta saatua tietoa tulee lukea arvoiden, sillä tutkimuksen kysely ei kata koko Italiaa tai sen kaikkia korkeakouluja. Opinnäytetyön hankkeistajayrityksellä on valtuudet käyttää tietoja tahtomiinsa tarkoituksiin.

ASIASANAT:

Italia, Opiskelijavaihto, Aasia, Vaihto-opiskelu

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AE	Asia Exchange Oy
CINECA	Not-for-profit Consortium, made up of 67 Italian universities*, 9 Italian Research Institutions, 1 Polyclinic and the Italian Ministry of Education.
CRUI	Conference of Italian University Rectors association of the state and no state universities
Free mover student	Student participating in credit mobility outside an organized student mobility program.
GDP	Monetary measure of the market value of all the final goods and services produced in a specific time period
GNI per capita	The dollar value of a country's final income in a year, divided by its population
Home university	The university providing the exchanged students
Host University	The university accepting the exchanged students
MIUR	The Ministry of Education, University and Research (in Italian: Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca) is the ministry of the Italian government for the national education system, the Italian universities and research agencies.
Partner University	University that has an exchange agreement with another university, that states the students can study abroad at the other university and vice versa

1 INTRODUCTION

Studies abroad and internationalization of higher education increase their popularity among higher education students every year (ICEF Monitor, 2019). According to UNESCO's Outbound internationally mobile students by host region- data, it is evident that between the years 2013 and 2017 the amount of students going abroad to study increased by more than 25% (Unesco Institute for Statistics, 2019) It is researched all over the world, that the most popular destinations to go study abroad have for decades been either Europe and United States, but Asia is growing its portion in the number of students of foreign students (ICEF, 2019). Asian countries, such as China and Japan have also started scholarship programs for international students to attract more students from abroad.

The researcher spent 4 months doing an internship as an administrative intern at the commissioning company Asia Exchange Oy. It is a Finnish company established in 2007, that provides students of higher education from all over the world an option to go study abroad in Asia as a free mover student outside of bilateral agreements between universities as well as degree programs at Asian Universities. All the company's programs are held at 11 host universities in different countries in Asia and New Zealand. The company's headquarters are in Tampere, Finland. (Asia Exchange, 2019)

The idea for the company was born after its founders, - Harri Suominen and Tuomas Kauppinen, had spent an exchange semester in Shanghai, China. The process of going abroad to study -in the beginning of 2000s was not as easy as it is now, and the procedure was not as convenient and fast as it is nowadays. They decided to start their own business; i.e. help students go abroad to study in Asia, with an easier application procedure, and to places that not all universities even have agreements with. After its establishment Asia Exchange now has options to study either for a semester or two, and a whole degree in Asia and New Zealand. The company has helped more than 6,000 students from all over the world.

The idea of the company is, that instead of applying through their own universities, the students apply on AE's website. The company receives all the required documents and information from the student, and thus starts processing the application to be then sent to the university in Asia. Every program has its own document requirements, and some programs are also available for students that are not currently enrolled at an institution

of higher education. The student pays the tuition fee and an application fee to AE (Asia Exchange OY, 2019). After the application deadline is over, the tuition fees are collected from every student participating in the program at same host university, and AE then pays all the tuition fees to that destination university.

The Asian host universities and AE have their own agreements, in which the universities have given the instructions for the documents they require from the students. The host universities in Asia are in contact only with AE, and AE is the one in contact with the students answering their questions and collecting the documents required by the university.

In 2019, most of AE's outgoing students come either from Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, the USA and Finland as in these countries AE has many connections with international coordinators of the universities. The countries where most of the outgoing students come from have a good standard of living, however there are not as many students from Italy going to study in Asia than there are from other countries with the same level of living standards. Although, according to the UNESCO's data about the flow of tertiary students from Italy, there are currently more than 65,000 Italian students studying a degree abroad (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2019). What comes to shorter semester exchange, Italians tend to do that via funded programs like Erasmus. In 2017 there was 36,000 Italian university students taking part in the Erasmus programs and went abroad to study (Maddalena & Silvestri, 2019)

Erasmus+ is the European Commission's Program for education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014–2020, succeeding the previous Lifelong Learning Program (2007 - 2014). For one example, in 2012 more than 9,900 students went from Italy to Spain via Erasmus+ (Statista Research Department, 2019). But there can be students that cannot attend their home university's mobility programs at a location of their wish. Sometimes this is because the students home university does not have agreements with universities in the location the student would like to go, or they cannot take part in funded programs like Erasmus. This may be either due to due to maximum number of exchange students per university or the student does not fill all the requirements, such as language requirements (European Commission, 2019). AE could be an option for those students to study in Asia with the help of the company. Therefore, as there are students in Italian higher education taking part in mobility programs, the purpose of this study is to find a way to send more Italian students to study abroad in Asia with AE.

Doing a market research about the outgoing mobility in Italian higher education institutions helps AE to find out what kind of a market of outgoing students exists in Italy already. One of the main goals for AE is to create relations with Italian universities, that would be interested in sending their students for study abroad programs in Asia. It is probable, that as a European country, Italy should be a highly potential target market. To compare, France was only a few years as unknown market to AE as Italy is now but now France is one of the biggest markets for the company after the company invested in a market research of France.

There is a lot of research on student exchange, and according to the data of UNESCO's Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students, 0,88% of the mobility of Italian students is to Asian countries (UIS, 2019). Thus, this flow of outgoing students from Italy to Asia is not particular enough for AE to make any assumptions on how to send more Italian students to Asia. Thus, the company would need more information from Italian universities to see what kind of universities in Italy would be potential for them to partner with. The problem is to be solved by researching the higher education system and universities in Italy, and the consumer behavior from the student's perspective.

The author's motivation in this topic lies with her own experiences with studying abroad and cultures in general. Working in the commissioner company for a several months before beginning the research process gained interest in finding new markets for AE. The host universities for the programs are all located in Asia. One of the host universities in Thailand is a university where in fact the author spent -four months studying as an exchange student herself. The whole experience of studying abroad in another continent was eye-opening. Therefore, finding new ways to introduce more people to find Asia as one of the best places to study abroad, is close to the researchers own interests.

Before the beginning of the research, the higher education system of Italy or Italian language is not familiar for the researcher. Additionally, the distance brings its own challenge to identify the factors influencing the outgoing mobility for Italian higher education institutions. This comes with shortage of face to face communication as a result of the distance between the researcher and Italy. Additionally, there are difficulties in sending emails in great quantity, and the emails might end up in spam folders of the universities and therefore they might never see the email. This makes it more difficult to conduct a survey by sending it via email, and thus receiving as many answers as possible.

The objective of this thesis is to increase the amount of applications for AE's study abroad programs coming from Italy. The importance of bringing more Italian students is great as it develops the customer base of AE as well as helps the market become more diverse. As for the moment, the biggest market for AE is Germany, the second biggest market is France. Thus, the purpose of this thesis is to answer the following research questions

Where do Italian higher education institutions send their students to study abroad at the moment

What factors influence the market for outgoing mobility in Italian higher education institutions

What kind of higher education institutions would be the most beneficial for AE to approach in Italy

2 HIGHER EDUCATION AND STUDENT MOBILITY IN ITALY

For AE to enter the Italian market in outgoing student mobility, they should know the higher education system of the country and the factors affecting the student's consumer behavior. Knowledge about these helps to understand the reasons behind the statistics of the current outgoing mobility and the information received from a survey sent to the universities in Italy.

Italy or formally Italian Republic, is a country in the Apennine Peninsula, in southern Europe. By the US Bureau of the Census, the population of Italy in 2018 is 62,246,674. The population is equally distributed throughout the country, although 70,7% of the population is living in urban areas. The official language of the country is Italian, and there are areas where common spoken languages are German (Region of Trentino Alto-South Tirol), French (Region of Valle d'Aosta) and Slovenian (Trieste-Gorizia) (CIA, 2019) . Italy is divided into 20 regions, from which the region of Lombardy in the north of Italy, is the most populated and has the highest GDP in the country. The capitol of Italy is the city of Rome, situated in the region of Lazio, the city is also the seat of Italian Government. The economy of Italy is 8th largest in the world, and 3rd largest within the European Union, due to its large market for tourism, luxury goods steel and iron and several other industries (World Atlas, 2019) in 2018, the GDP of Italy was tremendous, \$2,074 trillion, and the GNI per capita was \$33,540 (World Bank Group, 2019)

2.1 Higher education institutions in Italy

There are around 96 universities in Italy, from which 67 are public universities, 29 are private, from which 11 are telematic (online and distance learning) universities (European Commission, 2019). From the public universities, three are publicly promoted and legally recognized universities, that receive their funding from another source, for example from a specific region. The rest of the public universities receive their funding from the state. The difference between public funded and private funded universities in Italy is the financial source of the institution and how they are governed, as the quality of teaching is on the same level (MIUR, 2019). Private institutions generally have higher tuition fees

compared to public universities and depending on the student's financial status the tuition fees may be decreased or funded with scholarships.

There were 1,690,834 registered students for the academic year 2017-2018, from which 88,5% students were from public universities and the rest in private institutions. 2,5% of the students in public institutions were involved in outgoing mobility programs during the year 2016-2017, whereas the same year there was 5,8% of students from private institutions taking part in mobility programs (Ministero dell'Istruzione, 2019).

Institutes for Higher Artistic Education (AFAM)

The AFAM (Alta Formazione Artistica e Musicale) was made parallel to the Italian University system to provide higher education teaching in the artistic field such as visual arts, musical, dance, drama and design (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, 2019). These institutions offer degrees in three cycles similarly to universities, nonetheless the names of the degrees are different. Diploma accademico di primo livello, is the first cycle degree and takes about three years to complete. The second cycle, Diploma accademico di secondo livello, follows the first cycle and takes 2 years to complete (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, 2019). The first and second cycle degrees at an AFAM institution are also recognizable in the Bologna process countries, as the credits are counted in ECTS.

Higher Technical Institutes (Istituti Tecnici Superiori – ITS)

The higher technical institutes, ITS, belong to a non-university vocational tertiary education segment. They are institutes that excel in high technological specialization and respond to the demand of the companies to require the employees to obtain new and high technological and technical skills. When a person graduates from an ITS, they will obtain the diploma of a higher technician (Diploma di tecnico superior). (MIUR Ministero dell'Istruzione dell'Università e della Ricerca, 2019)

2.2 Higher education system in Italy

Italy's higher education system is one of the oldest in the world. It consists of 97 universities, containing publicly and privately funded universities, 12 national research centers and 137 AFAM Institutes. (Higher Education in Art, Music and Dance) (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, 2019). Italy is one of the first

countries in Europe to suggest the unifying of the education systems in Europe. The Bologna declaration was first signed in 1999, at University of Bologna, in Italy.

Bologna Process was established by European governments to make the higher education systems in Europe more coherent, and to create unified European Higher Education Area. The process begun with declarations in Bologna and Sorbonne in 1999, and now there is 48 countries that have signed, and promised to

engage to a three-cycle higher education system (bachelor's, master's and doctoral studies), mutual recognition of qualifications and learning periods abroad completed at other universities involved in the process, and implementing a system of quality assurance, to strengthen the quality and relevance of learning and teaching (European Commission, 2019).

The process introduces the participating countries, including Italy, with three-cycle system for higher education. This means, that every cycle degree is obtained by completing a certain amount of ECTS (European Credit Transfer system) (European Commission, 2019). Usually, 60 ECTS is equivalent of one year of studies and one credit requires 25 hours workload. The ECTS is based on quantity and quality, as the workload and learning outcomes of the studies. (EHEA European Higher Education Area, 2019)

In Italy the Undergraduate Degree, which is the first cycle qualification of the process is Laurea, while in many countries it is referred as Bachelor. To complete this, the student typically needs to receive 180-240 ECTS, which means 3 years of full studies.

The second cycle which is the Graduate Degree or Master in many countries, is called Laurea Magistrale in Italy. This cycle in the Bologna process is made to be worth of 60-120 ECTS and is typically complete after two years of studies. (EHEA European Higher Education Area, 2019)

In some fields such as law, medicine, engineering and architecture, the first two cycles are integrated in laurea magistrale a ciclo unico. In total of 300 or 360 ECTS it takes 5 to 6 years to complete.

The third cycle of the system is the Doctoral or Postgraduate Degree (PhD): Dottorato di Ricerca. In order to apply for a Dottorato di Ricerca, a person must obtain Laurea Magistrale. In few fields of education, such as Law and Medicine, there is specialization degrees and 2nd level specialization master's degree in in the third cycle in the Italian Higher Education system, after completing the master's degree (Ministero degli Affari

Esteri e Cooperazione Internazionale, 2019). Unlike the first two cycles, no specific amount of ECTS is set to complete this degree as the studies vary from pure study programs to fully independent research (EHEA European Higher Education Area, 2019).

The mutual accreditation system in the countries taking part in the Bologna process has increased mobility in those countries (Skinner, 2019). The system supports and makes it easier for the students to go abroad. "The ECTS allows credits taken at one higher education institution to be counted towards a qualification studied for at another " (European Commission, 2019) . If the host university does not share the same accreditation system, it might be difficult for the student to accredit their studies abroad in their home university. Thus, this may influence on the student's decision of studying abroad in different universities. The number of mobile students in the EHEA area are to be doubled within the next years by the European ministers (European Commission, 2019).

2.3 Student mobility in Italy

According to UNESCO's Institute for Statistics (UIS), in the academic year 2017-2018 there was 74,268 Italian higher education students studying abroad, and on the contrary 97,563 international students from abroad studying in Italy (UIS, 2019) . This can be seen in figure 2 which shows the flow of tertiary level of students.

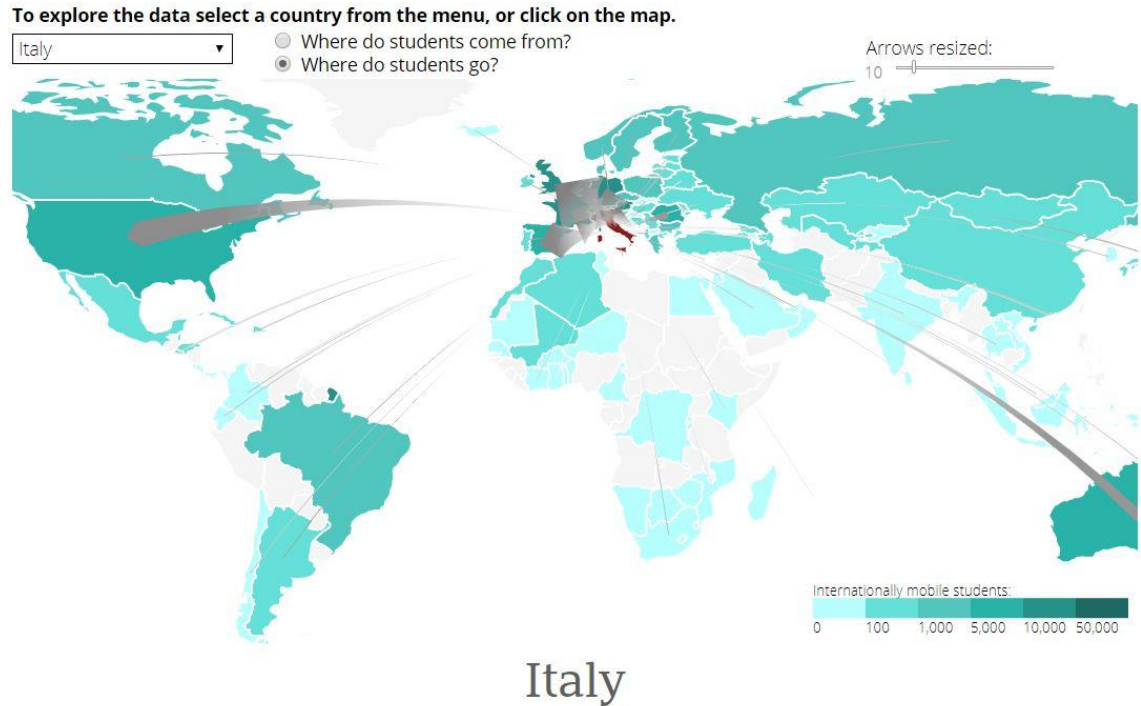


Figure 1. Flow of Tertiary Students (UIS, 2019)

In addition, the amount of outbound Italian Erasmus students is on the rise and changes every semester. In 2017 there was 36,000 Italian university students taking part in the Erasmus programs and went abroad to study (Maddalena & Silvestri, 2019). Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and CRUI in collaboration with Cineca have created a CINECA platform of university collaborations between Italian and foreign universities. Italian Universities and higher education institutions have 7578 agreements with institutions in Europe and 3927 in North and South America together, whereas there are 3012 agreements with institutions in Asia and Oceania combined (CINECA, 2019). Each of these agreements are agreements for different types of mobility, such as Education, Teaching, Training and Research, thus they do not list the annual number of exchanged students between the universities.

3 FACTORS INFLUENCING A STUDENT'S DECISION TO STUDY ABROAD

In this chapter, it is explained from the student's aspect, what kind of factors influence the student deciding to go study abroad. Though the buying behavior of a consumer in every aspect is complex, these factors among others help a person from an early age to nurture the idea of going abroad to study.

3.1 Personal factors

The personal factors affecting consumer behavior also applies for a student choosing a place to study or go abroad to study. Some of the most important ones are; age, income, occupation and lifestyle. Age is a factor when choosing a service provider, as the way of decision making is highly dependent on a person's age (Adams, 2015). Income affects the consumers behavior, as it defines the buying power of an individual. The bigger income the person has, the more expensive services and products the person can purchase.

The programs that AE offers, have tuition fees starting from €990 up to €1,990 per semester. In addition to the university's tuition fee, there is other expenses to be covered by the student such as flights to and from the destination, housing and living costs (Asia Exchange OY, 2019). Thus, it is possible that not all people in their twenties have the resources to pay the expenses to cover the mobility period unless they have financially supportive family, scholarships from the university or other financial aid.

The occupation of an individual has an impact to consumer behavior as well. Different occupations and roles on society, usually have different income. This is also reflected on the consuming behavior between different occupations and roles. For example, a student more likely that has no occupation and low-income level, they are almost certainly to spend their money in another way than a student that has greater income or financial support from his family.

The lifestyle and personality of a person are important influencers in addition to all the previously mentioned personal factors. Lifestyle reflects a person's interests, background, values, opinions and activities. One could think that if a person that has

interest towards other cultures, travelling, languages and is interested in putting themselves outside of their comfort zone, thus is more likely to consider mobility abroad during their studies.

Other factors influencing the student's decision to study abroad the geographical location, the host country's visa regulations, political environment, recommendations and previous knowledge about the host country. For example, there is many blogs, and study abroad related websites on the internet giving information about different destinations and what it is like to study in those places. Also, every country has its own regulations for immigration and study visas, therefore it may affect a person's decision for choosing a country that has strict immigration policies. Though, this might not be the case with Italy as European passports do not need visas in many countries (McKirdy & O'Hare, 2019)

3.2 Social factors

Social factors affect consumers behavior by being prevalent in the society where the consumer lives in or was grown up in. Since childhood, a person is affected by his family and as they grow up, they become affected by other social factors as their reference group and their roles and statuses. It is evident, that a family plays the main role in a child's life when growing, and this does not stop when the person grows older. An individual learns a lot from its family members, such as the way of talking, behaving and what they value. This also applies in buying behaviors from which comes the term "Consumer socialization" , which means the way children learn about consumption and different products and services (Paul Peter & Olson, 2010) .Thus, could be assumed that if a person has grown up with a family that values travelling and broadening the persons cultural views, it is more likely for them to be supportive the student's decision to study abroad.

Reference group initiates that the person is influenced by the members of a group that the person likes to be associated with. This can mean for example a certain group of fans of an artist, or sports team members or just a group of friends. There are different roles in this section of the social factors, as there is always an initiator that initiates the buying decision, an influencer that gives an influence on the decision of a purchase, decision-maker that decides whether the purchase will be made, and person finally makes the purchase; the buyer. And this is what the company needs to focus on and

identify the members, as the marketing needs to be aimed to the right person (Paul Peter & Olson, 2010)

Roles and status, and social class of an individual influences the person's consuming behavior in a way that they start making purchases that are expected from a person of their status (Paul Peter & Olson, 2010). For example, could be predicted for an executive of a company to purchase an expensive car than it would be from an employee that has an income much lower and is working in a position beneath the executive.

3.3 Institutional factors

Every institution has its own regulations regarding student mobility. Generally, if a student wants to study abroad, they will first head to the International Office of their home university and discuss about the opportunities with the International Coordinator of the university in question. and restrictions about studying abroad. For example, if the student's home university does not allow free mover mobility, it may affect the decision not to go abroad with AE or any third-party study abroad organization.

Some universities, for example Bocconi University in Milan, guides their students to check both the requirements of the host university as well as Bocconi University, before applying for a semester abroad. For one example, Bocconi university only allows undergraduate students enrolled on their 2nd year to apply if they have 60 per cent of their 1st year credits registered with a 22/30 grade average. This does not include the requirements from the partner university, let alone the language requirements for some programs. If these requirements are not met, the student will not be permitted to attend the study abroad program (Bocconi university, 2019).

One important factor from the institution's side, is whether the studies completed during the study abroad period are accredited in their study program in the home university. For example, in the Erasmus program, the student, its' home university and the partner university are required to fill out an agreement before the mobility period. The agreement contains information about the courses the student will be taking, so that it is guaranteed that those exact courses will be accredited after the mobility period (European Commission, 2019).

4 RESEARCH STRUCTURE

The research begins with previous written knowledge for student mobility and higher education institutions and system in Italy. A survey created based on this information, and the data received from is analyzed by using qualitative method.

4.1 Method

There are over 90 universities and other institutions of higher education across Italy. The state of current outbound study abroad market is easier to understand with statistics of previous years' number of students going abroad to study. Consequently, the most convenient way to generalize the information to cover the country's study abroad market in higher education institutions, is to create a survey that has only closed questions and to send it to all the universities in Italy. The answers received are possible to convert into measurable data. Thus, the research method is the quantitative method. (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009) Even though outgoing mobility of higher education market from Italy to Asian countries, is not researched enough for AE, the phenomenon of outbound student mobility from Italy is. It is easier to understand the market in Italy, if as many higher education institutions as possible answer the survey. This makes it easier to predict what the future for AE would look like working with Italian universities, and what type of institutions would be the most potential for AE.

When a company is entering a new market, it is the best to try an entry based on previous experiences rather than entering without knowing anything about the trends of that certain market. Also, even though the method is not revealing the answerer's reasons behind their answers, the method still uncovers many things just by making conclusions. (Goertzen, 2017)

4.2 Data collection

The data was collected by primary and secondary sources, using the internet and the websites of the Italian universities. The researcher gathered contact information of the university international office staff in order to send the survey for the universities. In

addition to the contact details, information about the universities in general was gathered from the home pages on the internet.

The research included a survey, that was sent on 6th of November to international coordinators in 83 Italian Universities. The survey was done and its answers were collected in an online survey platform (Google Forms) and sent via email. As the distance between the researcher and Italy is long, using an online survey was the most suitable to receive as many answers as possible in the shortest required time, as it is the most convenient way to execute international surveys (Kananen, 2015). The universities were given two weeks' time to answer the survey, and two reminder emails were sent for those that hadn't answered after each email.

After two weeks, 30 universities had answered the survey, and the answer rate was 36,1%. The survey constructed of closed questions about the mobility options in their institution and the popularity for study abroad options in different continents. The universities that answered the survey sent to them, gave primary data about the statistics of the outbound mobility in their institution.

Most of the information used for the research is secondary data about Italian higher education system and the outbound mobility in Italy. The data is conducted from governmental sources such as Knoema for inbound mobility ratios in Italy, Istat.it and Organization for economic cooperation and development (OECD). UNESCO Global flow of tertiary students shows data about already existing mobility from Italy to other countries, and this data reveals the current situation on the mobility in Italy.

4.3 Data analyzing

As the survey will generate answers to closed questions, the data can be measured. (Surendran, 2019). Analyzing, and finally making conclusions from the data is wished to result in answers to research questions. For example, questions about existing possibilities for students at their home institution can be measured and this way concluded that there may or may not be enough market potential for AE to invest marketing in. Answers concerning the future of the mobility sector at the institution can be used to make conclusions whether there would be interest in the services of AE, regardless of the competition.

Also, the data will also show if there is specific geographical areas or types of university where interest exists. This kind of data could be analyzed and concluded that even if there is no straight interest of a specific university, it would still be beneficial to start marketing in that area of Italian Universities.

There were some limitations regarding the chosen methodology as well as the reliability of the data received from the survey. The quantitative methodology and the closed questions in the survey generalize the data of the universities and does not reveal the reasons behind the answers. Also, it is possible that the validity of the data is endangered because of the style and language of the question. Some of the questions may have been understood in a different way by the answerers, as there were some answers from one person, where the information was not consistent between two questions. When the email was sent to the universities, it included a text that the person answering the survey should be the head of international office at the university so that the survey would collect answers from the person knowing the most about the university's mobility.

Regardless, as the survey was answered online anyone from that university could have been the person answering. The number of students going abroad from a certain university changes every year and even every semester, thus the reliability of the information received from this survey is dependent on the time and person answering. Furthermore, as the survey was sent via email it is possible that most of the universities that did not fill out the survey, didn't see the email as it may have gone to spam folder or the email was not forwarded to the right people, or otherwise was left unanswered.

The response rate was 36,1% as the answers were received from 30 out of 83 universities that were sent the email. Usually, email surveys generate response rates of around 10% (Kananen, 2015). This means that the information received from this survey could be generalized to represent at least the Italian outgoing mobility in higher education institutions from the regions where the answers came from, even though answers were not received from every university in Italy.

5 RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

The email accompanying the survey was sent to 83 universities across Italy, from which 19 were private institutions and 64 public. The selection of universities chosen to answer the survey was made from a list of universities in Italy at the website of Italian Ministry of Public Education (MIUR, 2019). The chosen universities excluded AFAM institutions, the ITS higher technical institutes, telematic online universities and pontifical universities in Italy, as these kinds of universities do not offer studies other than their specific study fields thus the studies at those Asian Universities that AE has programs in, most likely would not be accredited. It was decided by the researcher to exclude them to save time as a resource as these kinds of institutions would most likely have low potential for AE to work with.

The email sent to the universities included the link to a survey of closed questions. After sending the first email batch, it became evident that one university operating in different cities is using only one international office, unlike understood when collecting emails from the universities. Therefore, the second campus that was sent an email to at first, was removed from the sending list before receiving an answer from there or before sending the first reminder email. Also, there was evidently some confusion between the questions as in one university's answers it was told that they would be sending less than 10 students abroad a year but, in another question, they had chosen to be sending more than 100 students solely to European universities, hence there is some noticeable inaccuracy in the results of the survey.

Within two weeks and three email batches to these 83 universities, there was 28 answers received by the deadline. All the questions were mandatory except the question number 2 about the position of the person answering and the specifying question number 15 about the time period to go study abroad. After the mentioned deadline for the survey, one university wrote an email if the survey could be opened again, and after re-opening the survey two more answers were received. Therefore, in total 30 answers received and thus the response rate rose to 36,1%. This means that the rate was high enough to be generalized to represent the whole sample population, as usually the response rate above 35% is appropriate for academic studies involving organizations' representatives (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Because 7 out of 19 private institutions sent their

answer, the response rate for private institutions was 36,8%. From 64 public universities 23 answered, the response rate for these types of institutions was 35,9%.

5.1 Background questions

The answers came from 30 different universities that received the email with a link to the survey. The survey platform was collecting the emails of the participants; therefore, it was easy for the researcher to keep on track with the universities that had already submitted their answers. Every answer required the email of the person answering, and the person answering the survey was either the head of International Office or a person responsible for the mobility sector of their university. The email addresses or the names of the universities will not be published in this thesis to guarantee the anonymousness of the participants.

There are three types of universities categorized by their funding sources in Italy, and the answers to the first question divides the participants by this. Figure 2 shows that from the 30 answers, a majority of 22 answers were from a public state-funded university, 7 private universities and one public university funded by another source. Another public source can be for example a specific region. The state-funded universities were spread all over Italy, whereas from the 7 private universities five were in the Rome and Central Italy region, and two universities in North-West Italy.

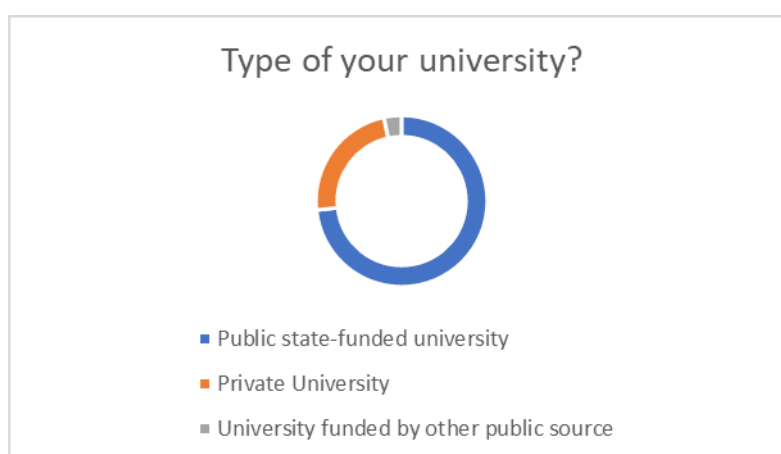


Figure 2. Type of Institution

The question regarding the location of the university shows in which region in Italy, the universities are located. Of the total 30 answers, figure 3 shows that none of the answers came from the islands of Italy (Sicily and Sardinia).

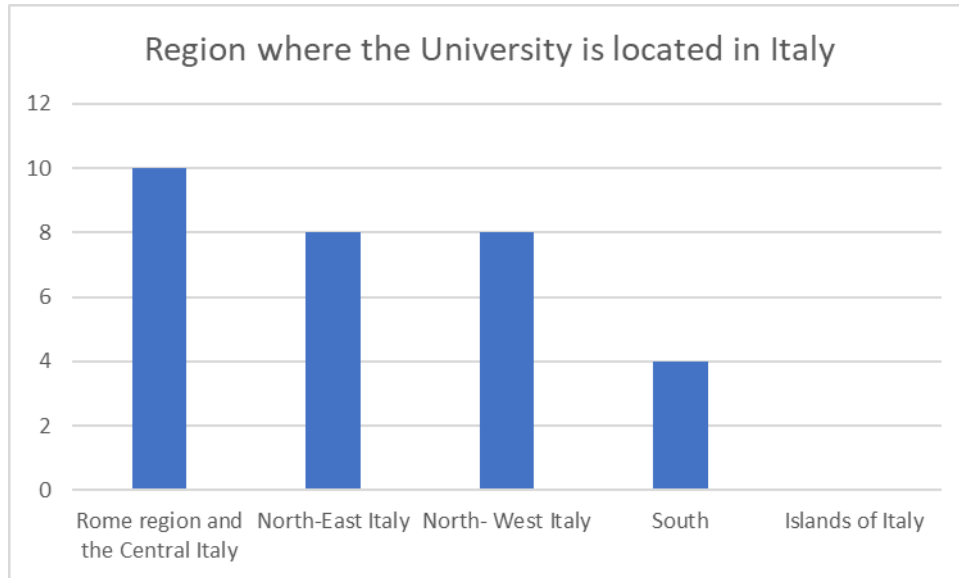


Figure 3. Location of the University

The figure number 4 shows the answers from the universities about the size of the university. Majority of the participants universities have less than 10,000 students, and 5 of the small universities were private universities in the Rome region. Medium, large and major sized universities were all state-funded public universities, but there were also four state-funded universities that identified as small by the number of their enrolled students.

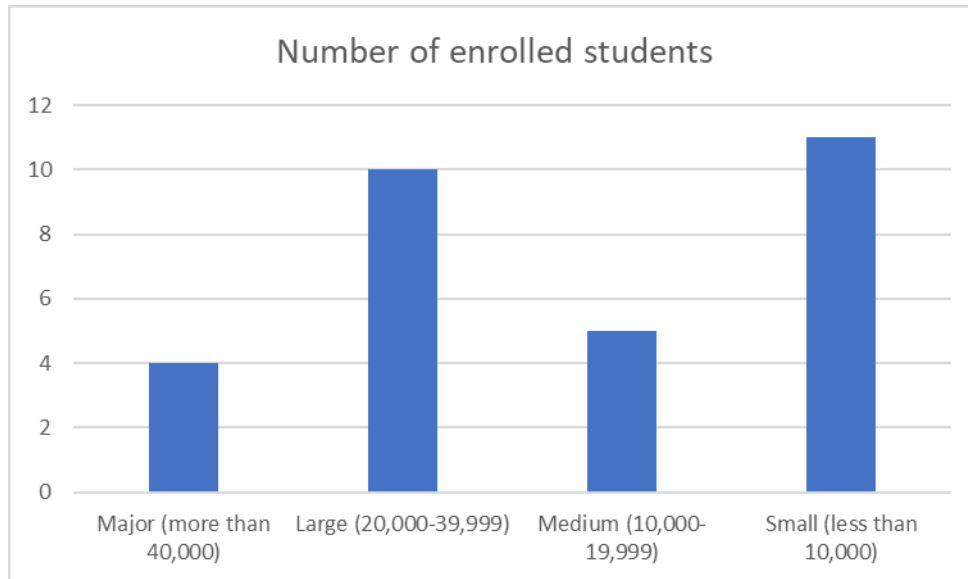


Figure 4. Number of enrolled students

The options for studies of specific fields available at the universities were chosen by the options AE host universities have as well. 11 universities had all the study fields mentioned available, and two universities have none of the study fields offered in the questionnaire available in their study programs. Economics and business were most likely to be available at the university, as 24 universities offers study programs in business and economics as shown in the figure 5. Most universities were also offering at least one technical study program such as engineering or architecture.

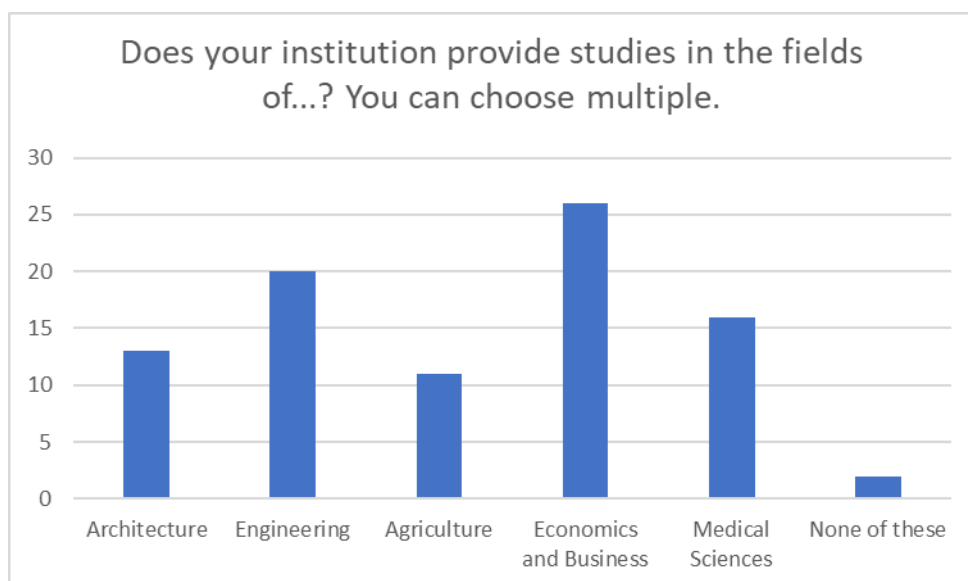


Figure 5. Study fields of the university

Figure 6 shows that when asked about the study programs in English, majority answered yes. Three universities told that there were no programs in English offered at their university, and two of them were also universities that did not have any study programs mentioned in the figure 5.

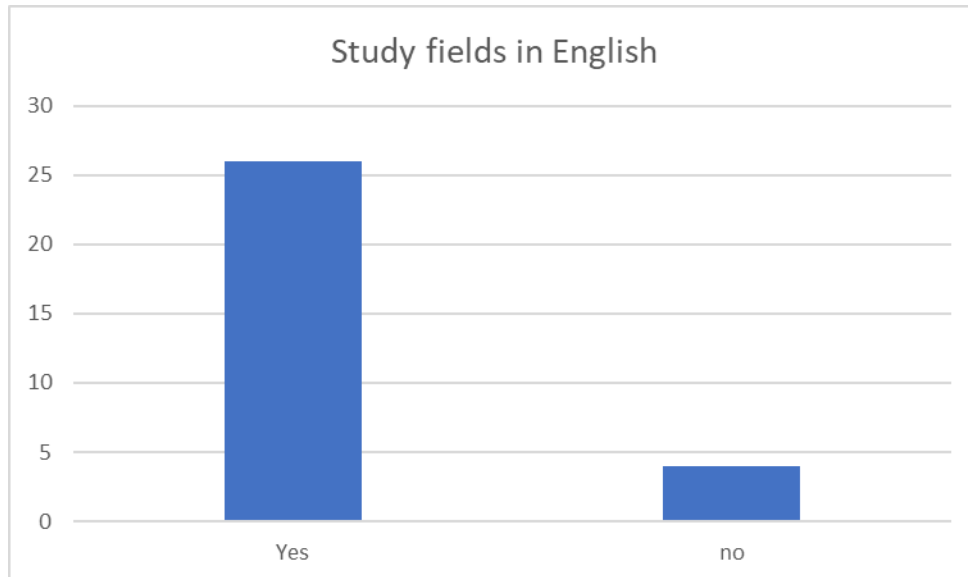


Figure 6. Study fields in English

5.2 Outgoing mobility in the university

The second part of the survey contained questions regarding the options to study abroad. All 30 universities mentioned to have some kind of mobility programs available for their students. Majority of them, 14 universities answered to have options in all the inhabited continents. Europe was available for all universities, as well as Asia is an option in 24 universities as shown in the figure 7.

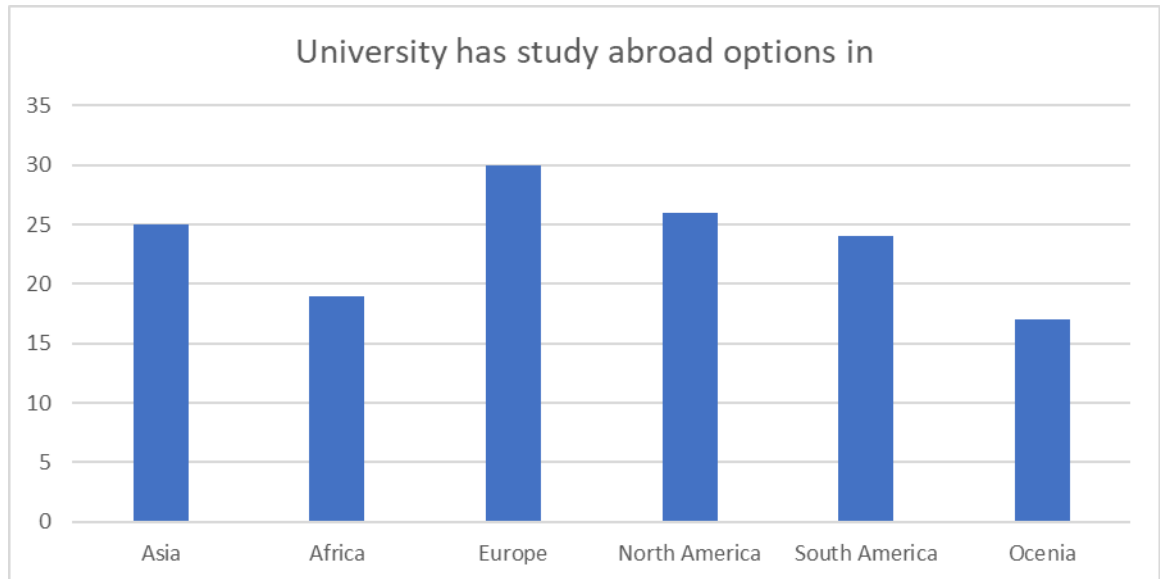


Figure 7. Study abroad options

The amount the universities send students abroad every year can be seen in the figure 8. Two small private universities mentioned sending more than 100 students a year whereas most the universities answering more than a 100, were large or major public universities. There was one answer about sending less than 10 students abroad every year. Although, this university is a large state funded university, that has options in every continent mentioned in figure 7 could be figured that this option was chosen by mistake. The same university chose in a later question to be sending at least 100 students solely to European destinations.

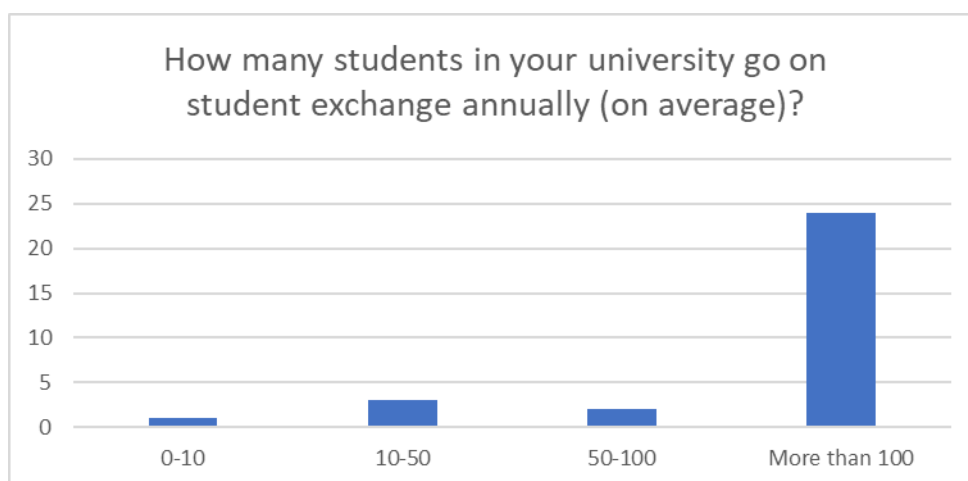


Figure 8. Students going abroad annually on average

The universities were given all the inhabited continents to point out their existing study abroad options, and from these they were to choose how many students they send every year to the mentioned destinations as shown in figure 10. As all of them offered study abroad programs in Europe, also most of them send majority of their students to European universities. 4 universities send 10-50 students to Europe and the rest more than 50 every year.

A few universities do not include Africa and Oceania in their study abroad options at all. Consequently, 12 universities were not sending any students to Africa and 10 universities sends no students to Oceania and 4 universities were not sending students to South America. On the other side of the range, there was one Italian university sending more than 50 students to Africa, however there was no universities sending as many students annually to Oceania nor South America.

The most popular destinations after Europe are North America and Asia. There are 4 universities not sending any students to Asia and 3 universities not sending students to North American universities, but there were 2 universities sending more than 50 students every year to both.

12 universities were sending 1-5 students to their South American universities annually.

How many students go to these destinations per year?

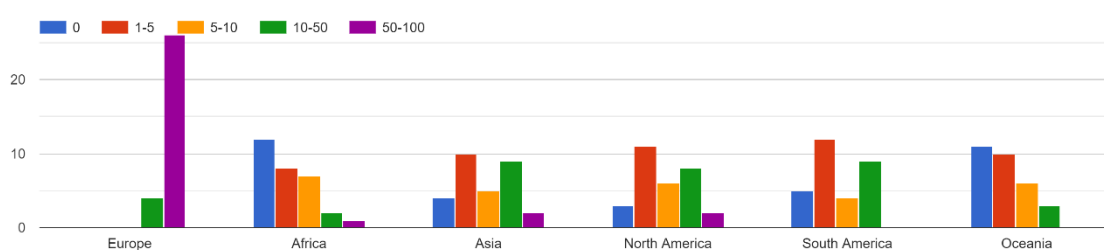


Figure 9. How many students annually per destination

How many students go to these destinations per year? The universities answered to the question specifically about the agreements with Asian universities, and the majority answered yes. From the three universities that answered no, one sends 50-100 students every year only to Europe. The two other universities answering no, answered in another question to send 1 to 5 students annually to Asia.

Thus, this would mean sending students without any bi-lateral agreements with Asian universities. One of the universities with no agreements with Asian universities, has agreements only with European and North American universities.

Does your university have agreements with universities in Asia?
30 vastausta

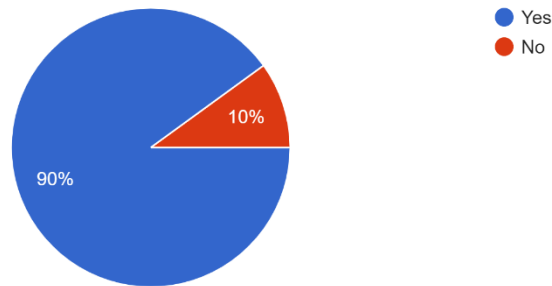


Figure 10. Agreements with Asian Universities

None of the universities answered no to the question about the funding for a student exchange, thus it is available in every university. As shown in the figure 11, 21 Italian universities offer a scholarship, and in 20 universities it was also possible to apply for a governmental support. EU funds and Erasmus funding was mentioned by 11 universities.

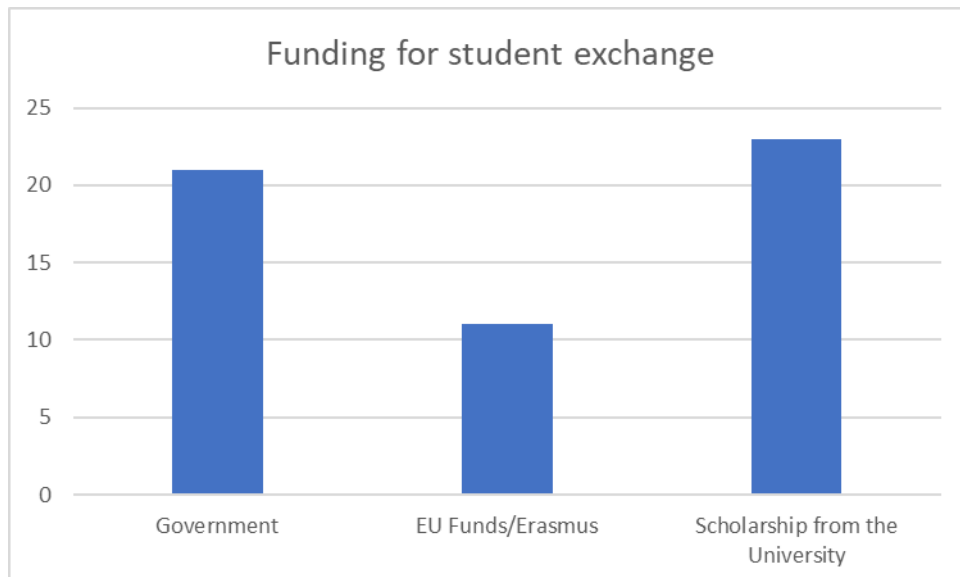


Figure 11. Funding for student mobility

The figure 12 portrays the universities' answers if they have a specific time for the students to go study abroad. 20 universities allow their students to go abroad at any time during their study program, and 10 had a restricted period for studying abroad. In a separate question, those who answered no, were able to specify the period when it is allowed. Only one that answered no, did not specify when, and 3 of them mentioned that it was possible throughout the year only if the students study plan allows it. The first semester of the academic year, which usually is from September to February, was mentioned by 2 universities restricting the time to study abroad. 5 of them mentioned to allow one semester to study abroad but this could be the second semester of the academic year as well.

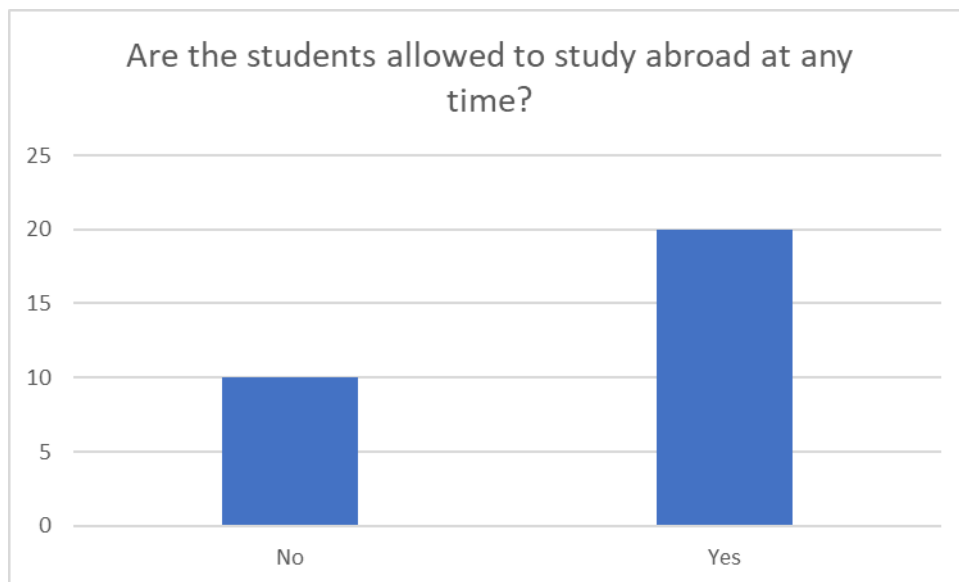


Figure 12. Restricted time for mobility

As shown in the figure 13 From the 30 universities participating in the survey, 21 answered yes to allow free mover exchanges. From the 9 universities that do not allow students to go abroad as a free mover, 7 were large or medium sized public state-funded universities that have their agreements with universities in almost all inhabited continents, One was a private small university that offers study options only in business and economics, and one was a small public state-funded university that offers none of the study fields shown in figure 5.

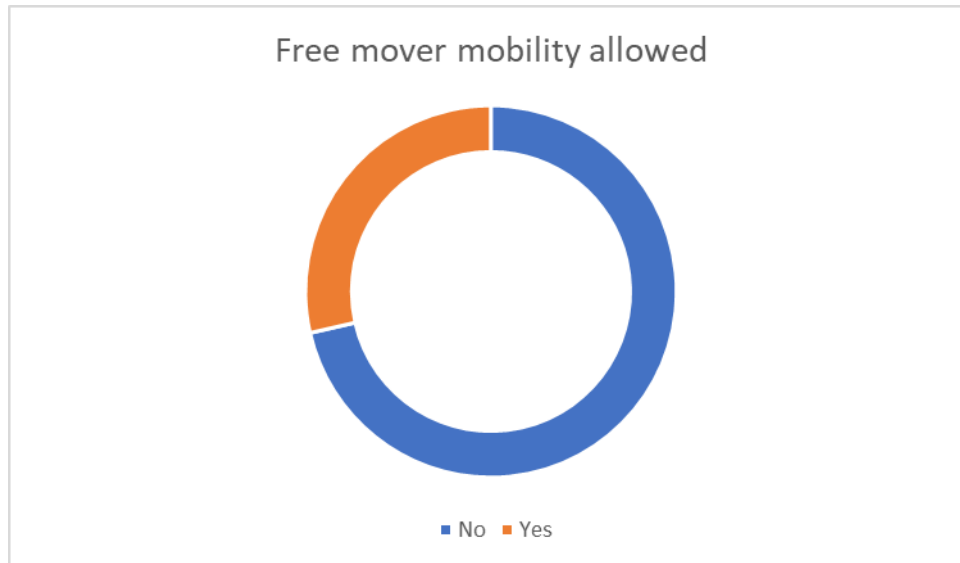


Figure 13. Free mover mobility allowed

To conclude the information received the information from the survey, all mandatory questions were answered by the universities. The data shows, that all 30 universities answering the questionnaire have at least one type of mobility program available to their students. The universities answering were from all over Italy, but mostly Rome region and Central Italy as well as from the regions in North of Italy. The size of the universities varied, but most answers came from large and small sized universities. The funding of the universities come either from public or private sources, and most of the universities answering were public, although the private universities send bigger percentages of their students to study abroad, as most of the private ones are also small institutions.

6 ANALYSIS

Regarding the research question and the objectives of the study, the survey gives a glance in the current situation for outgoing studies abroad for Italian universities. The survey was sent in three email batches as each round gave more responses than the first. The first email gave 9 answers, the second resulted in 8 answers and the last email brought 13 more answers. Therefore, even though the emails were received by all universities, most of them did not answer to the first email. Thus, it is evident that it may require a lot of contact requests before receiving an answer from Italy.

Even though the answers came from staff members representing 30 universities in different geographical areas of Italy, the answers do not reflect the entire state of Italian outbound student mobility as it is missing many regions, especially in the South of Italy. Naturally, it would require an answer from every university in Italy for the research to present the realistic picture of the market. Almost two thirds of the answers came from the most populated regions of Italy, from the Milan and Rome regions.

The survey gave information about what type of universities there is in Italy. Similarly, to many other countries, majority of the universities are funded by the state, and so was most of the participants of the survey as well. 24 universities offered business and economics, and technical study fields were also offered in majority of the universities. This can be considered when marketing to Italian universities, as many of the study programs AE offers at its host universities are aimed for students of these study fields.

As mentioned, the results give insight in the current state of the outbound mobility in Italian higher education institutions. And encouraging results for AE, is that all universities organize student exchange in some form. The fact that 22 universities said to have more than a hundred students going abroad every year proves that Italian universities are committed in internationalization of their students. This is also helped by the fact that 26 universities are also offering programs in English in their university, consequently the language barrier in these universities would not be as much of a problem.

What comes to the popularity of student mobility and student exchanges, it is evident that Italian students are interested and also encouraged by their universities to go abroad for at least one semester. Primarily the larger public universities are sending the most

students abroad. Yet, in comparison the small private institutions send a bigger percentage of their students for a student exchange. Thus, these private institutions allowing student exchange and especially free mover exchange, could be a highly potential target for AE to promote their service.

The results of the survey state that majority of the exchanges happen between Italian and other European universities, as all universities offered opportunities for exchange in Europe. Could be derived that this is due to the close distance and result of the work done to create the European Higher Education Area. Though, Asia on the contrary is and has been improving in all aspects of life, therefore it is not a surprise that Italian universities are also investing by signing agreements with Asian universities and sending their students to study in Asia. Also, it is clear that the data shows Italian students also have personal interest in studying abroad, as well as are curious about different cultures and ways of living.

From 30 universities, only three mentioned to not have any agreements with Asian universities at the moment. The background information of these specific three universities is that for now, they either send students only to Europe and North America through their bi-lateral agreements. Even though they do not have agreements with Asian universities right now, all of them still did allow free mover exchange. This implies that these universities may be selective with agreements with other universities, but then again still supportive to all kinds of mobility and thus would be highly potential clients to AE as well.

From the answers about the financial support for student mobility, could be derived that Italian universities with the help of the Italian government and the EU, are making it easier for the students to go abroad despite their financial status. 23 universities offered scholarships for studying abroad, and all of them had the EU funding available for their students as well. Even though all the universities offered financial help, it cannot be derived from the answers that if this applies to free mover exchange, as the questions did not make it possible to specify this.

Majority of the universities allowed their students to go abroad at any time of the academic year. Only one third restricted their students somehow, for example by allowing the mobility during the first semester of the year. Though, most of these restrictive universities specified that the study program defines the time that the student can go abroad during their studies, thus in most of the cases it is allowed all year long.

Finally, the most important information regarding the services that AE offers, is that 21 universities out of the 30, allowed free mover exchange. This allows the students to go abroad to study even if their home university does not offer study programs within the bilateral agreements with other universities. All of the universities allowing free mover mobility, would be highly potential partners to AE, as the home universities would be willing to accredit the studies the student takes during the mobility program. Thus, this would lower the threshold for the student to apply for a free mover mobility program, perhaps even if their economic status would allow for this kind of mobility and they had no financial support.

7 CONCLUSION

The idea for this thesis came during the internship period the researcher spent at the office of the commissioner. The target market was chosen to be Italy in the discussion about the new markets AE has been planning to enter next mainly because the customers of AE are rarely Italian. Thus, the purpose of the research was to find if it would be beneficial to propose the idea of collaboration with Italian universities, in order to increase the number of Italian students for AE.

The research questions that were answered by this thesis, were

- Where do Italian higher education institutions send their students to study abroad at the moment
- What factors influence the market for outgoing mobility in Italian higher education institutions
- What kind of higher education institutions would be the most beneficial for AE to approach in Italy

Based on the findings of the survey, it is evident that universities are sending their students all over the world and are keen to support the internationalization of their students. However, it depends on the university, whether they are interested in allowing their students to go abroad outside the university's bilateral agreements. Majority of the universities do allow free mover exchanges as well, which is a positive finding for the commissioning company AE especially because not all the supportive universities have agreements with Asian universities.

In order to create the base for the findings of the survey, information about the student mobility in Italy was read in order to realize if Italian universities are on the same level as other European states. Additionally, understanding the Italian higher education system was needed, as it affects how the universities in Italy work in general as well as how the students come to the decision of studying abroad. Similarly, to other European countries, Italy is part of the Bologna process and they are committed in creating the European higher education area as part of the process

There are more than 90 institutions of higher education in Italy, offering studies of many kinds. From all of the higher education institutions, there are 84 public or private

universities. There is plenty of possibilities for the students to be able to study regardless of their financial status or nationality.

The research was quantitative research, which was mainly because the market to be looked at, the country of Italy, is a geographically large area thus a large amount of responses was to be received to understand the market. Due to the long distance between the market and the author, the information needed was best received with an online survey of closed questions that was sent via email. It was chosen to be sent to all international coordinators at Italian universities, and their contact information was gathered from the universities' own websites. The emails were sent at the beginning of November in 2019 to all 83 universities. After one week, first reminder email was sent, and second reminder email a few days before closing of the survey as the universities were given two weeks' time to answer. The final amount of responses was 30 out of 83, thus response rate of the survey was 36,1%. All the universities that responded, were offering study exchange options to their students, and 21 of them also allowed free mover exchange.

Regardless the size of the institution, all the Italian universities that answered the survey, encourage students to study abroad by offering them scholarships either from their own institution, the state or from the EU. Also, 24 respondents send more than 100 students abroad every year. Majority of the universities have bilateral agreements with universities in all continents, and Europe is the most popular destination in all as all respondents sent students at least to Europe. Besides Europe, the Americas and Asia were among the top destinations.

Regarding the research questions, the thesis answers them quite well. The survey resulted in valuable information about many Italian universities, and major parts of the country was covered geographically. Also, the data shows that Italian higher education students have interest for studying abroad. However, as a large proportion of the universities did not give an answer and there were no responses from many regions, the reliability of the survey needs to be taken in consideration. The survey received answers from universities in 13 regions, and those 7 regions that had no answers are regions in the South and the Islands of Italy. The reliability in the answers that some universities gave need to be considered as incoherent information as at least one university gave answers where the information was not in-line with its other answers.

What the researcher would recommend AE to do next, is using the information from the research to plan a trip to promote the services of AE at Italian universities, especially the smaller private institutions in Rome region and Northern cities in Italy. They should begin with contacting the universities to suggest a meeting with the international coordinators in person, where they should highlight the student's opportunity to apply to programs outside of the home university's selection as well as the business and economics and technical study programs via AE. This would help them to create relationships and even partnerships with the universities. The ideal objective of meeting them in person would be that the international coordinators begun introducing AE to their students as an alternative path to study abroad programs, and Asia as an interesting destination. These Italian universities could be the most potential way for AE to send more Italian students to their host universities in Asia.

The learning process during the research shifted from the beginning to the end, though it begun for the researcher by searching for information about the culture of Italy and working with Italians. Towards the end of the research, it worked to be focused on the higher education system of Italy, as it was found out to be the most relevant information regarding the thesis objective. The information about the current student mobility situation in Italy became one of the focus points. The commissioning company AE operates in that field, thus entering the market in Italy and knowing the statistics was required. All in all, the research and process of making this thesis has been rewarding for the researcher and hopefully for AE as well.

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Appendix 1: Survey on Outgoing student mobility of Higher Education in Italy

Your university

My name is Tiina Lustig, and I am conducting a research on outgoing mobility in Italian Universities. Thank you for your help!

*Pakollinen

Sähköpostiosoite *

Sähköpostiosoitteesi

Your university *

Oma vastauksesi

Your position

Oma vastauksesi

The type of your institution *

- Public state-funded university
- University funded by other public source
- Private University
- Muu: _____

Which region is your university located in? *

North- West Italy

North-East Italy

Rome region and the Central Italy

South

On the Islands of Italy

Muu: _____

Number of enrolled students *

Major (more than 40,000)

Large (20,000-39,999)

Medium (10,000-19,999)

Small (less than 10,000)

Does your institution provide studies in the fields of...? (You can choose multiple) *

Architecture

Engineering

Agriculture

Economics and Business

Medical Sciences

None of these

The university has study programs in English *

Yes

No

The university provides student exchange programs? *

Yes

No

Seuraava

Outgoing mobility in your university

We are conducting a research on outgoing mobility in Italian Universities, and especially towards Asia. This section gives me more insight on what kind of possibilities there is to go abroad in your university at the moment.

The university has options to go study abroad in *

- Asia
- Africa
- Europe
- North America
- South America
- Oceania

How many students in your university go on student exchange annually (on average)? *

- 0-10
- 10-50
- 50-100
- More than 100

How many students go to these destinations per year? *					
	0	1-5	5-10	10-50	50-100
Europe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Africa	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
North America	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
South America	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oceania	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Does your university have agreements with universities in Asia? *

Yes

No

Does the university provide funding for student exchange, if yes, what type of funding? *

No

Yes, governmental support

Yes, scholarship from the university

Muu: _____

Is there a specific time period when your students can go abroad for exchange? *

Yes

No

If yes, what is the time period to go abroad?

Oma vastauksesi _____

Free mover exchange
Free movers are international students who organize their studies independently, without being a part of any exchange program.

Does your university allow free mover exchange? *

Yes

No

Takaisin **Lähetä**

Appendix 2: Email accompanying the survey

If this e-mail did not reach the person in charge of your institution's outgoing study exchanges, please kindly forward this to them. I highly appreciate the help with my thesis research. Thank you!

Dear International coordinator of Institution of Higher Education in Italy,

warm greetings from freezing Finland! My name is Tiina Lustig, and I am an International Business student at Turku University of Applied Sciences. I am contacting you as I am conducting a survey for my bachelor's thesis "Outgoing student mobility of Higher Education in Italy". The purpose of the thesis is to have a better view of the state of the current outbound student exchange market in Italian universities, and where do your students prefer to go on exchange. The research is commissioned by Asia Exchange (<http://www.asiaexchange.org/>), a Finnish study abroad organization.

Therefore, I am kindly asking you to fill out a quick questionnaire about the current possibilities your university is providing, and where do your students choose to go on student exchange. All responses to this survey will be handled anonymously and confidentially, and no identifying information will be made public. Please, submit your answers by November 20th, 2019.

If you have any questions or need more information concerning the survey, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards, Tiina Lustig,

Turku University of Applied Sciences

Appendix 3: First reminder email

If this e-mail did not reach the person in charge of your institution's outgoing study exchanges, please kindly forward this to them. I highly appreciate the help with my thesis research. Thank you!

Dear International coordinator of Institution of Higher Education in Italy,

warm greetings from freezing Finland! I contacted you on November 6th regarding a survey for my bachelor's thesis "Outgoing student mobility of Higher Education in Italy". I yet have not received a reply from you, so I am kindly sending this reminder in case you have missed the original email.

My name is Tiina Lustig, and I am an International Business student at Turku University of Applied Sciences. I am contacting you as I am conducting a survey for my bachelor's thesis "Outgoing student mobility of Higher Education in Italy". The purpose of the thesis is to have a better view of the state of the current outbound student exchange market in Italian universities, and where do your students prefer to go on exchange. The research is commissioned by Asia Exchange (<http://www.asiaexchange.org/>), a Finnish study abroad organization.

Therefore, I am kindly asking you to fill out a quick questionnaire about the current possibilities your university is providing, and where do your students choose to go on student exchange. All responses to this survey will be handled anonymously and confidentially, and no identifying information will be made public. Please, submit your answers by November 20th, 2019.

If you have any questions or need more information concerning the survey, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards, Tiina Lustig

Appendix 4: Second reminder email

This is a reminder for a survey on “Outgoing student mobility of higher education in Italy”. If this e-mail did not reach the person in charge of your institution's outgoing study exchanges, please kindly forward this to them. I highly appreciate the help with my thesis research. Thank you!

Dear International coordinator of Institution of Higher Education in Italy,

warm greetings from freezing Finland!

I have contacted your institution on a few occasions regarding a survey for my bachelor's thesis “Outgoing student mobility of Higher Education in Italy”. Yet have not received a reply from you, so I am kindly sending this reminder in case you have missed the original email.

My name is Tiina Lustig, and I am an International Business student at Turku University of Applied Sciences.

I am contacting you as I am conducting a survey for my bachelor's thesis “Outgoing student mobility of Higher Education in Italy”. The purpose of the thesis is to have a better view of the state of the current outbound student exchange market in Italian universities, and where do your students prefer to go on exchange. The research is commissioned by Asia Exchange (<http://www.asiaexchange.org/>), a Finnish study abroad organization.

Therefore, I am kindly asking you to fill out a quick questionnaire (max 5 min) about the current possibilities your university is providing, and where do your students choose to go on student exchange. All responses to this survey will be handled anonymously and confidentially, and no identifying information will be made public.

If you have any questions or need more information concerning the survey, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

Tiina Lustig,

Turku University of Applied Sciences