Marketing Laurea University of Applied Sciences degree programs in Brazil

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The purpose of this study is to examine higher education marketing theories and analyze how they can be applied by Laurea University of Applied Sciences (Laurea) to advertise its degree programs in Brazil.

Brazil is a fast developing country whose government's latest efforts to support student exchange have increased the number of foreign universities advertising in the Brazilian market. With the Brazilian educational market becoming more international, Laurea has identified an opportunity to attract Brazilian students to Finland and therefore, increase the partnerships between Finnish and Brazilian companies and governments in the near future.

This study will provide the reader with an understanding of the Brazilian market and detailed research on Laurea's competitors and their activities to attract Brazilian students to their institutions.

A limitation of this study is the lack of information regarding Brazilian students' preferences and criteria used to select a foreign university; as a result this paper was unable to provide Laurea with consistent and specific marketing techniques that would guarantee Laurea's success in the market.

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1 Introduction

The study will provide the reader with an understanding of marketing activities regarding higher education in Brazil. In the first chapters, the reader will be presented with the theoretical background and will be able to understand marketing in general, and how a higher education institution similar to Laurea University of Applied Sciences (later Laurea) can use its planning process to market its degree programs in Brazil. The reader will acknowledge the existence of several factors needed in order to perform successful marketing actions. In the following chapters, the research method and structure will be presented, explaining how market and competitors' researches were prepared.

Laurea is a limited company providing higher education in different cities of Finland. Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulu Oy (in Finnish) is owned by different organizations, and it is a relatively large institution, employing 518 people, among teachers, counselors and staff, and has about 7780 enrolled students. Laurea aims to be recognized internationally, and its mission includes service innovation and regional development in the metropolitan area. The University offers sixteen Bachelor's degree programs and seventeen Master's degree programs, in seven different locations, in the Greater Helsinki region. Laurea offers its students seven Bachelor's degrees in English; they are Business Information Technology, Business Management, Facility Management, Nursing, Security Management, Social Services and Tourism. The two Master's degrees offered by the institution in English are Health Promotion and Service Innovation and Design. (Laurea 2012a, Laurea 2012b, Laurea 2012c, Laurea Live 2013.)

As an organization owned by public institutions, Laurea does not charge tuition fees from its students. Although there has been a discussion about collecting tuition fees in the near future for Bachelor's programs, Universities of Applied Sciences are not collecting them yet. However, such Universities are allowed to collect fees from non-European citizens for Master's programs, Laurea collects a 3.750 euros fee per semester from these students. (Laurea 2013.)

The main interest of Laurea's marketing department in this context, at the moment, is to attract Brazilian students to attend full Bachelor's degree programs and that is the main focus of this study.

1.1 Motivation

Laurea's marketing department's interest in marketing in Brazil motivated this study; it aims to provide a clearer understanding of the Brazilian market, and how competitor institutions market their study offerings in the country. Through this research, the marketing department

expects to be able to make use of the findings present in this paper, and to learn the opportunities it has to enter the Brazilian market to advertise and bring students to Finland.

The subject has been discussed between a team formed by the marketing department planner, the heard of the student affairs office, a Brazilian member of the teaching staff and the author of this paper - which is a Laurea student and a Brazilian citizen. The research questions of this study were designed among the team and are the following:

- Who are Laurea's key competitors? What are their activities?
- How can Laurea advertise in the Brazilian market?
- What are Laurea strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats compared to its competitors?
- What strategies can Laurea use?

1.2   Objectives

The main objective of this research is to study the marketing of higher education and how to use the marketing tools and apply existing theories to attract Brazilian students to Finland. The conclusions provided by this study will form a base for Laurea's marketing team, with which they will be able to consult when marketing Laurea's degrees in Brazil.

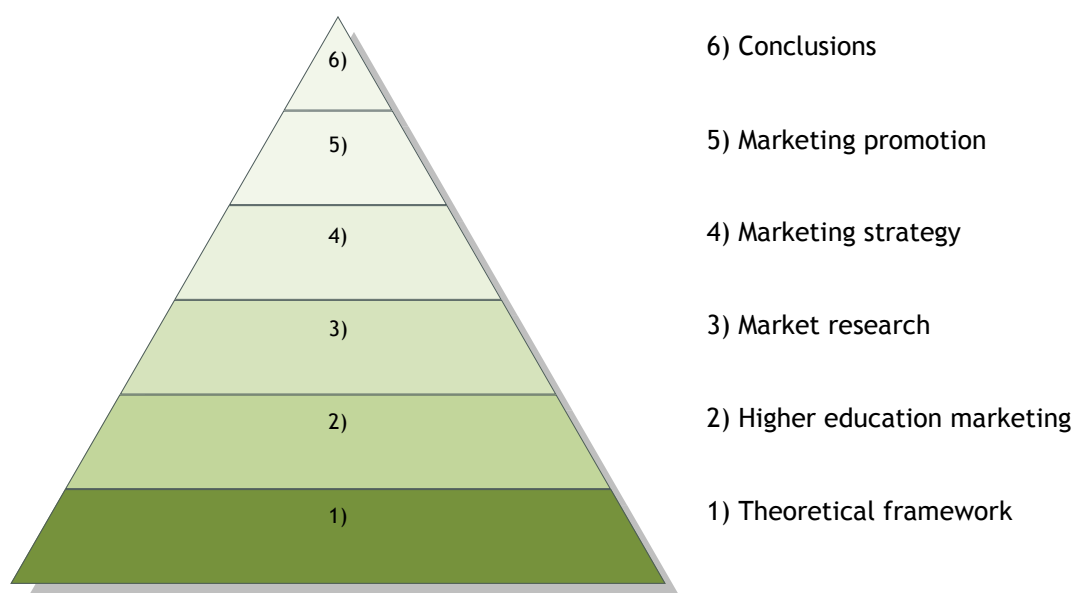## 1.3   Structure of the Study

Figure 1: Structure of the Study

1.4   Limitations of the Study

Although this research presents different marketing methods to attract Brazilian students to Laurea, it will not consider the motivations behind the choice of the institution and country of study of Brazilian students as this subject can be particularly extensive and no further studies on the subject have been found.

In addition, because there is a lack of information about the most popular universities for Brazilian students, the competitor analysis presented further in this paper is limited to the information presented on competitors' webpages. This study can only consider the most popular countries for Brazilian students in general.

2   Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework will provide information about marketing by introducing existing theories on the subject, serving as the basis for the study. The study will give emphasis on the marketing theories according to the case, which is marketing higher education. General marketing definition will be presented, and additional theory on higher education marketing strategies will be discussed further in chapter 3.

2.1   Marketing Definition

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2012, 29), marketing is a process where product or service providers with the purpose of delivering value must understand customer needs. Once the provider understands the customer's demands, products or services can be adapted to serve the customer better; this process involves developing solid relationships between marketers and customers in order to obtain value in return.

Doole and Lowe (2008) emphasize the importance of aligning the customers' needs and wants with the organization's objectives, when designing its processes by opting for techniques that will better satisfy customers' needs, the organization is be able to build competitive advantage in the market.

Even though Laurea's aim is to extend its international marketing activities, general definition and implications of international marketing may not apply entirely. Because Laurea's objective is to attract students to Finland, it does not go through the many challenges of establishing itself in a foreign country. On the other hand, the social, cultural, legal, and eco-

nomic factors must be well thought-out so that the target market's processes and laws are respected and the market's appropriate marketing methods are understood and applied.

2.2 Methods

The method chosen for this research is the benchmarking. In the next paragraph Watson defines benchmarking as:

> A systematic and continuous measurement process; a process of continuously comparing and measuring an organization´s business processes against business leaders anywhere in the world, to gain information that will help the organization take action to improve its performance (1993).

Despite the fact Laurea has experience in foreign markets; the Brazilian market is new for the institution. The benchmarking method is suitable for this research because Laurea's competitors have long experience in the Brazilian market, by studying their marketing techniques, this research will be able to provide Laurea with information of how to do marketing in Brazil and compete in the market.

3 Higher Education Marketing

The common marketing definition perfectly suits the typical provider and customer relationship; marketing education is, however, different. As the relationship between service provider (educational institution) and customer (student) is different, perception of value is also different.

Since the service provided by educational institutions is mostly intellectual, such intangible value is typically delivered through degree programs, courses, career guidance and other services and perceived in a longer period rather than instantaneously. The value attained in return can be in the form of tuition fees, donations or taxpayers' contributions. (Kotler & Fox 1995, 6)

Kotler and Fox define marketing of educational institutions as:

> [...] the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with target markets to achieve institutional objectives. Marketing involves designing the institution's offerings to meet the target markets' needs and desires, and using effective pricing, communication, and distribution to inform, motivate, and service these markets (1995, 6).

Higher education marketing is different because Universities not only offer a service, but prepare professionals for society. Although educational institutions have the freedom to design their own courses, the market's needs must be taken into consideration in order to offer programs and courses that are attractive to customers and valuable to society in a whole. Effective marketing can be successful by considering important aspects such as the clear communication of the institution's objectives. It is essential to understand that customers' decisions are not based merely in advertising, but it also involves the institution's reputation, location, study offerings, methods, extra activities and physical facilities to mention a few factors. Institutions must be able to adapt in order to provide an environment that corresponds to customers' expectations in a realistic manner. (Kotler & Fox 1995, 8.)

By linking the works of Doole and Lowe (2008) and Kotler and Fox (1995), it is possible to determine that in the international market, marketing higher education is even more challenging because it is necessary to understand the target market's cultural and social backgrounds and needs. Since consumers' mindset diverges from culture to culture, the marketing strategies must be designed to reach the target market. Educational institutions that use the same approaches in marketing their programs both in domestic and international markets will be prone to fail in one or another.

3.1   Marketing Planning Process

The marketing planning process is an essential part to Marketing activities. According to Kotler and Fox (1995, 95), strategic planning although necessary to improve educational institutions marketing effectiveness, is not a tool widely used by institutions yet. The writers define strategic planning as:

> [...] the process of developing and maintaining a strategic fit between the institution's goals and capabilities and its changing marketing opportunities. It relies on developing a clear institutional mission, supporting goals and objectives, a sound strategy, and appropriate implementation (1995, 95).

Once the institution's missions and goals are coordinated with the planned strategies, the institution can expect better results and performance in the market (Kotler & Fox 1995, 96). There are four stages involving marketing plans execution; they are analysis, planning, implementation and control. Figure 2 demonstrates how the relationship between these stages is interrelated and how continuous the process is. A more detailed definition of each stage can be found in the subsections below.
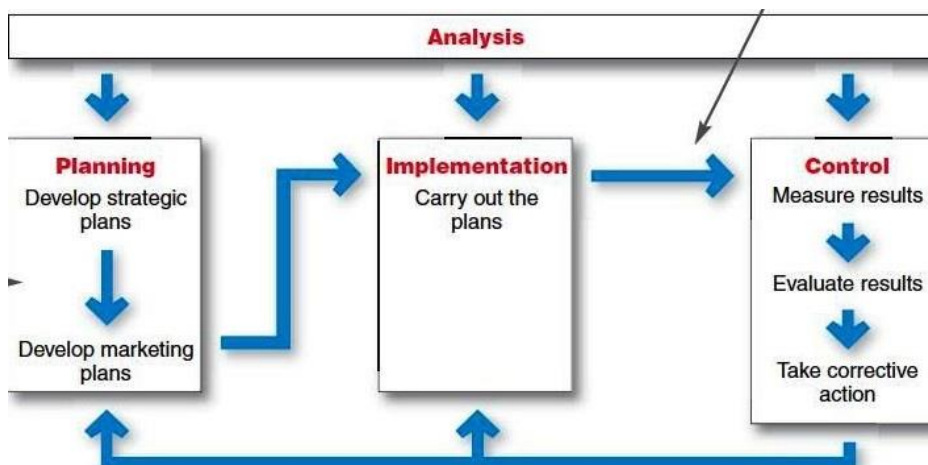
Figure 2: Managing Marketing: Analysis, Planning, Implementation and Control (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 77).

3.1.1 Analysis

The first stage of the planning process is the analysis; this part consists of an investigation of the institution's current situation. Known as SWOT analysis, this analysis aims to examine the opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses surrounding and involving the institution. The information acquired through this step will provide support and guide the next steps of the process. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 77.) The components of this analysis can be seen below, in Figure 3.

Figure 3: SWOT Analysis: Strengths (S), Weaknesses (W), Opportunities (O) and Threats (T) (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 78).

3.1.2 Planning

The planning stage of the marketing process, as mentioned previously in this chapter, is the phase where the institution selects the marketing strategies it will employ to achieve its

goals. Marketing planning relates to which marketing activities the institution should use and reason why they should be used. The plan should include the institution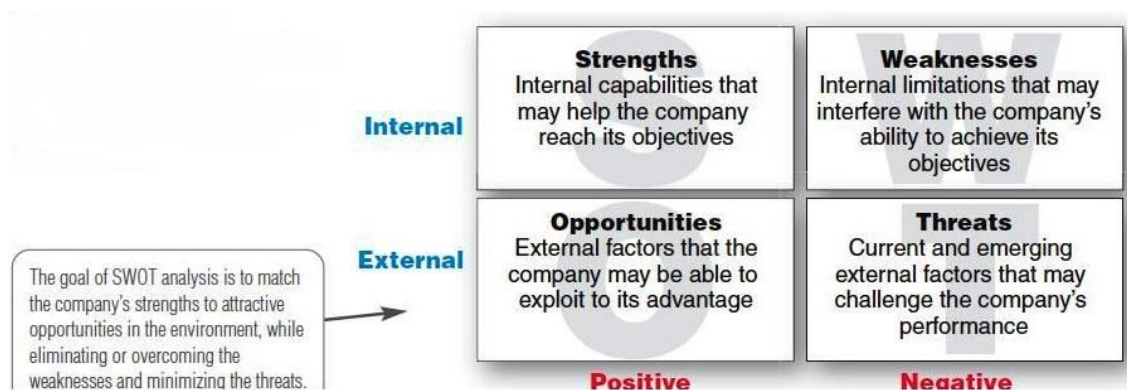's main objectives, a detailed SWOT analysis, an explanation of how threats and opportunities will be managed, and an action plan to implement the marketing strategy; how the process will be controlled, and the allocated budget for the process should also be included in the plan. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 78.)

3.1.3   Implementation

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2012, 78), implementation is the stage where the planned marketing actions are put into practice. Although realistic and tailored marketing strategies are fundamental for marketing success, a poor implementation of a marketing plan can compromise the whole process. The marketing implementation focuses on by what means, through which channels, to whom and where the strategies will be carried out. Solid strategies and implementation processes are critical to success.

Hollensen (2010, 545), however, argues that even though strategic planning and marketing implementation are interdependent processes, such processes should not be sequential. This is given to the fact that at the same time as the marketing plan describes through which means the strategies are going to be implemented, the content of the marketing plan will also be influenced by the implementation methods. In Figure 4, the relationship between marketing strategy and implementation can be seen.
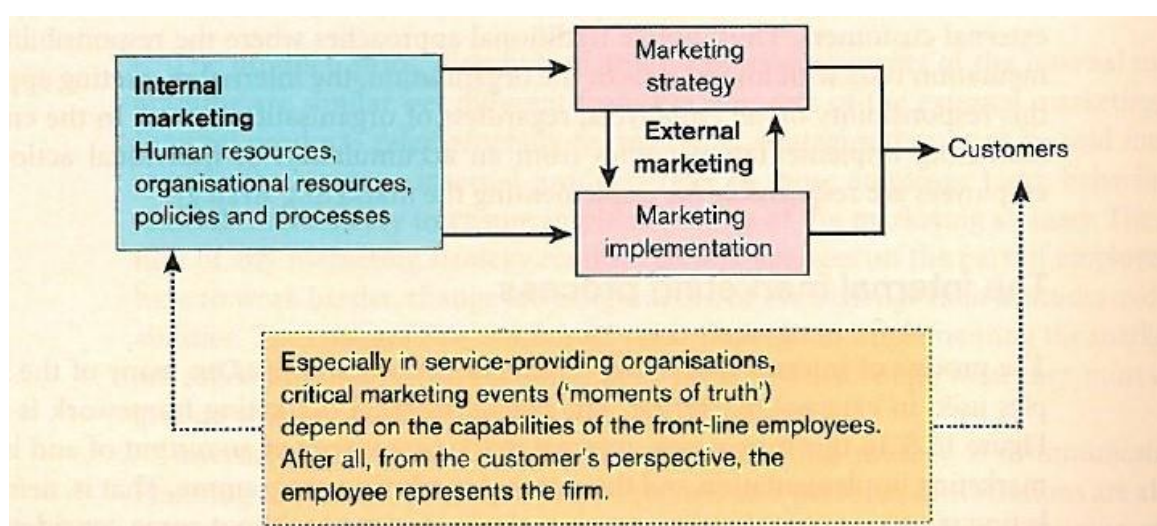

Figure 4: Two-way relationship between marketing strategy and implementation (Hollensen 2010, 545).

3.1.4   Control

The marketing control process is the step in which management is responsible for monitoring the results of marketing strategies and plans and adjusting the implementation procedures in order to ensure the achievement of the organization's objectives. During this process, any gaps or differences between actual and expected performances must be closed, and changes in objectives and procedures can occur. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 80.)

Hollensen (2010, 578) states that marketing control involves different types of procedures and devices to ensure marketing planning and actions is aligned. It involves allocating responsibility over failure or success of procedures and eventual alterations of objectives and standards. Figure 5 illustrates how the marketing control system functions.
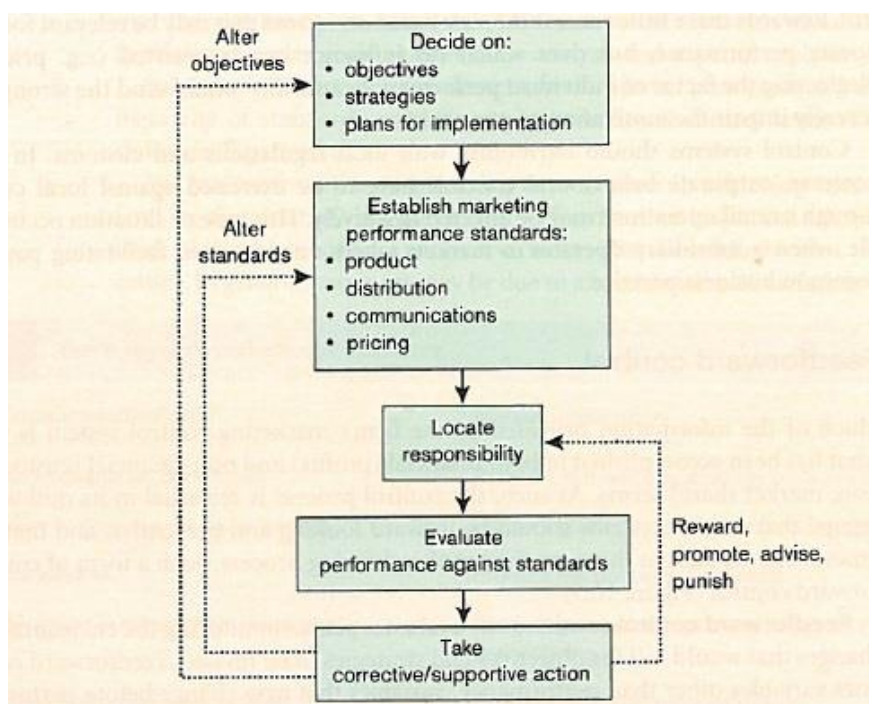
Figure 5: The marketing control system (Hollensen 2010, 579).

According to Hollensen (2010, 581), the control process involves four different types of control, each of them consisting of different methods, purposes and allocation of responsibilities. In his book on marketing management, Hollensen (2010, 581) references Kotler's rationalization on marketing control, the author also makes use of Kotler's illustrations to support his concept. His concept can be seen in the figure below.

Type of control	Prime responsibility	Purpose of control	Examples of techniques/approaches
Strategic control	• Senior management • Middle management	• To see if planned results are being achieved	• Marketing effectiveness ratings • Marketing audit
Efficiency control	• Line and staff management • Marketing controller	• To examine ways of improving the efficiency of marketing	• Salesforce efficiency • Advertising efficiency • Distribution efficiency
Annual plan control	• Senior management • Middle management	• To see if planned results are being achieved.	• Sales analysis • Market share analysis • Marketing expenses to sales ratio • Customer tracking
Profit control (budget control)	• Marketing controller	• To examine where the company is making and losing money	• Profitability by e.g. product, customer group or trade channel

Figure 6: Types of marketing control (Hollensen 2010, 582).

3.1.5 Segmentation, targeting and positioning

Segmentation, targeting and positioning are critical parts of marketing. By focusing on the most appealing markets, most educational institutions should be able to provide its services successfully. Because people differ in age, beliefs, cultural backgrounds, income level, preferences etc., it is important for institutions to segment markets in order to identify how and to whom their efforts should be aimed. (Kotler & Fox 1995, 211-212.)

These aspects of marketing consist in three important steps. The first step of the process is to identify groups of consumers and the marketing tools and techniques suitable for this group; the second step is to select the right market(s) segments to attend; the third step is to establish and lead the market(s) into the benefits the institution can provide. These steps are known as segmenting the market, market targeting and marketing positioning, respectively. The figure below demonstrates how these steps are related. (Kotler and Fox 1995, 212.)

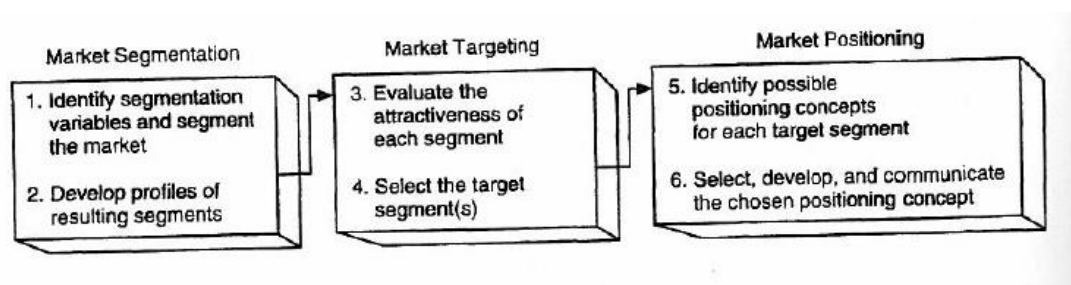| Market Segmentation	Market Targeting	Market Positioning
1. Identify segmentation variables and segment the market 2. Develop profiles of resulting segments	3. Evaluate the attractiveness of each segment 4. Select the target segment(s)	5. Identify possible positioning concepts for each target segment 6. Select, develop, and communicate the chosen positioning concept

Figure 7: Steps in market segmentation, targeting, and positioning (Kotler & Fox 1995, 212).

According to Kotler and Fox (1995, 214-225), markets can be divided into geographic segmentation, demographic segmentation, behavioristic segmentation and psychographic segmentation. In geographic segmentation, the market is divided into a way that marketing and promotion are aimed at a location. Demographic segmentation divides groups in the market by income, age, religion, profession, sex, level of education, nationality and family size, for example, this segmentation form is highly popular not only because it is easier to define and measure but also because these factors affect marketing techniques appropriated to the market. Psychographic segmentation consists of scenarios where groups are divided by their social class, lifestyle and personality traits. Behavioristic segmentation involves segmenting markets according to behaviors; which means that, through this segmentation, the institution learns how individuals respond to its services. Loyalty status, attitude, user status and benefits sought are examples of factors considered in behavioristic segmentation. Effective segmentation depends on how measurable, accessible, substantial and durable the segments will be.

Market targeting is the second step of the process and it is of concern because as mentioned previously, it will determine the marketing strategies to be employed. Three strategies stand out in market targeting; they are undifferentiated or mass marketing, differentiated marketing and concentrated marketing. The first strategy focus on making use of one technique or marketing mix appeal to a massive amount of consumers. In the second strategy, the institution selects various market segments and tailors its marketing methods to go well with each market. In the third and last strategy the institution selects one market segment and focuses its efforts into developing the perfect marketing mix and method to reach that market. (Kotler & Fox 1995, 225-228.)

In order to identify attractive markets segments, institutions should observe factors such as market size, market growth rate, ability to pay, competitive intensity, variability, scale economies and learning curve. Moreover, institutions should ensure they have the key factors to succeed in the segmented market; these factors include relative market share, price competitiveness, program quality, marketing effectiveness, geography and knowledge of consumer/market. (Kotler & Fox 1995, 228-229.)

The third step of the process is positioning; this step is a key component of the process because it handles how the institution is perceived in the segmented market. Positioning concerns the institution's image and it is defined by Kotler and Fox (1995, 231) as "the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of an object." The authors further describe that image does not necessarily reflect the truth as it involves personal perception and it varies from one individual to the other. Additionally, in order to succeed in the segmented market, the institution must ensure a good image is made known and the brand reputation is sol-

id; the institution should discover how different markets view its image and frequently measure its image in the market(s).

3.1.6   Differentiation

Kotler and Fox (1995, 237) define differentiation as "the process of designing a set of meaningful differences to distinguish the school's offer from competing institutions' offers." Apart from what is believed, differentiation is not a result from advertising, it is related to the institution's actions and resources. An institution can differentiate itself in factors such as its location, program requirements, prices, achievements of graduates, curriculum length, quality, technologies available, campus atmosphere, and so on.

Institutions should follow a few criteria in order to select the right features in which it should differentiate itself, Kotler and Fox (1995, 237) emphasize, which these should be, in the following table:

Important:	The difference delivers a highly valued benefit a sufficient number of students, alumni, donors and so on.
Distinctive:	The difference should be one that isn't offered by (many) other schools, or which the school can offer in a more distinctive or convenient way.
Superior:	The difference is superior to other ways to achieve the same goal or benefit.
Communicable:	The difference is one the school can demonstrate-and preferably show-to customers.
Preemptive:	The difference ideally cannot be copied by other schools-at least in the short term.
Affordable:	The school can afford to provide or the student can afford to pay for the difference.
Profitable:	The school will be able to charge enough-or get financial support through grants or donations-to make implementing the difference worthwhile.

Table 1: Criteria to designing features for school differentiation (Kotler & Fox 1995, 237).

3.2   Communication: promotion and advertising

Hollensen (2010, 490-494) explains how communication is critical in marketing. The author defines the role of communication as "to provide the information that buyers need to make purchasing decisions." Through communication, institutions are able to make known its brand image, objectives, services, prices, reputation, etc. In educational marketing, communication

acts as providing prospective customers with information and reasons why the institution should be their choice. Although communication involves more than simply promotion, promotion is still a particularly significant part of marketing activities.

According to Hollensen (2010, 493-494), marketing communication comprises four aspects, which are "a sender, a message, a communication channel and a receiver (audience)." Effective communication should consist of a clear understanding of the message to be communicated, the audience and the reaction expected. A failure in designing and identifying these elements is likely to compromise the whole process. Language differences, economic differences, socio-cultural differences, legal and regulatory conditions and competitive differences are examples of factors affecting communication at international level. Such factors should be studied and understood prior to communication, in order to design a message that will be suitable for the market.

Kotler and Fox (1995, 352) emphasize the importance of feedback in the communication process. The following figure illustrates the process and its components.
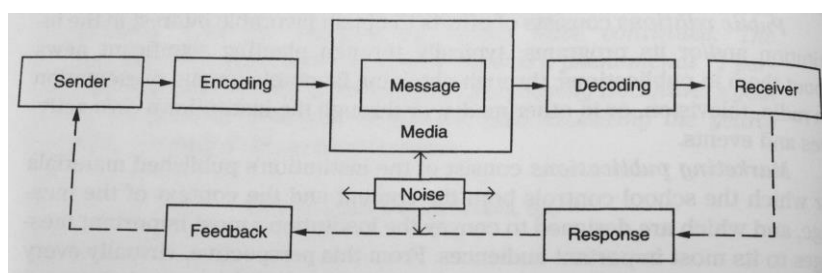
Figure 8: Elements in the communication process (Kotler & Fox 1995, 352).

Advertising is a noticeable communication tool; on the other hand because of the factors affecting communication mentioned previously in this paper, it can present numerous difficulties, especially at the international level. Other communication tools are public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing and personal selling. (Hollensen 2010, 498.) Although each communication tool can benefit educational institutions in different aspects, most of these tools will not be discussed further in this paper as it is believed they are not suitable for Laurea in this case. The typical communication tools and the medias used in these tools are presented by Hollensen (2010, 498) in Figure 9.

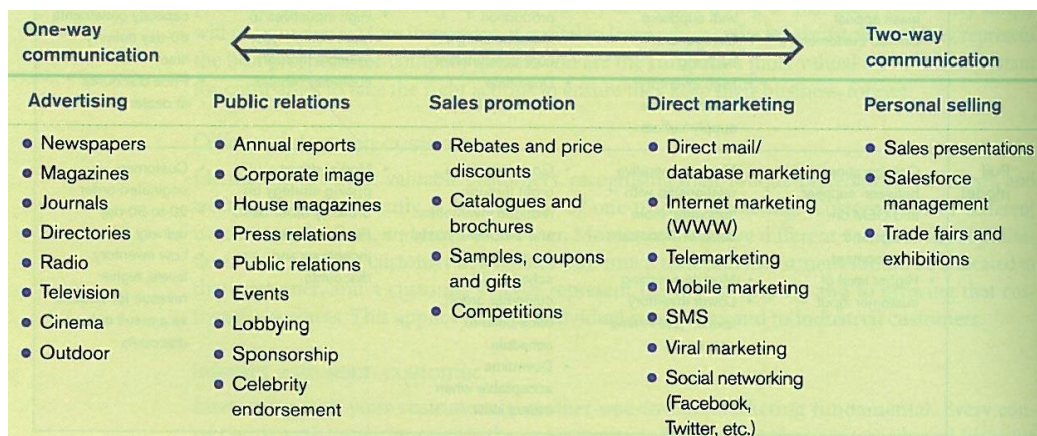| One-way communication				Two-way communication
Advertising	Public relations	Sales promotion	Direct marketing	Personal selling
● Newspapers ● Magazines ● Journals ● Directories ● Radio ● Television ● Cinema ● Outdoor	● Annual reports ● Corporate image ● House magazines ● Press relations ● Public relations ● Events ● Lobbying ● Sponsorship ● Celebrity endorsement	● Rebates and price discounts ● Catalogues and brochures ● Samples, coupons and gifts ● Competitions	● Direct mail/ database marketing ● Internet marketing (WWW) ● Telemarketing ● Mobile marketing ● SMS ● Viral marketing ● Social networking (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	● Sales presentations ● Salesforce management ● Trade fairs and exhibitions

Figure 9: Typical communication tools (media) (Hollensen 2010, 498).

Participation in trade fairs and exhibitions is an interesting communication tool from the point of view of educational institutions seeking international markets. As a major communication tool for marketers and educational institutions these days, trade fairs and exhibitions allow marketers/institutions to present and describe their services to potential customers, which is interesting because customers are allowed to ask questions and institution representatives are able to build relationships-even if for short-term. Moreover, this type of communication tool allows institutions to collect potential customers' information for subsequent advertising and also to improve the institution's image. The negative aspect of trade fairs and exhibitions relies on the high cost of participation in exhibitions in foreign countries; this aspect can be minimized by sharing costs with representatives, although personal representation usually results in better outcomes. (Hollensen 2010, 513-515.)

4   Market Research

A market research aims to support marketing decision-making; through the research aspects of the potential market are studied in order to provide a clear view for marketers (Hague 2002). In this section the aspects of the Brazilian market and Laurea's competitors' marketing actions will be presented, a SWOT-analysis will conclude this chapter with the main findings on the subject.

4.1   The Brazilian Market

In the following subsections, the Brazilian market will be examined, providing an overview of the country as well as of the cultural and social backgrounds in order to deliver a better understanding to the reader.

4.1.1 Country overview

Brazil is the largest country in South America, both by population and geographically; it is also a widely diverse country, presenting a mixture of climates, landscapes, races, culture and social backgrounds. Brazil is the only Portuguese-speaking country in South America, along with several other indigenous languages. (Brazil 2011.)

The Brazilian economy is one of the fastest developing economies in the world, surpassing even the United Kingdom in terms of GDP in 2011. As other countries face economic recession, Brazil continues to grow exploring its service, manufacturing, mining and agricultural sectors. (Central Intelligence Agency 2013.) According to The Economist (2012), Brazil is now a "resource-rich global economic source," as it has been exploring successfully new international markets for the past years; for that reason foreign countries now consider the Brazilian economy strong and reliable.

The numbers of Brazil according to the Central Intelligence Agency (2013) can be seen in Table 2.

Country information	
Country name:	Federative Republic of Brazil
Capital:	Brasília
Government type:	Federal republic
Area:	8,514,877 square km – the fifth largest country of the world
Population:	201,009,622 (July 2013 est.) – the fifth most populated country of the world GDP (purchasing power parity): $2.362 trillion (2012 est.) – the eighth highest country GDP of the world
Labor force:	107.1 million (2012 est.) – the sixth biggest labor force of the world
Ethnic groups:	White 53.7%, mulatto (mixed white and black) 38.5%, black 6.2%, other (includes Japanese, Arab, Amerindian) 0.9%, unspecified 0.7% (2000 census)
Religion:	Roman Catholic (nominal) 73.6%, Protestant 15.4%, Spiritualist 1.3%, Bantu/voodoo 0.3%, other 1.8%, unspecified 0.2%, none 7.4% (2000 census)
Major cities:	Sao Paulo 19.96 million; Rio de Janeiro 11.836 million; Belo Horizonte 5.736 million; Porto Alegre 4.034 million; BRASILIA (capital) 3.789 million (2009)
Literacy:	88.6% of all population
School life expectancy:	14 years

Table 2: Country information (Central Intelligence Agency 2013).

Brazil has been improving its educational systems for the past years, with a decreasing level of illiteracy and new investments in the educational system; the government expects to increase the general level of education in the country (Invest in Brazil 2009-10). In 2010, almost 6 million students were enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs, more than 4,4 million were studying in private institutions and 1,5 million in public institutions (Cieglinski 2010). As the number of high school graduate students increases annually and the Government's efforts to improve access to education rises, it is likely that such numbers have escalated considerably since 2010.

In a fast developing economy as in Brazil, the labor market demands highly qualified professionals more and more. As the number of unemployed people may rise in some sectors, companies often struggle to find skilled professionals. Being aware of the high salaries and the diversity of employment benefits offered by such companies, students are bound to pursue more high quality education. (Seixas 2013.)

4.1.2   Cultural background

The culture in Brazil is greatly diversified, as a result of the high level of migration since Brazil was first colonized by Portugal. In order to understand the country's culture better, it is imperative to acquire a minimum understanding of its history. In the early 1500's Brazil received the first Portuguese ships and colonizers who brought African slaves to work in the exploitation of the lands and its natural resources. By enslaving also the indigenous peoples, Portugal established a monarchy in Brazil. In the following centuries, the French and the Dutch again influenced the culture after they tried to take control of the lands from Portugal. As the awareness of Brazil's abundance of natural resources grew abroad, the number of various foreign immigrants raised considerably in the country. Japanese, Germans, Italians and Spanish were some nationalities who moved to Brazil to explore the land and the business opportunities. With the mixture of all races and cultures mentioned previously, Brazilian nationals emerged. (Every Culture 2013.)

Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G.J. and Minkov (2010, 29-32) discuss the five dimensions of national culture; power distance, collectivism versus individualism, femininity versus masculinity, uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation. Through research, such authors were able to recognize that individuals from different nations could behave in a similar way and share the same values despite physical distance and nationality; dissimilarities on those dimensions were equally considered on the researches. The description of each dimension, as well as the differences between the Brazilian and Finnish national cultures, can be seen in Figure 10. The comparison between both countries' numbers will allow a better understanding of the Brazilian culture and how it differs from the Finnish culture.

Brazil
in comparison with the below
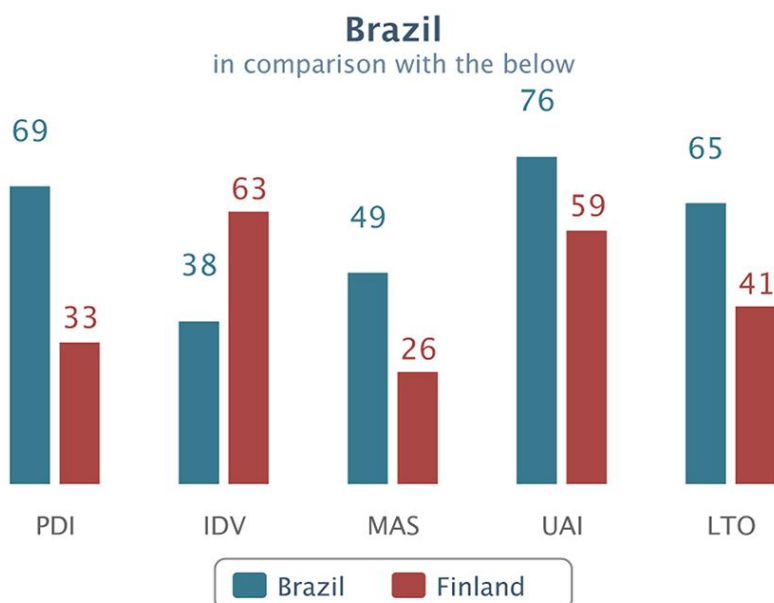
What about Brazil?

If we explore Brazil´s culture through the lens of the 5-D Model, we can get a good overview of the deep drivers of Brazilian culture relative to other world cultures.

Power distance

This dimension deals with the fact that all individuals in societies are not equal – it expresses the attitude of the culture towards these inequalities amongst us.
Power distance is defined as *the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.*

At a score of 69 Brazil reflects a society that believes hierarchy should be respected and inequalities amongst people are acceptable. The different distribution of power justifies the fact that power holders have more benefits than the less powerful in society. In Brazil it is important to show respect to the elderly (and children take care for their elderly parents). In companies there is one boss who takes complete responsibility. Status symbols of power are very important in order to indicate social position and "communicate" the respect that could be shown.

Individualism

The fundamental issue addressed by this dimension is *the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members.* It has to do with whether people´s self-image is defined in terms of "I" or "We".
In Individualist societies people are supposed to look after themselves and their direct family only. In Collectivist societies people belong to 'in groups' that take care of them in exchange for loyalty.

Brazil has a score of 38 which means that in this country people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive groups (especially represented by the extended family; including uncles, aunts, grandparents and cousins) which continues protecting its members in exchange for loyalty. This is an important aspect in the working environment too, where for instance an older and powerful member of

a family is expected to "help" a younger nephew to be hired for a job in his own company. In business it is important to build up trustworthy and long lasting relationships: a meeting usually starts with general conversations in order to get to know each other before doing business. The preferred communication style is context-rich, so people will often speak profusely and write in an elaborate fashion.

Masculinity / Femininity

A high score (masculine) on this dimension indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement and success, with success being defined by the winner / best in field – a value system that starts in school and continues throughout organisational behaviour.

A low score (feminine) on the dimension means that the dominant values in society are caring for others and quality of life. A feminine society is one where quality of life is the sign of success and standing out from the crowd is not admirable. *The fundamental issue here is what motivates people, wanting to be the best (masculine) or liking what you do (feminine).*

Brazil scores 49 on this dimension, really in the middle. The softer aspects of culture such as leveling with others, consensus, sympathy for the underdog are valued and encouraged. Conflicts are avoided in private and work life and consensus at the end is important. Status is shown, but this comes more out of the high PDI.

Uncertainty avoidance

The dimension Uncertainty Avoidance has to do with the way that a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future or just let it happen? This ambiguity brings with it anxiety and different cultures have learnt to deal with this anxiety in different ways. *The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these* is reflected in the UAI score.

At 76 Brazil scores high on UAI – and so do the majority of Latin American countries. These societies show a strong need for rules and elaborate legal systems in order to structure life. The individual's need to obey these laws, however, is weak. If rules however cannot be kept, additional rules are dictated. In Brazil, as in all high Uncertainty Avoidance societies, bureaucracy, laws and rules are very important to make the world a safer place to live in. Brazilians need to have good and relaxing moments in their everyday life, chatting with colleagues, enjoying a long meal or dancing with guests and friends. Due to their high score in this dimension Brazilians are very passionate and demonstrative people: emotions are easily shown in their body language.

Long term orientation

The long term orientation dimension is closely related to the teachings of Confucius and can be interpreted as dealing with society's search for virtue, *the extent to which a society shows a pragmatic future-oriented perspective rather than a conventional historical short-term point of view.*

At 65 Brazil places itself amongst the long term oriented societies as the only non-Asian society. The "jetinho brasilero" is really to look for alternatives to do what in a Western eyes could be regarded as impossible. Like Asians the Brazilians accept more than one truth. Brazilians easily accept change as a part of life.

Figure 10: Brazilian culture (The Hofstede Centre no date)

4.1.3 Social background

In Brazil, the society is divided by social classes, which are divided essentially by income. Since the discrepancy between wealth and the poor can be enormous, the division in social classes is useful for studying demography in Brazil. Whilst Brazilian cities contrast in industry sectors, the purchasing power and income level also differ; the division of classes allows marketers to identify which areas and classes to segment and helps the government to identify which areas to direct more investment and support. Cities such as Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Brasília present the highest level of disparity, where citizens exceptionally rich and extremely poor reside. (Novais 2011.)

The division of social classes is mostly divided by letters from A to E. The division, income level, education level and occupation of each class can be seen in Table 3. (Novais 2011.)

Class	Income level	Education level	Occupation
A	Above BRL 10.200	Usually composed by those who have completed higher education. The younger generations of these classes tend to be fluent in several languages.	Mostly bankers, investors, business owners, major landowners and people with extraordinary skills for the industry they operate in.
B	Above BRL 5.100		Mostly directors and managers, politicians, judges, justices, prosecutors, well graduated professors, doctors, well qualified engineers and lawyers, etc.
C	Above BRL 2.040	The majority in this class has finished high school and a significant amount of people has completed higher education or at least has a technical level degree.	Mostly service providers directly to the wealthier groups, such as teachers, managers, mechanics, electricians, nurses, etc.
D	Above BRL 1.020	Individuals who have not completed high school.	Mostly service providers to Class C, such as housemaids, bartenders, bricklayers, people who work for the civil construction companies, small stores sellers, low-paid drivers, etc.
E	Below BRL 1.020	Mostly people who have not completed elementary school and illiterate individuals.	Individuals who earn minimum salaries, such as cleaners, street sweepers, and also unemployed people.

Table 3: Social classes in Brazil (Novais 2011).

With the economic development of the country millions of Brazilians are migrating to higher classes, especially to A, B and C classes. According to the Ministry of Finance, by the year of the World Cup in 2014, Brazil will have 56% of its population included in class C. (Classe social no date.) This means that, with an increasing purchasing power, more individuals will have access to better quality of life and education.

4.1.4 Educational System

The Brazilian education system has been improving in the past years. After changes in the names of the stages and content to be taught in each stage, the latest system will be explained briefly in the following paragraphs. The phases of the educational system are Educação infantil, Ensino Fundamental, Ensino Médio, Ensino Superior and Ensino Técnico. (Educação 2010a.)

The Educação Infantil (preschool), is the first stage of basic education, it helps in physical, psychological, intellectual and social development of the child, complementing the action of the family and the community. It is offered free at daycare or equivalent institutions for children 3 years old and later in preschools for children 4-5 years. According to the National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education, organized by the Ministry of Education, kindergartens and preschools should provide activities that contribute "to the development of personality, language and social inclusion of the child." The Ministry of Education recommends activities such as paiting, drawing, play and music for children attending preschool. This stage is optional. (Educação 2010b.)

The second stage of the educational system is compulsory; it is known as Ensino Fundamental (elementary and middle school). This stage is for children and young people aged between 6 and 14 years. The Ministry of Education states "this stage of education should develop the capacity of student learning through the mastery of reading, writing and calculation. Upon completion of the cycle, the student should also be able to understand the natural and social environment, political system, technology, arts and the basic values of society and the family." (Educação 2010c.)

Ensino Médio (high school) prepares young people for higher education and is the final stage of basic education. This stage has the minimum duration of three years, intensifying what was learned in elementary and middle school and preparing the student for working life and exercising social responsibilities. This stage develops analytical thinking and intellectual independance of the student through the teaching of theories and practice in each subject. In this new stage, it is compulsory the addition of a foreign language, such as English or Spanish and

subjects such as philosophy and sociology. (Educação 2010d.)

The Ensino Superior (higher education) in Brazil is offered by universities, colleges, institutes and centers of technological education. Brazilians can choose from three types of courses: bachelor's graduation, technological training and teaching licensure. The postgraduate courses are divided into specialization, MBAs, Masters and Doctorates. (Educação 2010e.)

The Ensino Técnico (technical education) is another option of education for Brazilians. This education differs from higher education because it provides a technical training and has the duration of two years. In Brazil, students have three possibilities of studying in technical schools, they are Integrated – the student combines high school and technical training at the same time and institution; Concurrent – the student studies simultaneously in high school and technical school in different institutions and; Sub sequential – when the student receives technical training after graduating at high school. (Educação 2010f.)

The following table will allow a clearer picture of the education system in Brazil.

Age	0-5 years old	6-14 years old	15-17/18 years old	18-23 years old
Stage of Education	Preschool (non-compulsory)	Elementary and middle school (compulsory)	High school	Higher education
Duration of studies	0-5 years	9 years	3 years	2-6 years
Option of studies	Preschool	Fundamental education	Common or technical education	University (minimum duration of four years) Brief higher education (technologist – duration of two years)

Table 4: Brazilian educational system

The Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio (High School National Exam, later Enem) is an exam given to students who are still completing or have already completed high school education. The purpose of this exam is to evaluate the level of education in the country, as well as the level of knowledge of each student. Provided by the Ministry of Education, this exam not only helps the government to assess the quality of education in the country, but it also gives students the opportunity of accumulating points for entrance examinations in universities. The highest grades in Enem will also enable students to acquire scholarships, and in some cases, will eliminate the entrance examinations in some universities completely. The exam contains ques-

tions of Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Portuguese, Sociology, Philosophy, History, Geography, Biology, Arts and English or Spanish. (Enem 2013.)

4.2   Key Competitor analysis

In a large market as the Brazilian, Laurea has many competitors. Since Universities from all over the world advertise study offerings in their various fields of study in Brazil, it is difficult to follow every competitor's activities. Ever since the Brazilian government launched its new program to support education through international student mobility, most information available concerns exchange students, rather than full degree students in foreign countries. Besides, it is important to take in to consideration the lack of further researches on the number of Brazilian full degree students in each institution and the criteria used in the choice of institution, therefore, this analysis can only rely on information provided by Universities, which may reflect only a small portion of reality.

The key competitor analysis below was divided per country; the criterion chosen was the most popular destination countries to Brazilian students. The Universities presenting information designed for Brazilian students will be mentioned along with their benchmarked activities.

4.2.1   United States of America

According to the Institute of International Education (2012a), Brazil holds the fourteenth position in the ranking of nationalities studying in the United States. The American Universities have received 9,029 thousand Brazilian students in 2011/12 in undergraduate and graduate programs, an increase of about 3% from the previous year. It has been identified that around 63% of these students meet the expenses of the courses themselves, and even having to afford high living costs, many give up their enrollments in Brazilian public universities to study in the U.S. (Student travel bureau 2012). The Science Without Borders (later SWB), a scholarship program provided by the Government of Brazil through the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation in partnership with different Universities around the world, is also responsible for the increasing amount of Brazilian students in the United States. The SWB promotes the exchange and mobility of researchers, undergraduate, graduate and post doctorate students, and it has the purpose of better preparing Brazilian students for the Brazilian economic development and increasing and improving the country's partnerships abroad (Science without borders no date). Despite the fact, the United States has been receiving only 20.000 of the 100.000 Brazilian students involved in this program; the American government has made known their interest in welcoming even more Brazilian students in the near future (Americas Quarterly 2012).

The selection of a country and educational institution may be a long process; it is believed that decisions on American institutions are related to familiarity and idealization of American culture, and affordability of airfares and tuition. The costs of studying in an American University are equivalent to high quality private universities in Brazil, which is considered reasonable for middle and upper class families. (Student travel bureau 2012.) Such fact is subjective, not only because preferences in culture and language of study may differ from student to student, but also because expenses may not be such an important fact to upper class families for instance.

Although reliable studies presenting specific information about Brazilian students' preferences were not found, the Institute of International Education (2012b), stated "[...] California hosted more than 100,000 international students for the first time this year, followed by New York, Texas, Massachusetts and Illinois. Among the top 10 destinations, Pennsylvania, Florida and Indiana had the largest percent increases, with the international student population in each state growing by close to 10 percent. At the institutional level, the University of Southern California has the greatest number of international students, followed by University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, New York University, Purdue University and Columbia University. New York City remains the top metropolitan area for international students." It is realistic to believe the likeliness of such Universities and cities being of Brazilian students' choice.

In order to support international students, a number of Universities have associations and departments that strive to provide guidance and help students to adapt to the culture and academic life. The Texas A&M University is one example of an institution that recognizes and financially supports a Brazilian Student Association. Such Association provides students with general information about the University, the country, useful links, stores and events for Brazilians among other issues (Brazilian student association no date).

According to Bowater (2013), American universities have been investing more in marketing activities and practices in the Brazilian market. Bowater stated "[...] Harvard University has an office in São Paulo to support its US-based David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, and this month Columbia University opened an office in Rio de Janeiro aimed at developing research initiatives across a number of faculties. Later this year, the University of Southern California is expected to open a São Paulo office focused on recruiting Brazilian students and organising programmes for US students in Brazil."

4.2.2   Canada

As indicated by Vendrame (no date), Canada is the most popular country for Brazilian students, being the city of Toronto the most preferred destination. Followed by the United States, United Kingdom and Australia, Canada's popularity amongst Brazilian students is given to factors such as relatively lower costs compared to other destinations, easiness of obtaining a visa, quality of education, safety and hospitality.

Among these factors, hospitality is important in attracting students because it reflects how they will be seen and treated by locals and the government. As the government's support is important, Husny's press release makes evident the interest of the Canadian government in partnerships with Brazil, and it can be perceived by Minister Fast's following statement:

> Brazil is a priority market for our exporters, and Brazilians' interest in Canada's world-class education sector is further proof that more must be done to unlock the true potential of the Canada-Brazil partnership, [...] As part of the most ambitious plan to open new markets in our nation's history, our government will continue to work with our Brazilian partners to bring prosperity to people in both countries—now and into the future (2012).

Fast's statement demonstrates how the Canadian government not only perceives Brazilian students as financial profit but also considers the various business and partnership possibilities resulting from such exchange.

The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (later AUCC) is a membership organization representing 97 Canadian educational institutions. Founded over a century ago, the organization is responsible for publishing information, handling scholarships and international program and promoting higher education. In 2012, the AUCC sponsored its first higher education mission in Brazil, in which about 30 presidents from Canadian universities were present. The main goals of the mission were "building more partnerships in research, innovation and higher education, making Canadian universities a destination of choice for Brazilian students, and strengthening research collaboration between Canadian universities and their Brazilian counterparts, particularly in the area of university-private sector partnerships." (Association of universities and colleges of Canada 2013).

As Canadian Universities become more international, the amount of information available for prospective international students has increased in the course of time. Informative materials have been designed by most Canadian Universities and are disclosed through their webpages, and advertising materials. Information designed specifically for potential Brazilian students is not very popular, but Universities such as the McGill University, University of British Columbia, University of Calgary, the Dalhousie University and Kwantlen Polytechnic University have

been providing this type of information. Such educational institutions have a long history in higher education, some of them dating more than hundred years of tradition in various fields of study.

The Dalhousie University and the Kwantlen Polytechnic University have innovated in advertising to Brazilian students. In order to approach students innovatively, both Universities have developed webpage contents and brochures in Portuguese containing subjects ranging from institution information, study practicalities, visa requirements, student life, and prices to the possibility of contacting staff in Portuguese. (Dalhousie University no date; Kwantlen Polytechnic University no date).

4.2.3   United Kingdom

The United Kingdom is the third favorite destination in the world for Brazilian students and their first option in Europe (Vendrame no date). Interested in partnerships with the SWB program, more and more British Universities have been adapting their marketing techniques and tailoring their methods in presenting information to potential students. Many British universities have already adapted their webpages, including sections dedicated to students from Brazil, that is the case of King's College London, Lancaster University, and the Universities of Manchester and Southampton to mention but a few.

The British Council is a non-profit organization present in over one hundred countries; the organization's goals are to develop and improve partnerships between the UK and the host countries and to build relationships in order to support activities in education, arts, sports and English language. The Council is present in Brazil since 1945 and has offices in Brasília, Recife, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. (The British Council no date.)

To promote education, the British Council organizes education fairs in different cities in Brazil every year, and in the 2012's edition forty-six different British universities were present advertising their study offerings, fourteen of which were ranked in the QS World University Ranking 2012 among the 100 best universities in the world. (Education UK no date). This initiative from the British Council is very convenient for universities as they have support to advertise and do not need to invest heavily in entering the market.

The Universities of Edinburgh, Nottingham and Birmingham stand out from other institutions because their efforts to reach Brazilian students go beyond marketing adaptation and presence in fairs; the competition among these institutions is high. These Universities have established offices in Brazil, in order to support researches, recruitment and marketing activities. Whilst the University of Edinburgh has opened its office in São Paulo in early 2013, the Uni-

versities of Birmingham and Nottingham have been sharing an office in Santa Catarina since 2011. Nottingham's office, however, is established in Brazil since 2003 and handles not only higher education matters but also partnerships with businesses and government. (Bowater 2013). The presence of such institutions in Brazil may point towards competitive advantage. Their presence allows them to have a clearer understanding of the Brazilian culture and of the marketing strategies that meet the terms of Brazilian students. Additionally, through the universities' offices in Brazil the institutions may be able to provide services in the local language and faster processes as most cities operate in the same time zone.

4.2.4   Australia

Australia is the fourth most common destination for Brazilians searching for education abroad (Vendrame no date). According to Jornal de Turismo (2012), Brazil is fourth in the ranking of visas issued to study in Australia, second only to China, India and South Korea. Patrícia Monteiro stated "55.8% of enrollments made by Brazilian students from January to June 2012 was for English courses, followed by vocational and technical courses (36.6%) and higher education (6.5%)." Even though English courses are the most popular courses among Brazilians, the chances of engaging in further or higher education increase once students experience and adapt to the country. (Jornal de Turismo 2012.)

In advertising to students, Australian universities rely on their high quality education recognized by the QS University Ranking positions and the Australian government on the 11 Nobel Prize winners graduated in the country. The education level is highly valued in the country, and the government and institutions are constantly pursuing improvement. (Study in Australia no date.) Moreover, the top Australian universities are well located and have the most modern campuses where students can benefit from several activities; to some students this is a very important part in the student experience (Rannisto 2013. Personal communication).

The Group of Eight is an alliance between the best universities of Australia, which aims, among other things, to build cooperation among the institutions in order to contribute for the country's economic, cultural, social and environmental development. The universities that belong to the Group are the University of Adelaide, the University of Melbourne, the University of New South Wales, the University of Sydney, the University of Queensland, the University of Western Australia, the Australian National University and the Monash University. (The Group of Eight no date.) Besides providing information specifically for Brazilian students in their webpages, these institutions are represented by the Latino Australia Education, a company that provides information, guidance and also organizes events to promote Australian education in different countries in Latin America (Latino Australia Education no date).

4.3   Laurea SWOT Analysis

Laurea SWOT-analysis is carefully prepared based on the characteristics of the environment in which Laurea operates. By analyzing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, a comparison between Laurea's characteristics and Brazil's market demands will be described. This analysis will help the reader to acquire a broader perspective on the subject and understand how Laurea is positioned in comparison to its competitors; it will also take into consideration Finland as a host country, and how aspects of the country will influence Laurea's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

4.3.1   Strengths

As a country providing one of the best educational systems in the world, Finland has been receiving considerable attention from different countries and increasing its popularity and reputation over time (Anderson 2011). Providing high quality and cost-free higher education, Finland attracts students from different parts of the world.

When comparing Finland to competitor institutions from countries such as United States, Canada, Australia and UK it is possible to understand that Finnish universities pose a substantial competitive advantage, by providing cost-free education combined with high standards. Furthermore, Laurea provides studies in English, as its competitors. As the Finnish educational system complies with European Credit Transfer and Accreditation System (ECTS) standards and diplomas obtained in Finland are more likely to be recognized all over Europe, the increasing possibilities of mobility within Europe after graduation are attractive.

According to a study (Institute for Economic and Peace: Global Peace Index 2012, 12), Finland holds the 9th position in the list of the countries most at peace. Based on facts such as terrorism acts, political terror and violent crimes; the study shows that Finland is one of the safest countries to live. As a result from highly populated cities, increasing civil violence and lack of infrastructure, Brazilians appreciate safety more and more. When searching for higher education abroad, aspects such as quality of education, expenses and safety are carefully considered, and Laurea is able to provide these.

Laurea has seven campuses in different cities of Finland. The fact that most of these campuses are located in the metropolitan area close to the capital Helsinki implies that the amount of activities available for students increases. The city of Helsinki holds the main events in the country, such as music concerts and festivals, operas and theater plays and. therefore, studying and living close to the capital may be attractive to students.

Moreover, as an exotic country where seasons are well defined and habits are peculiar, the various aspects of the Finnish culture can be used to attract Brazilian students looking for cultural exchange. Since Finland and Brazil differ in many aspects such as culture, tradition, language and lifestyle it is interesting to exploit the possibility of experiencing such differences.

4.3.2   Weaknesses

Finland is considered a country with high living costs (Yle 2012). While education is free in Finland, it is important to consider that high living costs can influence the choice of Finland as a country to attend university. The requirement of Finnish language for most jobs in Finland considerably decreases the chances of engaging in part-time work, other than low-profile jobs as in cleaning and catering industries. For that reason, Laurea should compromise in developing more advanced and intensive language courses in order to provide a solid support for foreign students in career development.

Unlike other institutions around the world, Laurea does not provide scholarships for undergraduate students. Although this fact might influence the choice of university, it is believed this weakness is of a minor scale compared to Laurea's strengths.

It is important to acknowledge that factors such as expenses will only become problematic depending on the financial conditions of the families sending students to study abroad. If those families are able to pay for tuition-fees in other countries, it is likely that they are able to provide for the student living costs in Finland, which would be lesser than tuition-fees and living costs in another country combined. That is why Laurea should consider marketing its degree programs in specific segments, to assure students would be provided financially.

Additionally, Laurea is a University of Applied Sciences and not a University as most of its competitors researched. Because that is so, Laurea's competitors may have a competitive advantage over Laurea as the teaching methods and study focus are different.

4.3.3   Opportunities

Laurea will be able to take advantage of various marketing opportunities in Brazil. For instance, Laurea can participate in different education fairs. The main fairs in Brazil are the Brazil Higher Education Fair from BMI Media and the Brazil EXPO Roadshow from University Fairs. Such fairs happen in the main cities of Brazil at least once a year and are free for students; the universities' delegates are, however, likely to be charged to attend. On these

events, it is possible to have stands with posters and other marketing material and delegates are encouraged to talk to the potential students about the study offerings. In some of these fairs students are preselected to assure they are qualified enough for the study opportunities.

When the University of Oulu was marketing their education in Brazil in one of these fairs, they were able to receive support from the Embassy of Finland in Brazil. The Embassy was present at the fairs providing information about visa requirements and Finland in general. (da Silva 2013. Personal communication.) This support is essential in marketing as Laurea would focus mainly in advertising its degree programs instead of investing time and resources in providing information about culture, traditions, leisure activities, visa requirements, etc.

As Finland and Brazil are particularly distant countries, it is difficult to either invite students for entrance examinations and to provide such examinations in several Brazilian cities. According to Koski (2013. Personal communication) the Finnish Network for International Programs (later Finnips) has been providing entrance examinations for Laurea and other Finnish Universities in several countries. Finnips has already stated that other Universities of Applied Sciences are interested in attracting Brazilian students and, therefore, they are willing to provide services in the country in the near future.

 A different approach to marketing in Brazil is the partnership between the SWB and the Centre of International Mobility (later CIMO). Although Finland and Brazil have recently become partners in this program, the scholarships are only granted to exchange students, which is not Laurea's main interest at the moment. However, Laurea could take advantage of this program and receive exchange students in the Business Information Technology course. By raising Brazilian exchange students' awareness of Laurea's degrees and high standard education, Laurea would trust in the word-of-mouth marketing as such students would be expected to promote the degrees to friends and family members once they return to Brazil.

4.3.4   Threats

According to Chaves (2012), Brazilian students have been receiving increasingly attention from foreign universities and the market is becoming highly competitive. Laurea has many strong competitors attracting Brazilian students to their universities. While Finland has very little experience in the market, Canada and the UK have a strong tradition in advertising their study offerings in Brazil, for example. Both Canadian and British Universities have support from their embassies as they promote their own fairs to advertise their Universities.

Unlike its foreign competitors, Laurea does not charge tuition fees; therefore, it has very limited marketing resources. This fact is of considerable threat as Laurea is not provided with

fair competition. Besides, since its competitors are habituated with this specific market, Laurea's lack of experience presents another threat.

Moreover, Laurea's partnership with Finnips presents both opportunities and threats. As mentioned previously, Laurea can benefit from Finnips' services and save resources in entrance examinations and marketing. However, Finnips' services are not tailored to Laurea only, but it serves most of other Universities of Applied Sciences, which means that all competing Universities served by Finnips are marketed in the same places at the same time (Koski 2013. Personal communication).

Strengths

- High quality education
- Cost-free
- European diploma
- Safety
- Study offerings in English

Weaknesses

- Expensive living costs
- No scholarships

Opportunities

- Participation in Fairs
- Support from the Embassy of Finland in Brazil
- Use of existing partnership with Finnips
- Partnership with CIMO and SWB

Threats

- High competition
- Lack of experience
- Limited resources

Figure 11: Laurea SWOT analysis

5   Marketing Strategy and Promotion

Although it cannot be considered a threat or a weakness, the difference in Bachelor's courses between Laurea and Brazilian universities is important. Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences provide studies aiming at practical professional development, where students have vocational training and graduate in Bachelor's degrees. The main difference between technical/vocational and academic courses is that in Brazil, vocational courses are not considered higher education and therefore do not provide a Bachelor's degree. (Study in Finland 2013, Ensino Técnico 2010.) As a University of Applied Sciences, Laurea's study structure is different from Brazilians' Universities and because of that, it is of extreme importance to design Laurea's marketing strategy in a manner that clarifies the subject and avoids confusion. As vocational institutions in Brazil do not carry the same course titles as Finnish institutions, it is

likely that Brazilian potential applicants misunderstand Laurea's structure and, therefore, have their expectations unfulfilled.

As mentioned in chapter 4, Laurea's Finnish competitors will be competing in the Brazilian market through Finnips. As interest in the Brazilian market raises, Laurea must identify which aspects lead foreign students to choose Laurea over its competitors and explore it. Even though the Brazilian market is different from European, Asian and African markets, it is possible to design marketing strategies and techniques based on these whys and wherefores of choice and measure its success in the Brazilian market. Laurea's competitors in Finland are other Universities of Applied Sciences, especially in the Helsinki metropolitan area, these are mainly: Arcada, Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences and Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences (Arene no date). These institutions provide some of the same courses as Laurea, and therefore, compete in the same level. Although Laurea faces competition from these institutions, this study will not focus on these competitors, once Finnish universities are new in the Brazilian market and Laurea's first objective should be to raise awareness of the institution and country in the Brazilian market.

While Laurea offers a limited number of places per degree, unit and semester, the institution can rely on broad marketing, as not every applicant will succeed the entrance examinations or fulfill other requirements for acceptance (Koski 2013. Personal communication).

Although official studies on Brazilian students' criteria for selecting institutions were not found, smaller researches and interviews performed with Brazilian students studying abroad, state that Brazilians tend to select institutions and destination countries based on living costs, quality of education, institution's reputation, diversified environments and culture exchange possibilities (Veja 2010, Jornal da Globo 2011, Terra 2011). When selecting a segmentation strategy, Laurea should consider potential students' social classes, lifestyles, personality traits, age, income and level of education for example, in order to reach students who are able to afford living costs in Finland, are internationally-oriented and have the ability and desire to adapt to new cultures and situations. Selecting a foreign institution to apply for is a decision involving several factors, for that reason it is important make use of concentrated targeting, to ensure perfect marketing mix and methods will be delivered to support students' decisions towards Laurea.

Because the objective of promotion is to raise awareness and interest towards the institution, it is vital that promotion is designed to attract consumers in interesting and innovative ways (Kotler 2003, 18-19). To succeed in promoting its degree programs, Laurea must focus in designing methods and utilizing tools that will lead Brazilian students into wanting to know the institution and Finland more. By designing brochures and advertisements in Portuguese Laurea

would most likely catch students' attention. Besides, Laurea's efforts to contact students in their own language would make evident the institution's willingness to adapt and welcome these students.

Moreover, Laurea must improve the content of its webpages, as information is sometimes difficult to find or simply not enough. In comparison to Laurea's international competitors, Laurea should provide more detailed information regarding its degrees programs, calendars, extra activities for students, etc. The institution should also consider designing its webpages more attractively and in a manner where information is easier to find and texts are easier to read.

6   Conclusions and discussions

Laurea is an educational institution with experience in advertising in foreign countries. For many years Laurea has been attracting European, Asian and African students to Finland to pursue education. A certain amount of these students remain in the country after graduation to engage in work and in many cases business connections between Finland and these students' nations are built. In days where globalization is inevitable and necessary, these connections reduce distance and contribute for more modern, developed and, in many cases, more equal societies.

Brazil is a fast developing country, emerging from weak and unequal society and economy to a reliable and attractive market. Because the Brazilian scenario has been changing quickly, more and more foreign companies and governments have been seeking to establish businesses and partnerships with Brazil. In comparison with other developed countries, Finland still drops behind in partnerships with Brazil, for that reason it is important to build bridges that will facilitate the relationships between the two countries in the near future. With the Brazilian government's efforts to encourage exchange in education, Finland recognizes the opportunity to attract students for exchange.

Laurea, however, perceives the efforts as opportunity to attract Brazilian students for full degree programs, engaging these students in work after graduation and therefore, building partnerships between Brazilian and Finnish organizations. Because the Brazilian market for educational institutions is very competitive, Laurea should adapt its marketing methods used previously in order countries to match the Brazilian market. Moreover, Laurea should target the market to reach specific public seeking education abroad and make use of partnerships with CIMO, Finnips and the Embassy of Finland in Brazil.

Moreover, in order to become competitive in the market, Laurea could allow applicants to submit applications based on their grades in the Enem exam. By accepting applicants who, based on their grades, would be granted places on Brazilian Universities, Laurea would most likely decrease bureaucracy and the time spent in evaluating entrance examinations.

Unfortunately, no evidence was found to prove the criteria influencing the preference of Brazilian students for specific universities and countries. Therefore, this paper was unable provide Laurea with the most effective marketing techniques to be used in the target market. Thus, it is advisable that Laurea continues to research the subject further, to improve its marketing techniques and succeed in the market.

Since neither Laurea nor its Finnish competitors have experience in the market, the institution's knowledge of the market and students' preferences is very limited. For that reason, it is important that Laurea participates in educational fairs in the country and collects information through surveys from prospective students to understand the market's needs and desires and therefore, tailor its marketing methods and approaches in ways that are appropriated for the market.

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Figures

Tables