

Improving the **desirability** and **visibility** of Porvoo campus for non-EU/EEA students

Chinara Hollen

Author(s) Chinara Hollen	
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<p>This research work was commissioned by Haaga.Helia University of applied Sciences, Porvoo campus. As of January 2017, universities are obliged to charge students coming from non-EU/EEA countries tuition fees which in turn raised concerns for smaller campuses like the one in Porvoo in attracting the usual high number of international students to international programmes. These smaller campuses situated in small cities might not be very attractive to international students even if the programme themselves are of the same level as of the campuses situated more centrally for e.g. HAAGA-HELIA's campus in Helsinki. Thus a need was raised to find ways to maintain the high number of international students or at least propose a set of suggestions to prevent their number from dwindling. Recommendations to solve the challenge is offered in this thesis.</p> <p>Several theories were used in this project such as marketing in educational institutions, buyer decision process, service marketing, content marketing and social media marketing. Both interview and surveys were used to assess the current situation of the international degree programmes in Porvoo campus to map out the starting point of thesis project. In addition to primary data, secondary data was utilised to back up findings.</p> <p>The results of the interviews showed that currently Porvoo campus is not marketed separately and its marketing is rather incorporated in HAAGA-HELIA's overall marketing activities. The survey results showed that generally current students are satisfied with the level of education provided in the campus as well as with information provided. However, few areas of improvements were identified and recommendations presented which include careful marketing planning, choosing right marketing channels and implementing content marketing strategies.</p>	
Keywords: HAAGA-HELIA, international, Porvoo campus, marketing, tuition fees	

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1 Introduction

Finland has introduced tuition fees starting from August 2017 onwards which means that all traditional universities and universities of applied sciences are obliged to charge international Bachelor's and Master's level students coming from areas outside EU/EEU a minimal of 1,500 euros per academic year (Master Portal 2017). However, based on review of all publicly available information in regards to tuition fees in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences the actual amount many universities of applied sciences have set is considerably higher ranging from 4000 to 20000 euros depending on the program (StudyinFinland 2017)

Currently more and more people are obtaining their degrees abroad due to number of factors. The most common reasons being cost of education, ideological affinity, language proficiency, perceived academic superiority of the institutions in the host countries, acquisition of foreign language and culture and employment opportunities (Varghese 2008, 22-25). Cross-border education has grown significantly in past decades and with it the number of actors involved in the process. According to some of the projections (Böhm, Davies & Meares 2002, 3) the demand for cross-border higher education will increase to 7.2 million students by 2025. In the past years, number of foreign degree students in Finland rapidly increased. When the period of 12 years from 2002 to 2014 is examined, it can be seen that number of international degree students in Finnish higher education increased almost 2,5 times from 8442 to 20255 students (Figure 1).

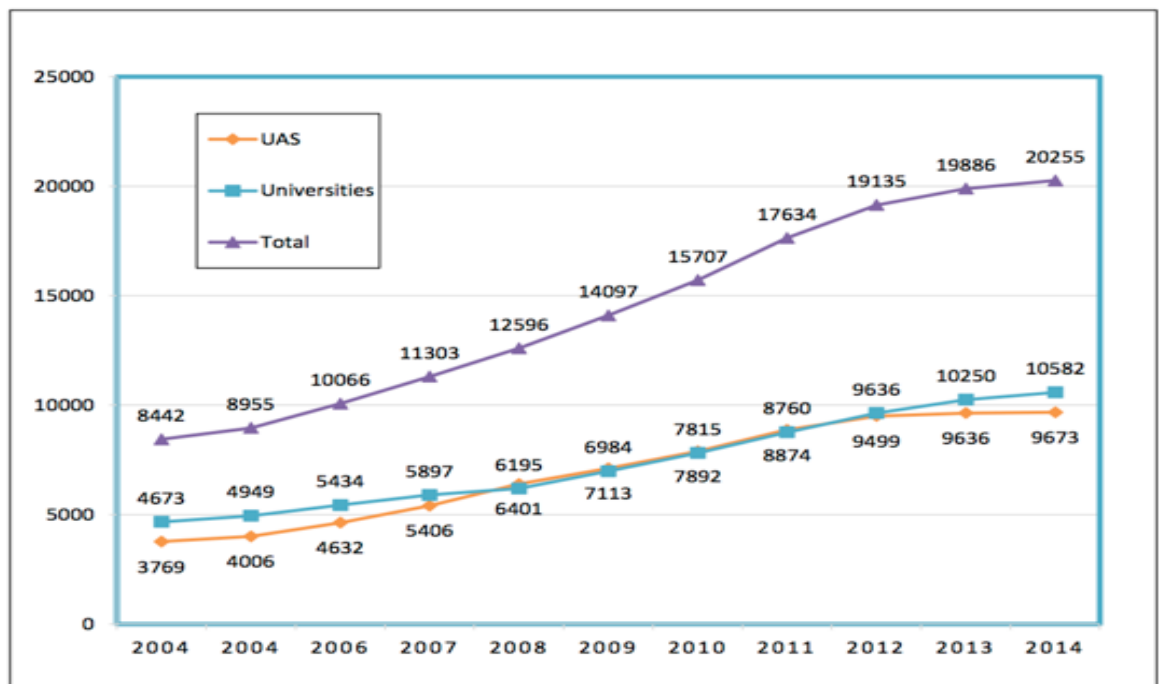


Figure 1. International degree students in Finnish Higher education (CIMO, 2016)

The increase in number can be attributed to the fact that more families can now afford to send their children abroad as well as to the prestige of foreign higher education. However, with the increased demand, competition has increased as well which is why universities need to stand out in order to be able to compete and attract students to their degree programmes.

International students outside of EU/EEU areas comprise a major part of the international degree programmes' population. According to statistics, among international students, larger amount comes from countries outside EU/EEU. Russian students are the largest group of international degree students in Finland with 3044 students, Chinese are the second largest with 1963 students, and Vietnamese are the third largest with 1619 students, followed by Nepal with 1149 students (Garam and Korkala 2015, 20). Therefore, most of the international students come to Finland from Asian countries, those countries which will be required to pay tuition fees starting from August of 2017. The author believes that the amount of international students coming from these countries might be reduced and only time will show the exact scope of changes in student numbers. Not many families will be able to afford to pay tuition fees or will be more inclined to send their children to more prestigious and higher ranking universities. Thus, higher impact will be on those campuses not centrally located or with easily interchangeable programmes. Example in Denmark showed that some of the universities with the introduction of tuition fees has suffered minimally and regrew their number of non-EU/EEU students while others lost large majority of non-EU/EEU students and the numbers are yet to recover (Gair 2010, p.47). For this reason, it is clear why HAAGA-HELIA's Porvoo campus need to strive to remain international and attractive for international students who will be affected by the tuition fees.

1.1 Research problem and research questions

International students play important role in HAAGA-HELIA's life. They enrich learning experience for local students and bring internationality to campus. With tuition fees set to be from 8,500 to 9500 euros per academic year for students coming outside of EU/EEU, HAAGA-HELIA risks losing some of their international students. Especially smaller campuses, like the one in Porvoo are in danger having location as disadvantage because prospective applicants will be more fastidious about their choose of educational institution taking into account not only the degree programme but as well location of institution.

A research question has been identified to tackle the research problem. A research question is the heart of the whole research work. “A research question is a formal statement of the goal of a study.” (Marion 2004). It is crucial to formulate a clear research question because the research work is going to be built around it.

In this research, the author is going to answer one main research question. The main research question is the following:

What are the actions that must be taken in order to attract paying international students to Porvoo campus with tuition fees being introduced?

In addition, the author would like to find answers to the following sub questions “Which factors do international students outside EU/EEU areas considers before applying?” and “What are the strengths of Porvoo campus and how they can be used for marketing purposes?”. In order to find answer to these questions, the author used mainly primary data collection techniques.

1.2 Aims and objectives of the study

The aim of the research is to provide recommendations for the commissioning university in order to increase visibility and attractiveness of Porvoo campus for international students outside of EU/EEU area, as Porvoo campus it may face a decrease in international students’ number due to tuition fees.

There are three objectives of this thesis work which are to evaluate current marketing strategies in the commissioning university, identify problems the university is facing and propose recommendations for commissioning university which will improve its desirability and visibility for the target group. The first objective is to analyse the current marketing strategy and overall situation of the commissioning university which will give a starting point of the project. This will be executed by interviewing the representative from the commissioning university as well as current international students in Porvoo campus. The research will concentrate on strength and weaknesses of the degree programmes in Porvoo, if there is a need to revise the content of the programmes and how to market the international degree programmes to reach potential international students from non-EU/EEA countries.

The second objective is to clarify problems and possible challenges HAAGA-HELIA is facing currently and identifying future problems related to introduction of tuition fees. Identifying future problems is important as pre-emptive actions could then be taken to prevent negative outcomes from tuition fees regulation.

The last objective is creating beneficial practical recommendations for university on how to proceed in case of perspective international students' amount reduction. This will answer the primary research question in providing recommendation based set of actions for the commissioning university to undertake to improve Porvoo's campus visibility and attractiveness. The recommendations are meant to be utilized are the are created on the research are theory used in this thesis work.

When the research is done, the commissioning university will receive important recommendations to help the campus in maintaining the amount of international students from areas outside of EU/EEU or at least to reduce the probable decrease in their numbers.

1.3 Limitations and thesis structure

The research has a few limitations. First of all, the author focused only on Porvoo campus, making the sample of research is rather small. The focus only on Porvoo campus stems from the the author's personal interest in improving the image and visibility for Porvoo campus as, being small and not centrally located, the campus might be impacted more than the main campus of HAAGA-HELIA in Pasila. In addition, the scope of the thesis would be too big for a Bachelor's thesis if the author would have taken all the campuses HAAGA-HELIA has.

In addition, the focus of this research was on current students studying in HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo campus. Ideally, the author would like to ask potential students who are thinking of applying to a university, their attitudes, opinion and behaviour concerning choosing a potential university. However, due to difficulties associated with finding potential students and limit of time the author had, such option was not possible.

The thesis holds six chapters and follows next structure: first chapter is introduction, which is responsible for providing aims, objectives and research questions for the research with all essential background information. Second chapter introduces commissioning university as a whole and Porvoo campus separately. Third chapter offers overview of the relevant academic

literature on the topic. Fourth chapter presents research approach and methods used. Chapter five provides findings and analysis of the interview and survey results. Conclusions and recommendations for the university are presented in chapter six. Further down, at the Figure 2, the structure of the thesis is presented.

INPUT	CHAPTER	OUTPUT
General information about topic and thesis	Introduction	Aim of the thesis, research problem and questions, structure of the paper
Information about HAAGA-HELIA UAS and its Porvoo campus	Introduction to HAAGA-HELIA UAS	case company
Literature review	Theoretical framework	Understanding of the basic concepts and trends within chosen framework
Data collection and analysis process, reliability and validity	Research approach and Methods	Stages of the research
Introducing and discussing the results of the interview and survey	Key Results and Discussion	Research results and findings
What to do to improve Porvoo's visibility and attractiveness and conclusions	Recommendations and Conclusion	Answering the research questions and providing recommendations

Figure 2. Structure of the thesis

2 Introduction to HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences

HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences is one of the largest university of applied sciences in Finland with around 10,500 students, 700 staff of whom around 400 are full-time teachers. It began its existence in 2007 when Helsinki business polytechnics (Helia) was united with Haaga polytechnics. It privately owned by Helsinki business community but steered and co-funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (HAAGA-HELIA official website).

The school's primary facilities are in Pasila, Helsinki. It has other premises in Helsinki (Haaga, Malmi, and Vallila), and outside of Helsinki in Porvoo and Vierumäki. HAAGA-HELIA offers courses in business, information technology, sport and leisure education, hospitality, tourism, management assistant education, vocational teacher education programmes, journalism, marketing, and in languages. Internationalization is a key to HAAGA-HELIA which is seen from eight full-time bachelor level programmes offered in English and one part-time programme and five international Master level programmes offered throughout the campuses. In addition, HAAGA-HELIA has a lot of agreements with universities worldwide which gives exchange opportunities in one of the 200 partner universities for both incoming and outgoing students. Moreover, some students get a chance to complete a study project abroad, which gives them additional international learning experience.

HAAGA-HELIA claims that it is the most attractive and professionally-oriented Finnish institution of higher education with its vision and mission being “serving and revitalizing business community working together responsibly and sustainably”. It aims to international growth together with partners and providing quality education with human touch (HAAGA-HELIA official website.) HAAGA-HELIA encourages students to work independently and innovatively while providing them with all the necessary guidance and assistance. With its slogan being “opens doors to future careers”, HAAGA-HELIA, as all UASes, has mandatory practical training as part of bachelor’s programmes opposed to universities which often does open door to students as through internship many students find permanent work placements. HAAGA-HELIA has agreements with businesses on close collaborations which consists of recruiting students for internship, thesis project and even permanent job placement. In addition, many student projects are done for the real companies which allows students to grow their professional network and stand out from the crowd.

As of popularity, HAAGA-HELIA won first place in 2014 international student satisfaction award which means that international students are happy with the level of professional education offered in HAAGA-HELIA. Finland overall was chosen as the most satisfied place to study abroad (studypaortal.com).

2.1 HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo Campus

Porvoo is a small city with approximately 50,000 inhabitants. It is situated 50 kilometres east of Helsinki in Southern coast of Finland. The connection to Helsinki is very good with busses leaving to Helsinki every hour (or even more often) and the road takes about 50 minutes.

Three international degree programmes are offered in Porvoo campus, Degree programme in Tourism, Degree programme in International Sales and Marketing and new Degree programme in Aviation Business. In addition to that, there are several bachelor's degree programmes offered in Finnish as well. At the moment, there is no Master's level programmes offered in Porvoo campus.

According to information provided by Student Affairs Secretary at Haaga-Hellia Porvoo campus, at the moment, 294 students are studying on international degree programmes in Porvoo campus, of which 168 are international students. 138 out of these 168 international students are students coming from countries outside of EU/EEU areas. Therefore, almost half (47%) of all the students studying on international degree programmes are students coming from areas outside of EU/EEU. The contingent of the students outside of EU/EEU areas are diverse with over 30 different nationalities present. Similar to statistics mentioned above, majority of the students are Russians (44) given Finland's proximity to Russia. On the second place are student from Vietnam (31), followed by Nepal (8) (student affairs secretary at Porvoo campus).

Porvoo campus has an international atmosphere with students from different countries working together, sharing their culture through fairs and different multicultural events and working together in diverse groups. Beside HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences, Laurea University of Applied Sciences is located in the same building. In HAAGA-HELIA's campuses both degree and exchange students are studying alongside. As in all HAAGA-HELIA's campuses, students are supplied with all the necessary information before their arrival and during their studies. A tutor, who is a student himself, is assigned to all the international students to help them with everyday life and helps them adjust to new surroundings. First week of the

semester is orientation week when students get familiar with the campus and get practical information about studies and living in Finland. New international students can become tutors themselves, thus making adaptation and finding new friends easier.

Student accommodation is reserved by the International office of Porvoo campus for exchange students so they do not need to fill out separate accommodation application. International degree students fill out the form to the accommodation provider. Information about this is given to students in their acceptance letter. Usually, everybody gets a room before their arrival, so there is no shortage of apartments. In Porvoo student apartments are situated 2,5 kilometres from campus or easily reachable by bike or bus.

To the author's best knowledge, there has not been a thorough research on level of satisfaction among international students outside of EU/EEU conducted in Porvoo campus. Former students Victoria Battalova and Jana Konstantinova in their 2013 Bachelor's thesis "*Integration of Russian Speaking students at HAAGA-HELLA on opinions of Russians students studying in Porvoo campus*" briefly touched some reasons for choosing Porvoo campus among Russian students with Porvoo campus, as well their attitudes about "health, students and library services, computer labs, help they have/ or have not get, information about studies, availability of courses in English at Porvoo Campus, methods of exams, teaching methods, course contents and quality of teaching" (Konstantinova & Battalova 2013, p.41).

3 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, theoretical framework is presented. The author begins with marketing in educational institutions followed by consumer buying process and strategic marketing plan in institutions.

3.1 Marketing in educational institutions

Educational institutions should not underestimate the value of marketing. Marketing for them is as much of a necessity as for for-profit organizations. Kotler and Fox (1995) defines four main benefits which marketing can offer for educational institutions:1) greater success in fulfilling the institution mission; 2) improved satisfaction of the institutions public and markets 3) improved attraction of marketing resources and 4) improved efficiency in marketing activities. (Kotler & Fox 1995, 26)

According to Kotler and Fox (1995, 5-6) “marketing exists when people decided to satisfy their needs and wants through exchange”. In institutions, the exchange happens between students(customers) and institutions which offer courses, degree programs, career preparations etc. in return (the products).

Kotler and Fox (1995) further defines marketing as:

The analysis, planning, implementations, and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring voluntary exchanges of values with target markets to achieve institutional objectives. Marketing involves designing the institutional offerings to meet the target markets’ needs and desires, and using effective pricing, communication, and distribution to inform, motivate, and service these markets. (Kotler & Fox 1995, 6.)

Previously, educational institution did not pay a lot of attention to marketing of their institutions, however now almost all educational institutions realized the need of marketing. According to Kotler and Fox (6,1995) marketing is a primal activity of modern institutions, rising out of their quest to effectively serve some area of human need and achieving its goals by offering and exchanging values with various markets and public.

3.2 Consumer buyer process/The School-Choice Process

Students want to receive quality product from the institution which is why their decision-making process of applying and deciding about university is highly complex and based on a number of factors. After all, the decision about the school will affect many aspects of their future life such as the place of residence, future friendships and even choice of marriage partner (Kotler & Fox 1995, 215). The choice of the school is similar to ordinary consumer buying process as a students go through the similar phases (Figure 3).

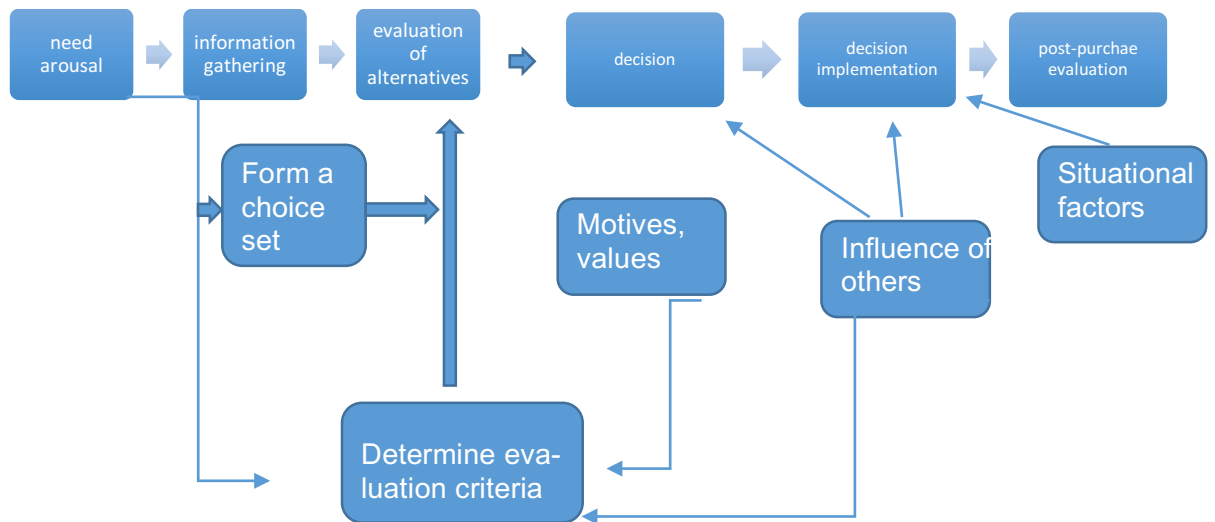


Figure 3. The steps in highly-complex decision-making (Kotler & Fox 1995, 251)

3.2.1 Need recognition

Need recognition is the first step of consumer decision making process and it can be explained as “result of an imbalance between actual and desired needs” (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel 2011, 190). The need is triggered by internal or external stimuli. In case of education, both stimuli might be triggered, internal is person’s own desire to educate himself for personal reasons and external stimuli is because everybody is getting education so should he/she.

3.2.2 Information Gathering

At this stage, consumer (student) starts to search for information about the desired product, in the authors’ case this product being education. According to Kotler and Fox (1995, 252) students considering a college vary in the amount of information gathering, depending on their

own level of need for information. Some students make a decision very fast some weigh information carefully for several months. It is crucial for institution to understand where the students are gathering the information from. Marketer job is to assist students in learning about the key attributes of an institution, their relative importance and position of an institution on more important attributes (Kotler & Fox 1995, 253.)

3.2.3 Evaluation of Alternatives

On this stage, different people act differently. Some people evaluate choices carefully, some acquire product or service on an impulse. Nevertheless, all consumers try to satisfy a need. Maslow's hierarchy of need can be used to demonstrate what part of need a person satisfies with education. Maslow's hierarchy of needs asserts that a person has to first satisfy his lower need before he satisfying a higher need. (Figure 4).

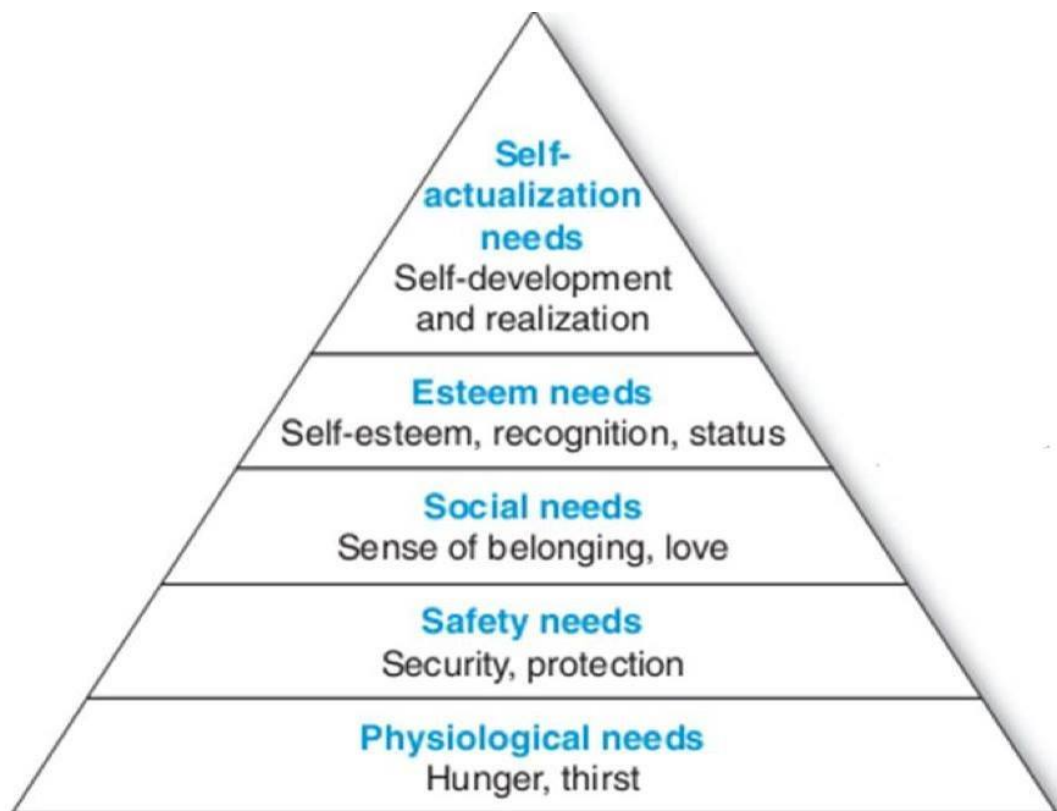


Figure 4. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 172)

Different needs are to be satisfied when it comes for education. A need for safety, belonging, self-esteem, self-actualization, even basic needs with affordable college are among the needs a person what to satisfied when choosing an institution. However, a single institution rarely can

satisfy all the needs of various students. When a student has several needs concerning a university choice, he/she need to prioritize which need is the more important one. Solving the conflict is the role of person's values (Kotler & Fox 1995, 253-254)

A student might consider for different attributes important when choosing an institution: academic quality, social life, location and cost (Kotler & Fox 1995, 256). Consumers will pay more attentions to attributes that deliver the sought-after benefits (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 209). Different students appreciate one attribute more then another. For some students' location is important as they might not like to live in a village even is a university is offering a high quality education. Others can not afford a university even if they would like to attend it because of tuition fees.

3.2.4 Purchase decision

In the previous stage, the consumer has formed the set of preferences among different options(institutions). However, according to Kotler and Keller (2012, 2009), two factors can come in the way of implementing the actual decision. The first factor is attitudes of others. In a student case, families' attitude plays an important role as family is usually providing money for the education. The other factor is unexpected situational change (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 178). For example, a student has long planed to attend a certain university in a certain country when unexpectedly, that country had put forward tuition fees or increased tuition fees. That unexpected situational change might deter a student from getting though with his/her choice of educational institution because the perceived risk is high. Thus, preferences and the enrolment decision are not entirely steadfast forecaster of actual behaviour (Kotler & Fox 1995, 269). Therefore, Kotler and Fox (1995, 263) state that marketers must understand the factors the incite the feeling of a risk in the consumer and attempt to eliminate it by providing additional help and information.

3.2.5 Post purchase behaviour

Post purchase behaviour or post enrolment assessment happens after the product (education) was chosen the customer (student) will either be satisfied or dissatisfied with the choice. The post-purchase phase of the decision-making process is vital for marketers to confirm that consumers are satisfied after the purchase (Ramesh 2008, 3). According to Kotler and Armstrong (2012, 178) the relationship between the consumer's expectation and the products perceived

performance determines if the buyer is satisfied or dissatisfied with the product. A happy student will continue his/her education in the chosen university while a dissatisfied student might drop out and then spread the bad word of mouth about the university which will definitely damage its reputation.

According to Kotler and Fox (1995, 264) a university can take certain steps in helping students feel good about their choice. For example, university might send a special letter of congratulation to the students expressing universities' value and slogan (Kotler & Fox 1995, 264). For example, a student opening an acceptance letter and seeing slogan "one of us" might feel a sense of belonging to a special group which will encourage him/her about the righteousness of the choice. The quality of education should also must match the students' expectations.

3.3 Strategic marketing planning in institution

The need of using strategic marketing could not be overemphasized. Using strategic marketing tools could help a university in fighting the competition and differentiate itself on the market. These tools include market segmentation, targeting, focusing, position, market planning and other techniques to differentiation and building image (Bulley 2014, 5-6).

Kotler and Fox (1995, 94) defines strategic marketing planning as "planning the overall direction of the institution to respond to its markets and opportunities". There are certain steps an institution should undertake to improve its effectiveness. The first step is environmental analysis. This steps includes examining the internal environment of the institution, markets, publics, competitors and microenvironment. Threats and opportunities are defined so that university can adjust its course of actions. The strengths and weaknesses are examined in personnel, funds, facilities and other recourses. While formulating its strategy, an institution should review the portfolio of programmes and decides which of them should be improved, build or dropped altogether. In addition, an institution should review and revise its basic mission, and formulate its major goals and objectives. Finally, the institution revises its system of information, planning and control to make sure they are satisfactory to perform the strategy successfully (Kotler & Fox 1995, 110-116.)

3.3.1 Marketing mix

As the nature of educational offering is offering services which are mostly intangible, the consumer may only realize if they like the offering only over time, as one cannot simply test the programme in advance. Because of its nature, it is particularly difficult for international students to assess the whole programme (Patterson, Romm & Hill, 1998; Harvey 1996; Srikatanyoo & Gnoth, 2002). The customer's decision-making process is influenced by the indirect mechanism of service evaluation because the intangible nature of services incites the students to analyse such aspects as institution image or country of origin (Cubillo, Sanchez & Cervino 2006, 103.) Moreover, different consumers relate to services differently which only makes it is more difficult for an institution to satisfy all the customers.

The marketing mix can be used to overcome the problems associated with the service specific features of education. Institutions can improve the quality of the product by providing education with enhanced features as updated curriculum and industry interaction. With franchising and better infrastructure facilities and experienced professors, institutions can meet their customer expectations. With the right mix of all the Ps, tailor-made customer focused courses can be offered (Service marketing workbook.)

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2012, 75) marketing mix is “the set of tactical marketing tools that the firm blends to produce the response it wants in the target market”. In services the extended service marketing mix with 7 P's opposed to product marketing mix with 4 P's is used (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Service marketing mix

Most educational institutions offer numerous degree programs and variety of services. An institution's program/service mix involves all the programs and services that the institutions offers. Developing a suitable marketing mix requires aspects of the entire institution. A thorough and appealing educational programme should be developed to appeal prospective students at a price prospective applicants and their families are ready to pay in an attractive place. All these aspects should be communicated to students at a timely, interesting and correct manner (Kotler & Fox 1995, 403.)

Elements of marketing mix:

Product (program): means the goods-and-services combination the company offers to the target market (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 75). In service marketing mix product is intangible, heterogeneous, inseparable and perishable. Intangibility indicates the lack of a tangible component related to the services. Heterogeneity signifies incapability to maintain consistency in the way services are offered to customers. Inseparability suggests the need for customer to interact with the service provider to obtain the service. Perishability refers to the inability of service providers to sustain service inventories to meet future demand (Service marketing workbook.)

Price is the amount of money customers have to pay to acquire the product or service. Price mix includes determining pricing objectives and policies, price fixation, discount policy, concession policy, profit margin, terms of paying, credit policy etc. (Jain 2009, 77.) In case of education, a student pays not only for the knowledge acquiring, but also for additional student services such as counselling and support, IT and communication service, library services etc. A service is acceptable to a customer for a particular price and if the price increases, a service might become less acceptable to the customer (Shanker 2002, 60.) A non-representative survey of college-bound high school seniors found that about 60 percent of students from low- and middle-income families said they ruled out colleges based on list price alone, without considering the possibility of receiving financial aid (College Board 2012).

Promotion: indicates activities that communicate qualities of the product or service and persuade target customers to acquire it (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 76). Promotion mix includes personal selling, advertising, sales promotion activities, public relations, displaying and demonstration, exhibition etc. (Jain 2009, 78.)

In services, however, as they are easily can be reproduced, the brand becomes important. There are three fundamental differences between in information usage between goods and services. First, the customers are less likely to acquire a service without any information. Second, Shanker (2002) states that customer prefer to personal over impersonal sources of information. Third, the basic feature of services has implications for communication strategy (Shanker 2002, 66.)

Place denotes where the service is located. Because of the nature of services(intangibility), they are cannot be transported, stored and inventoried (Shanker 2002, 62). For educational institution place represents locations of university which is especially important as location usually adds to the attraction in the eyes of prospective students mostly of whom want to have rich social life being in epicentre of things.

The extended marketing mix elements:

People is in the heart of service delivery as many of them are responsible how the product will be viewed by potential customers. According to Glimore (13, 2003) often people are the “service. In case if education it could be both professors and employers on the institutions. Glomore (13, 2003) positions that customers and their interactions can have big impact on service delivery which is way interaction between staff and customers should be carefully managed.

Process represent the way it is delivered to the customers. Process management guarantees process availability and consistent quality (Shanker 2002, 82). Managing of the process involves pre- during post- service delivery experience of the customer and guaranteeing managerial and operational attentiveness to detail in all phases of service delivery (Glimore 2003, 13).

Physical evidence and its management is important element in the mix. Even though the customer cannot see service he/she can see tangible clues of the service such as facilities, communication materials, employers, other customers and on the basic of this tangible clue customers makes decision about the purchase (Shanker 2002, 77.)

3.3.2 Content marketing

Content marketing is not a new concept. It has been used by companies for years to market many sectors. Nowadays, due to the Internet, it is utilized even more with as a cheaper and faster way for companies to market their content online. One may doubt, if education is one of

the sectors that requires content marketing. The author believes that education sector is especially in need of good content marketing.

Content marketing is defined as “publishing content that empowers, engages, educates and connect with readers” (McPheat 2011, 9). In other words, content marketing is about creating visible, sellable marketing content that pulls people to the business, organization or institution.

Content marketing supports brand recognition, trust, credibility, loyalty, and authenticity. It creates value and assist people by providing them with fundamental information and answering questions they might have in mind. Providing information is crucial as based on the information customers received, he/she makes a purchase decision. Content marketing helps to arouse a genuine interest in peoples’ minds and incite customer engagement in all stages of buying process, transforming a prospective into a real customer (Lien 2011, 2.)

3.3.3 Online Content marketing

With the appearance of the Internet, people now have an easy access to all kind of information. Moreover, people’s voices are now more audible then ever as many of them are sharing freely their views and opinions about a product, organization or educational institution. There are different channels which are currently being used by vast majority of population. In Figure 6, most popular online channels are shown. The type of tool an organization is due to use depends on type of demographic that is needed to be reached as well as current customers (McPheat 2011, 19).

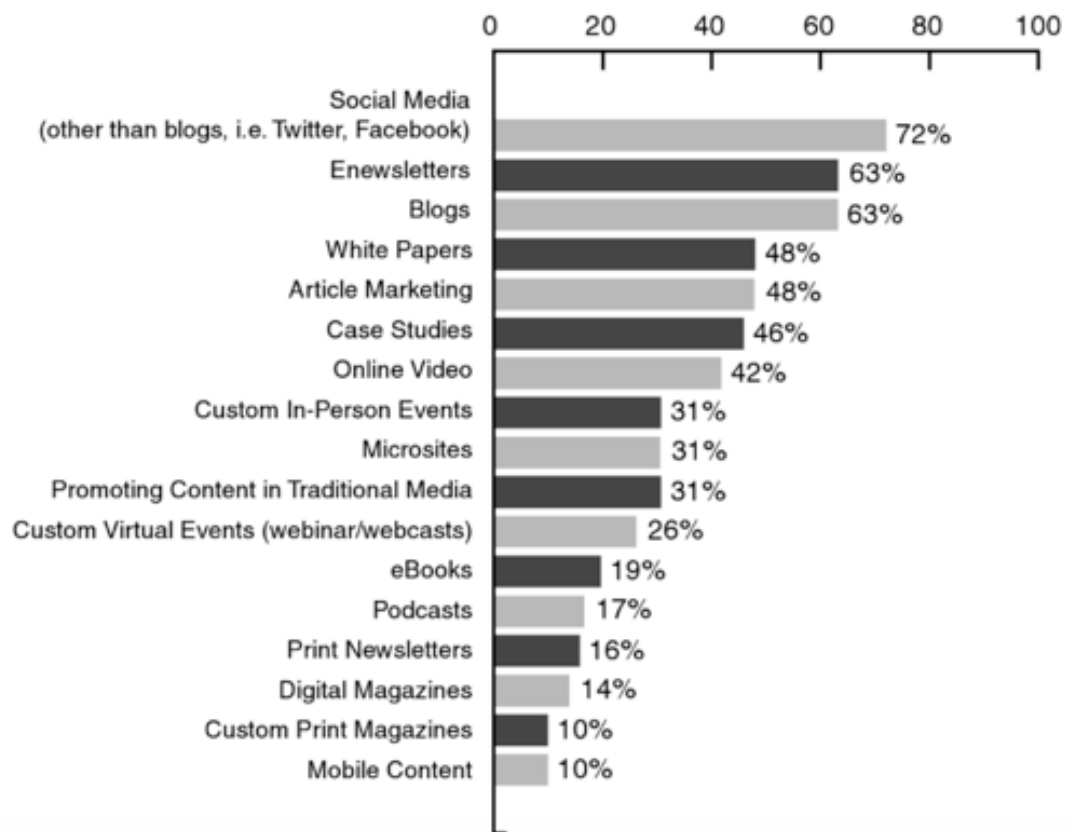


Figure 6. Content marketing usage by tactic (Lieb 2011, 3)

The beneficial aspect of publishing the same content through multiple channels is that it reinforces the same idea to potential consumers. Viewing the same information across various media tools gives credibility as if multiple source saying the same then it must be true. Furthermore, having the same content across a range of media guarantees that the message is delivered to many different customers (McPheat 2011,19.)

Content types:

Websites

Websites are one of the most important sources of information as people first usually go to an organization's website to get official information which is way its important that website is easy find, use and browse information. Websites are first impression a customer get about the organization so they impression should be good and catch attention of the reader at once. According to Noel-Levitz (2014), parents and seniors both rated college websites as the most influential recruitment resource by a significant margin. Search engine optimization can be used to get the website to top search results. According to Miller (2013, 309), it is a good idea to

feature success stories and testimonial on the website, as well as links to the organization's social media accounts.

There are three attributes that that visitors use to judge a site's performance:

1. The site downloads quickly
2. The first page is easy to understand
3. Is easy to navigate to other pages that open quickly

Physical attractiveness of website is determined by:

1. Individual pages are clean and not crammed with content
2. Typefaces and front sizes are very readable
3. The site makes good use of colour (and sound)

(Kotler & Keller 2009, 580.)

Mobile devices

Today, even kinder garden children have mobile devices. Nine out of ten seniors and eight out of ten parents have access to a mobile device; 71 percent of seniors and 45 percent of parents have looked at college websites on their mobile devices (Noel-Levitz 2014). Therefore, it is integral that companies and educational institution make sure their webpage and e-mail is suitable for using on mobile devices and the convents is easy to browse on small screen.

Blogs

Everyday thousands of blogs are created and shared which is why blogs are important for educational institution to have their own blog as well. According to Kotler and Keller (2009, 591), around third of Internet users have read blogs. In educational institution's blog page, students can share different kind of information, their experiences of educational institution, exchange stories, studying tips. According to Miller (2013, 313), blogs give an organization more freedom than other social networks and also more audience than email; they attract audience to the website because of improved search rankings that blogging stimulates.

Emails

International student email marketing converts at a rate three times higher than social media marketing; it is most preferred method of communication among students and parents with universities as seen from Figure 7 (BigChoiceGroup). Therefore, special attention should be made to email communication and all the inquires from perspective student and their parent should be answered and not overlooked.

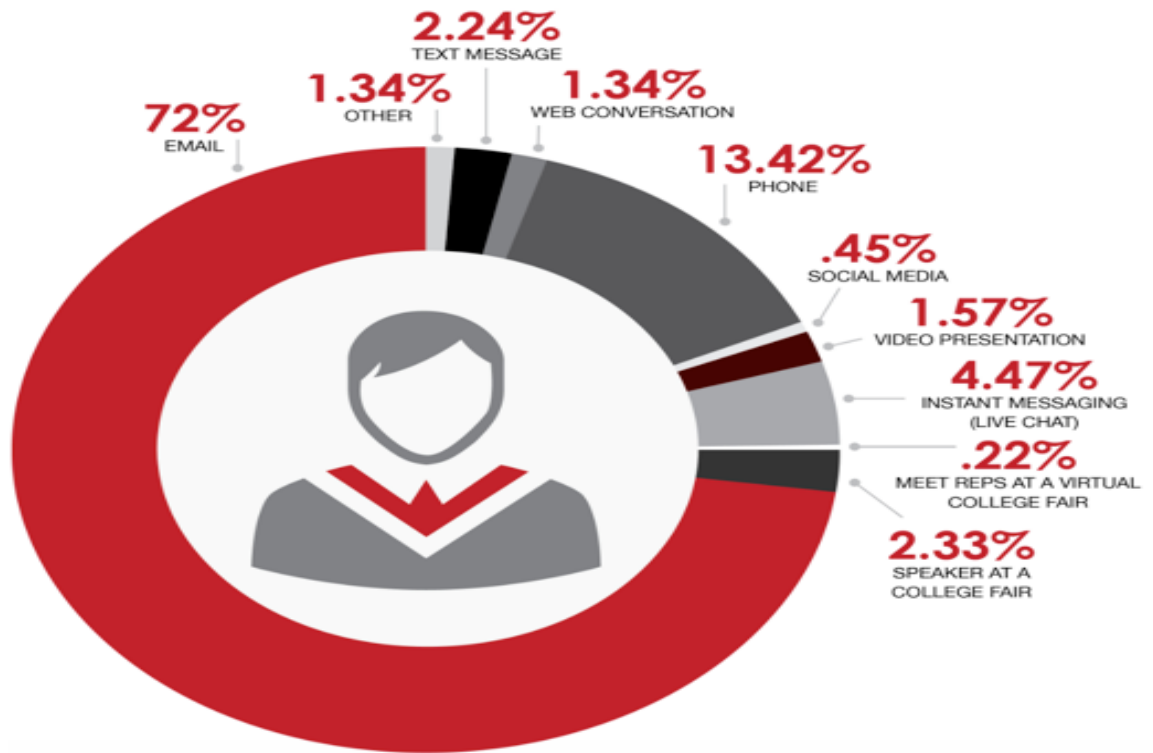


Figure 7. International students' preferred methods of contact (BigChoiceGroup)

Video

Video is a good and an easy way to communicate a message in a clear and interactive way. It is easier for students to watch video than read through text on a website. A video posted beside institutional website into on YouTube might be starting point which bring prospective student to the institution's website. The video might include testimonials of current students or short set of instruction in interactive and fun way of how to apply to university.

Social media

Popularity of social media has skyrocketed. Such social media sites as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest, LinkedIn and YouTube are among most popular among population. Many businesses embraced the opportunity and are present on different social media platforms so they could interact with customers directly while marketing their services there. Social media is about collaborating, networking, sharing and generating knowledge and content, and all of these features are of great value in the context of higher education (Gupta 2015). The following infographic demonstrates various uses for different social media sites and why students might visit a particular social media site (Figure 8).

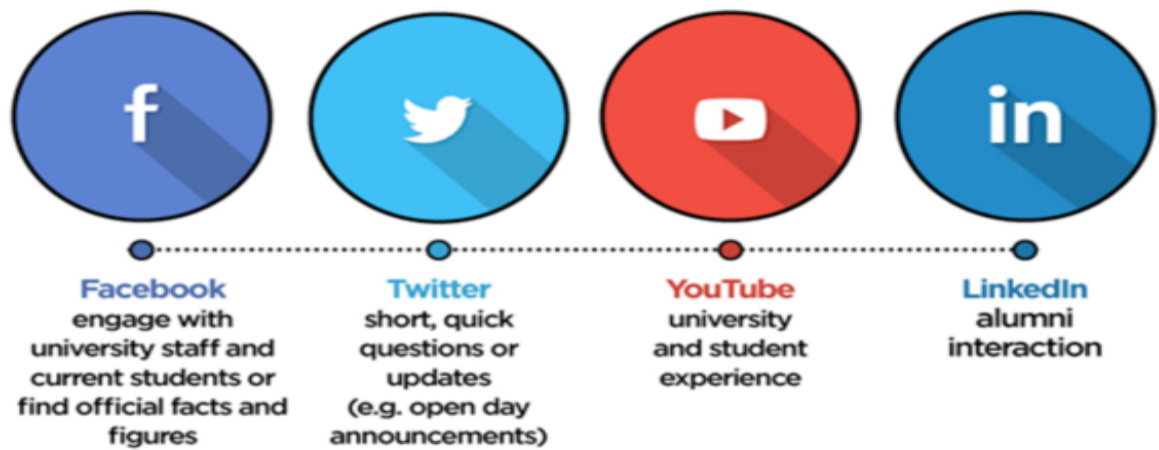


Figure 8. Students' engagement in social media (BigChoiceGroup)

According to the findings of the TopUniversities.com (2014) even though social media sites are considered less critical compared to official website, majority of prospective students still rated social media as being important in their decision making process and rated it as a source of inspiration and ideas sharing.

When a prospective students begin searching for a suitable university, they are not only looking for the best match in a degree programme, they are also looking a campus that they can call home for several years. Using social media, educational institutions now can communicate with students directly and share vast amounts of information in an instant. Students, especially living far away do not need to physically visit university, instead they can get a peek at a university online via virtual tours, photos, tweets etc. Students can find information on academic programs, scholarships and events on institutions' Facebook page. They can also follow the institutions' Twitter or Facebook page and get instant updates or replies (Subramanian 2013.)

Word-of-mouth marketing

According to Kotler and Keller (2009, 585), an important aspect of social networks is word of mouth marketing as well as the number and nature of communications and conversation between different parties. Word-of-mouth marketing can have a significant influence on consumer buying behavior. Advices from friends, family members and alumni are still considered the most influential among prospective students (TopUniversities.com 2014). Prospective students can now easily connect to alumni students in LinkedIn or Facebook for example to ask for advice about certain educational institution.

There are two types of word to mouth marketing: buzz marketing and viral marketing. Buzz marketing means enlisting ambassadors who provoke conversation about a brand's new product or service to other in their communities. Viral marketing is online marketing where consumers spread their company's message online (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 539; 433).

Viral marketing has become an easier and less expensive way to market a company nowadays with the Internet at everybody's fingertips. However, this means that bad experiences are also easily shared as online networks are largely user-controlled which is why an organization should monitor its online activity and try to reduce the impact of negative commentaries. Nevertheless, an organization should not force its way into consumer's online conversations, instead the right to be there should be earned; the organization should learn to become a value part of the online experience (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 541).

4 Research approach and methods

In this chapter, research approach is presented along with the quantitative and qualitative methods, data collection and data analysis process. In addition, validity and reliability of research are discussed.

4.1 Quantitative and Qualitative methods

In order to create a better research, the author used a mix of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. According to Eskelinen and Garant (2012, 204) mixed methods are widely accepted in educational research today. The term “mixed methods” applies to research that combines alternative approaches within a single research project (Denscombe 2014, 137). The qualitative part consisted of interviews and was used to develop ideas that could be further investigated through quantitative research part.

According to Hague and Hague (2004, 16) quantitative and qualitative research are often complementary, and in a research design both may feature. The qualitative element frequently takes place at the front end of the study, exploring values that need measuring in the subsequent quantitative phase. The ‘qual’ research may offer a diagnostic understanding of what is wrong while the ‘quant’ research provides hard data across different respondent groups that can lead to specific recommendations with measures that can be used as controls to determine the effectiveness of actions.

Qualitative research is a group of methods and trends of researching social relations, humans and their lives. Qualitative research means that the research data is not subject to quantification or quantitative analysis (McDaniel and Gates 2011, 108). Out of quantitative research methods a structured survey was chosen.

4.2 Data collection process

Both interview and surveys were used to assess the current situation of the international degree programmes in Porvoo campus to map out the starting point of thesis project. In addition to primary data, secondary data was utilised to validate the findings.

As the primary data, semi-structured phone and Skype interviews with the commissioner universities’ personnel was conducted to find out the current marketing strategies Porvoo uses to

attract international students, ideas and needs of the commissioner as well as marketing resources that are being used currently and will be used in the future. Face-to-face interviews are not possible because of the distance between the commissioner and the researcher. According to Markham (2008, 255) the benefits of using Skype as a method of data collection, particularly in place of face-to-face interviews, outweigh the drawbacks. In addition, the interview results were used to create a survey for quantitative analysis.

Among three fundamental interview types, semi-structure interview was used to get more in-depth responses from the commissioner. According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2007, 312) semi-structured interviews allude to those questionnaires where interviewers physically meet interviewees and ask questions face-to-face. In authors case, Skype and phone was used in place of face-to-face interactions.

Self-administrative survey with both open and closed ended questions were chosen as part on quantitative analysis and was distributed among current international degree students outside of EU/EEU to gather valuable data. According to Kotler and Fox (1995, 400), analyzing the characteristics of current students helps to identify where an institution should recruit and what types of students it is likely to attract. The survey was e-mailed to students and shared via different social media channels. The target was around 100 responses. The students were given two weeks to answer the survey with a few reminders sent to prompt them to answer the survey.

4.3 Data analysis process

Three variables were assessed in the survey: attributes, opinion and behavior. Opinion variable record how respondents feel about something or what they think is true or false. The data on behaviors and attributes record what respondents do and who they are, their characteristics (Saunders et al. 2007, 362.)

The data analysis took around three weeks to complete. The author used survio.com as a platform for gathering the responses and analyzing structured survey questions. Survio.com provided ready graphs and calculated the data in form of percentage so the author did not have to use Excel for the most part. The questions about nationalities was however analyzed with Excel because it was an open-ended question. For other open-ended questions, the author grouped similar responses and analyzed them in a qualitative way (Appendix 2).

Ari Nevalainen, the head of HAAGA-HELIA's marketing and communication activities, and Harri Lähdekorpi, international coordinator in HAAGA-HELIA, were interviewed about the current marketing situation in HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences. In case of Ari Nevalainen, a phone interview was conducted and transcribed verbatim. Harri Lähdekorpi sent the answers to the interview questions in written form by email. In addition, a Skype interview was conducted with Kaija Lindroth, degree programme director at HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo campus to find out about current marketing activities implemented in Porvoo campus. The Interview with Ari Nevalainen took one hour to conduct. The most time consuming part of the research was not taking the interview, but actually writing all the results down from the voice recorders. The processing required concentration and editing. By editing the author means filtering unnecessary hesitation particles and discourse markers, e.g. "Mmm", "Hmmm", "And, and", etc.

4.4 Reliability and validity of research

Reliability and validity are ways of signifying and displaying the thoroughness of research practices and the trustworthiness of research findings. The trustworthiness is dependent on several research features: the initial research question, how data are gathered involving when and from whom, how data is analysed, and what conclusions are made. Reliability depicts how well a particular test, such as a survey, will generate comparable outcomes in different conditions, if nothing else has altered. Validity is about the closeness of what we think we are assessing to what we planned to assess. (Roberts, Priest & Traynor 2006, 41-43.)

The author believed that this research measured what it intended to measure: the opinions, behaviours and attitudes of non-EU/EEU students about studying in Porvoo campus, their satisfaction as well as what kind of modern communication channels they have been using. Nevertheless, the number of respondents which answered the survey was lower than expected, with the response rate lower than 50%; out of 138 international students coming from outside of EU/EEU areas in Porvoo campus, only 52 answered the survey which makes response rate 37,7% which is not an ideal response rate. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize about the sample group only based on the data received, because the sample must be larger to get clearer view of students' opinions and views concerning Porvoo's campus desirability and visibility. Therefore, as for reliability of research, the author can not definitely say that research will produce exactly the same results for a larger sample than the one used in the research. In terms of interviews, the author got the answers needed and interpreted them accordingly. However,

given the nature of research, only a few employees had capabilities and expertise to answer the questions related to current marketing activities implemented in the commissioning university. According to Burke (1991), a probable difficulty in reaching validity in qualitative research is researcher bias, ascending out of discriminatory gathering and recording of data, or from interpretation based on personal perspectives. It would have helped to have another researcher to evaluate the answers and compare them to avoid any biases, but as the author conducted the research alone, that was not an option. However, the overall validity of the research can be confirmed. Above mentioned limitations of research are expected and can not always be avoided.

5 Key results and discussion

5.1 Interview results

In this subchapter, the answers results are presented in a shortened form. The interviewees (Ari Nevalainen and Harri Lähdekorpi) were asked to define primary market of HAAGA-HELIA. The primary markets at the moment are Russia, China, India and Vietnam. Special focus is allocated to Turkey, Iran, Botswana, Nigeria and possibly to UK as well. At the moment, the university incorporates different kinds of marketing tools. Online marketing, beside the website, consist of social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat (in the future Vkontake). In fact, 90% of marketing activities take place in social media. In addition, HAAGA-HELIA is on a number of Chinese educational websites that are meant for potential students who want to study in Europe. Offline marketing tools include paid print ads in newspaper, billboards, banners and brochures. Furthermore, international educational fairs, marketing events for schools, alumni network, marketing through tutors, students and agents are among the channels HAAGA-HELIA is actively using in its marketing mix.

Next, the author aimed at finding out how HAAGA-HELIA rates among its competition in factors that influence students' decision. The input received was that HAAGA-HELIA is the strongest and biggest in relation to business and service studies among Finnish UASes. In addition, the interviewees believed that HAAGA-HELIA has the strong reputation both in Finland and abroad. One interviewee referenced a website vipuinen.fi, where statistics of number of application is presented and HAAGA-HELIA has one of the highest number of applicants.

With fierce competition among local universities, it is important for universities to position themselves advantageously, especially in the face of tuition fees. The interviewees were asked exactly how HAAGA-HELIA is planning to achieve that. Firstly, HAAGA-HELIA plans collaboration with Metropolia UAS which will allow students to take courses from both universities. Secondly, HAAGA-HELIA personnel believes that besides using current marketing tools, using external help in promoting the degree program can be one of the solutions. For example, sites like Hot Courses, Keystone, FPP Edumedia, Big Choice, agreement with which are not yet established. Recently HAAGA-HELIA has started using study portals, like bachelorstudies.com and masterstudies.com, but it still too early to judge how these sites will affect application statistics. Moreover, simplifying entrance examination, creating encouraging scholarship systems and possible satellite campuses can help HAAGA-HELIA to distinguish itself from other

UASes. Lastly, it has been mentioned that before marketing university, marketing Finland, its image as an attractive place to study has to be done first.

As it has been noted above, the enrolment decline is probable, therefore the author wanted to find out how the commissioning university has been preparing for the possible enrolment decline and if there were any contingency plan put in place. The interviewees believe that, there will be an initial decline, but in 3 to 5 years the enrolment number will recover and return to the current high. The number of enrolled students will be monitored closely, like at the moment. These responses make it apparent that no special contingency plan has been prepared to tackle probable decline in enrolments, but rather situation is viewed as something that HAAGA-HELIA has to come to terms with and just wait and see what happens.

To follow up on the previous issue, how possible decline will be tackled has been asked. Like in previous matter, no concrete actions were listed, but rather equivocal responses were given, like assessing the reasons for decline, the programmes effected, will be measured and respected action will follow.

Measuring students' feedback is an important task in order to improve the current practices, which is why the interviewees were asked if the university collects current student feedback as well as alumni's feedback. The author found out that not only they do it for improvement purposes, but also they have to collect students' feedback as it is one of the key indicators that are directly linked to the amount of public funding for all Finnish Higher Education Institutes.

As this research work aims especially at improving visibility and marketing for Porvoo campus, the author wanted to find out how Porvoo has been marketed. The results revealed that Porvoo has not been marketed in a special way, but rather its marketing was aligned with university's overall marketing activities. However, when Porvoo is mentioned in fairs and when marketing to high schools, the different studying atmosphere, a sense of belonging and strong academic community are highlighted. Furthermore, as differentiators, strong pedagogic philosophy of facilitating learning and creating social meanings can be pinpointed when it comes to Porvoo campus.

As theoretical part discussed, strategic marketing plan is important for a university to implement, which is why the information about HAAGA-HELIA's strategic marketing plan was sought. Strategic marketing plan in HAAGA-HELIA is done for two years' time in addition to action

plan, which is done for each year. The summary of the interview responses is provided in form of SWOT below (Figure 9).

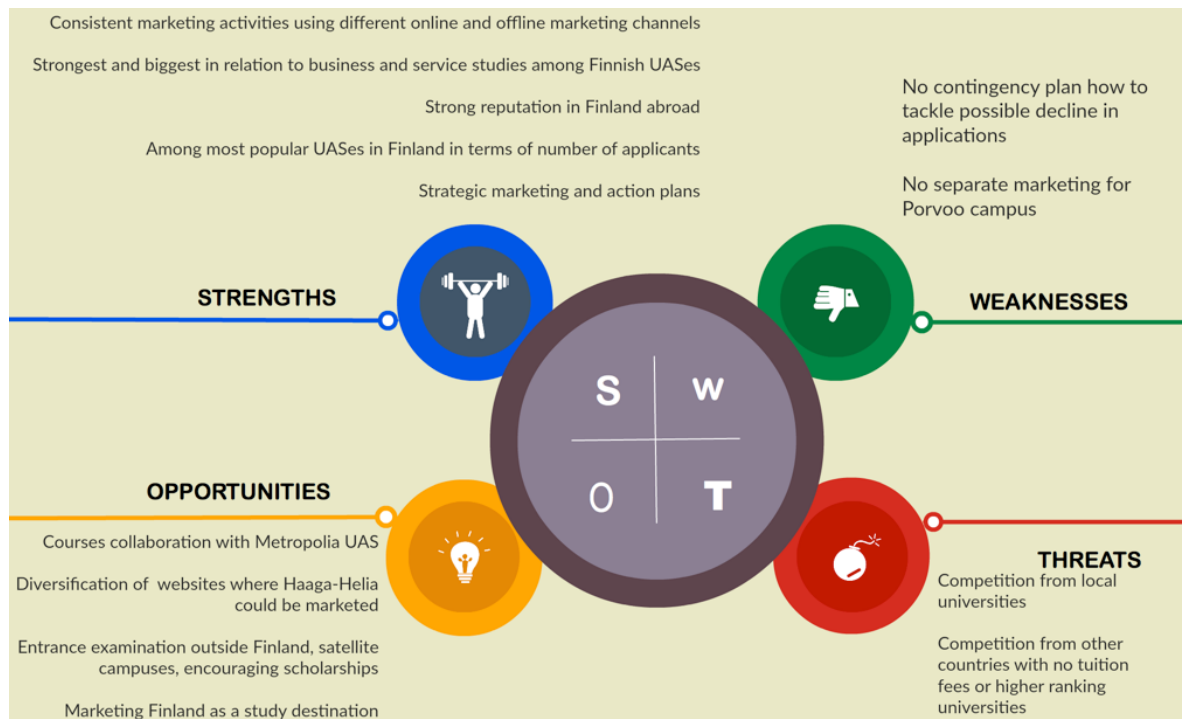


Figure 9.SWOT based on interview responses

5.2 Introduction to the survey

A survey was distributed electronically among HAAGA-HELIA's international students outside of EU/EEU to in Porvoo campus. The website survio.com was used to create the survey and analyse the results. The purpose of the survey was to find out students' opinion about studying in Porvoo campus, measure their satisfaction as well as to map out what kind of modern communication channels they have been using. One of the objectives was to find out what information sources they used when applying in university and when searching for information about the university.

The survey was sent to target group, which was 138 students via email by student affairs secretary. Incentives in form of chance to win eight movie tickets were promised to all participants who agreed to identify themselves were used to get a higher response rate. Almost all the respondents chose to leave their names so that to participate in the lottery draw. The author gave the respondents two weeks to answer the survey. Two reminders were sent in order to prompt new answers to the survey. At the end, even with incentives being sent, the author received 52 responses thus not reaching the goal of 100 responses and making the response rate 37,7%

which is an average response rate for an online survey. According to Nulty (2002), online survey get lower response rate compared to offline surveys.

The survey contained a total of 19 semi-structured questions. Multiple, category, scale questions as well as open-ended questions were incorporated to get fuller data for the analysis. As the goal was to find out students' point of views as well as their behaviour, questions were mainly behavioural, opinion, with a few attributional questions present (gender, nationality). The questions were designed and structured in the way to make it easy for the students to fill out the survey.

5.3 Analysis of the survey and interview results

Interview results supported survey results about the primary target market of HAAGA-HELIA university overall, and for Porvoo campus in particular. Out of 52 respondents, most of the respondents were from Russia (28,8%) and Vietnam (26,9%). Interviewees stressed special efforts to target to Russian and Vietnamese market as Russia and Vietnam are such a big part of the international students' coming from outside of EU/EEU. Other nationalities composed only small percentage of the total respondents, with one or two respondents representing a nationality.

As the tuition fees will be applied to only students coming from outside of EU/EEU and holding a student visa, the author wanted to find out how many of the target group would fall into the category and how many would have been excepted from the paying the tuition fees (e.g. holders of residence permits). The majority of the respondents 67,3% (35) hold a student visa, thus, they would have to pay tuition fees if they had applied next year. Surprisingly, 26,9 % (14) of the respondent hold a residence permits thus making them exempt from the tuition fees. This rather high number can be explained by the fact that some students are already living in the Finland permanently, either because of work or because of the relationship with locals.

When the students were asked how they first heard about HAAGA-HELIA, most of the respondents 38,5% (20) heard first about HAAGA-HELIA through their friends and family recommendations which supports the theory that Word-of-Mouth is one of the most effective marketing tools. Website, studyinfinland.fi, was the second most popular answer option, with 25% (13) of respondents selecting it. Educational fairs were chosen by 11.5 % (6) of the respondents, which represents that, despite efforts put in them by the commissioning university,

it can be concluded that they are deemed less effective. “Other” open-ended option was selected by 11,5 % (6) of the respondents which included friends and family recommendation, google search (list of best schools and universities in Finland), agency help and academic advisor services. Only 7,7 % (4) of the respondents answered that they first heard about HAAGA-HELIA’s through its official webpage. Social media had helped to find out about HAAGA-HELIA only to 5.8 % (3) of respondents.

The official website, according to survey’s results, was the most popular source of information among respondents with 88.5% (46) selecting it, so official webpage of the university plays a huge role in information search process. Social media websites were used only by 5.8 % (3) of the respondents to gain information. The reason is due to the fact that social media sites do not offer full information students were looking for. Other options chosen by only 3.8% (2) included asking friends and family, or using other websites(studyinfo.fi). Email was least preferred options for gaining information, chosen only by 1.9 % (1) of the respondents.

Next, with scale question (scale from 1 to 5) the author aimed at finding out if the respondents believed that HAAGA-HELIA’s website was informative and easy to use. This question was included to find out if HAAGA-HELIA’s official webpage content corresponds to the respondents’ expectations and if some improvements were needed to the website’s content. The results were positive, with average rating of 4.1 given to informatively of website and 3.8 to its navigability meaning even though there is some room for improvement, overall the Haga-Helia website is informative and easy to navigate according to the majority of the respondents (Figure 10).

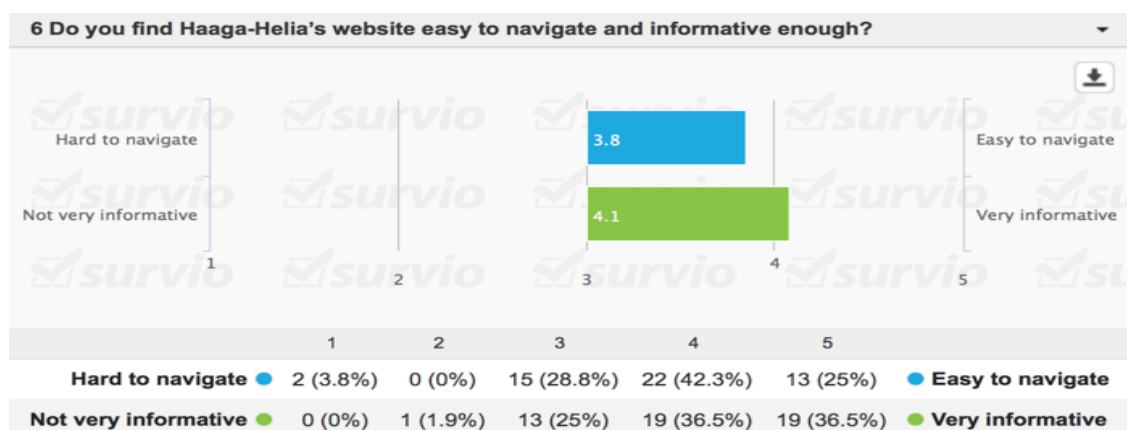


Figure 10. HAAGA-HELIA's website useability

To follow-up on the previous question, respondents were asked if they felt that they received enough information before applying to HAAGA-HELIA. Almost all of the respondents 96.2% (50) stated that they received enough information. Only 3.8% (2) of the respondents felt that the information they received before applying was not enough, particularly the practical information about Porvoo campus, the city, its location, travelling to there were missing. The satisfaction level of the information they received was measured using scale from 1 to 5 revealing a very positive rating 4.2 proving that students are very satisfied with information they received (Figure 11).

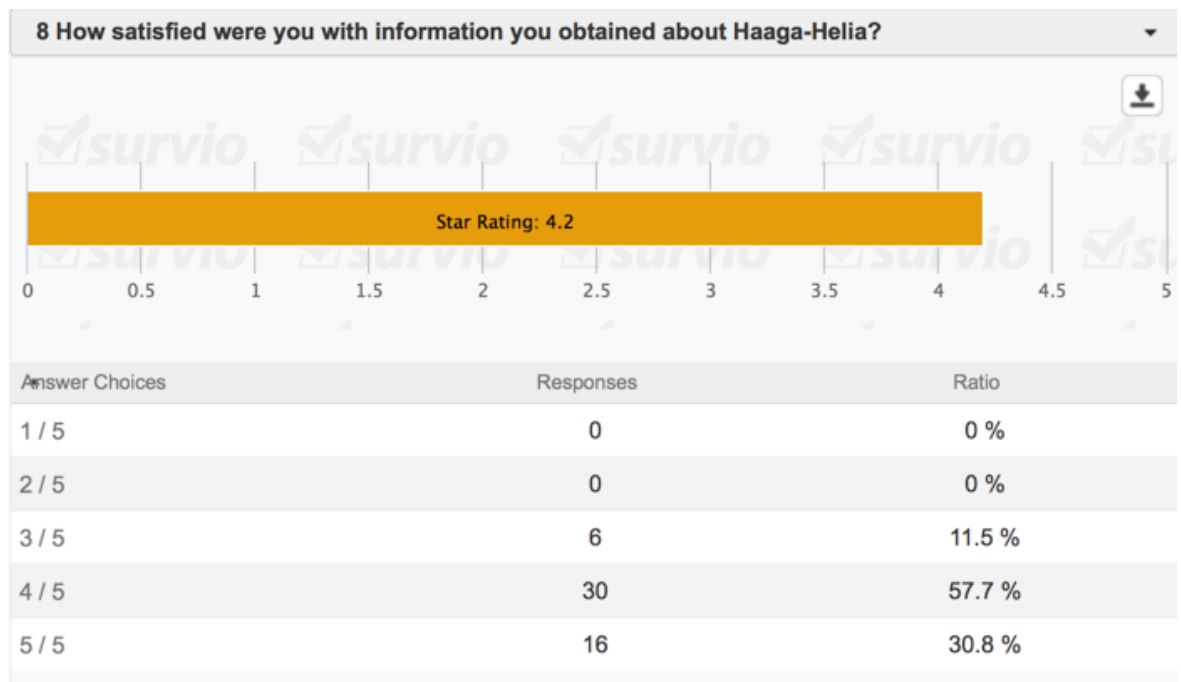


Figure 11. Satisfaction with information obtained

As social media is now used very actively by HAAGA-HELIA in its marketing activities as stated by interviewees, the author goal with to find out which channels the respondents preferred when they were looking for information about the university (Figure 12).

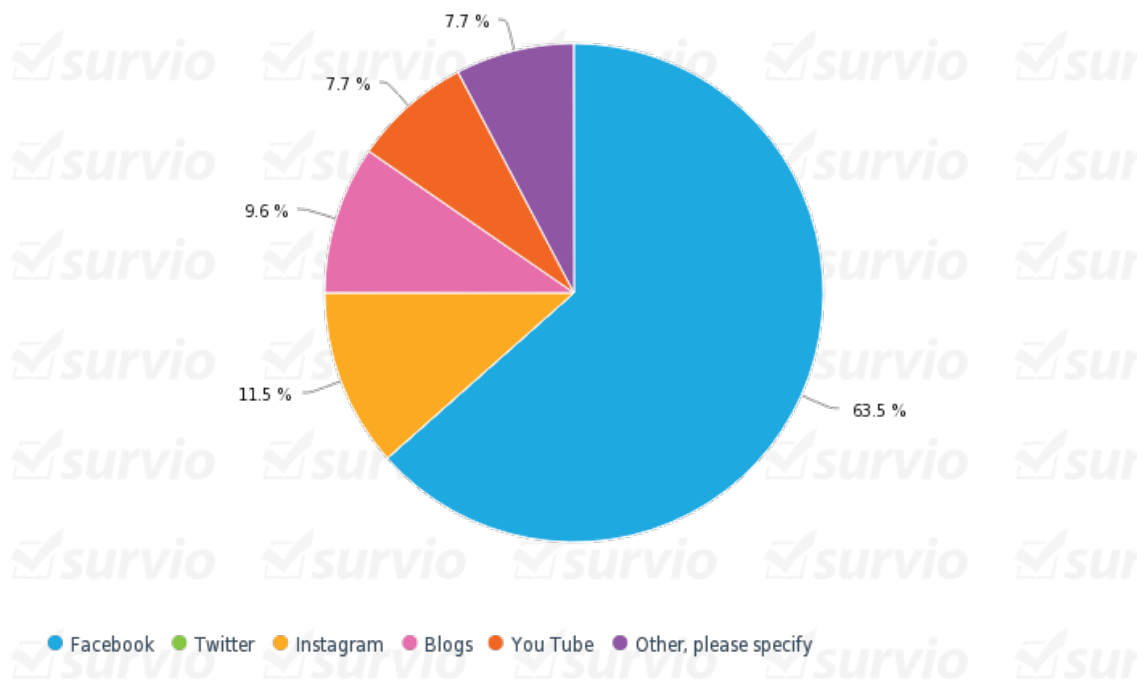


Figure 12. The most popular social media channels

As it can be seen from the Figure 8, Facebook is the most popular social media channel among the respondents with 63.5 % (35) selecting it. Far behind is Instagram with 11.5% (6) of respondents choosing it. Other minor selections included Blogs 9.6 % (5), LinkedIn and VKontakte scoring both 7.7% (4). However, website is still the main source of information for the majority of the respondents as one of the previous question discovered that only 5.8 % (3) of the respondents are using social media to get information about the university.

When students apply to Finnish universities, they can choose up to six universities in order of preference, and if students are not accepted to the first choice, they can be accepted to the second or third choice and so on. So with the next questions, the author wanted to find out how many current students chose degree program in Porvoo campus as their first choice. Just over a half of the respondents 53.8% (28) chose degree programme as their first choice. Open-ended possibility for a negative answer was included to get deeper insights why Porvoo was not the first choice for 46.2 % (24) of the respondents. Many students stated that they did not apply to degree programme at Porvoo campus because they did not have enough information about Porvoo as a city and Porvoo campus as a place to study. In addition, location wise, people felt it was a bit far from Helsinki, with less work opportunities located in Porvoo. Furthermore, students felt the degree programs in Helsinki and Porvoo were very similar which is why Helsinki was given a preference. Even though some students did not choose degree programme in Porvoo campus, when asked if they would transfer to another university given the chance to do

so, the majority 63 % (17) answered they would not, which corresponds to some of the open-ended answers where some students wrote that they came to like Porvoo campus even though it was not their first choice. Only 37 % (10) of the respondents whose first choice of university was not Porvoo campus answered that they would transfer given a chance to do so.

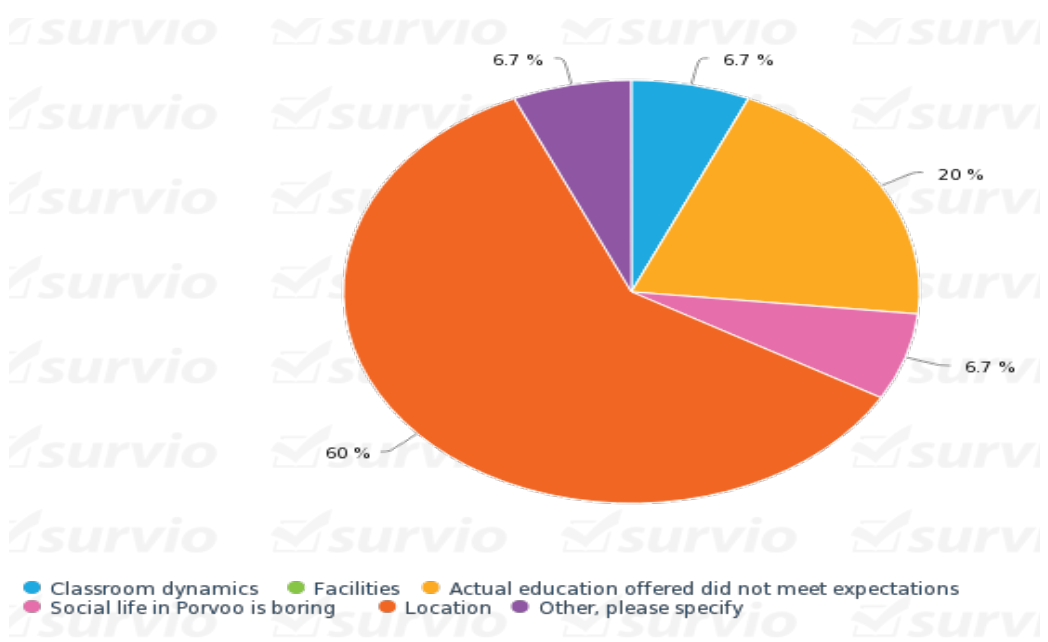


Figure 13.Reasons for transferring among students

In Figure 13 the reasons for transferring were mentioned by those 37% (10) of the respondents who would transfer to another university given a chance to do so. Most of the respondents, that is 60% (9) are not satisfied with the location due to the reasons mentioned above. Other reason for transferring mentioned by 20% (3) of the respondents was the fact the the actual education did not meet expectations of the students. Options “other” chosen by 6.7% (1) of the respondents revealed the students would want some support from the university in finding a job after graduation, boredom of social life on Porvoo and classrooms dynamics were each chosen by 6,7 % (1) correspondingly.

When the students were asked about the reason they chose the university it was clear that the biggest influence was the quality of education chosen by 48,1 % (25). An open-ended option was included to get deeper insights and not to limit the respondents to the selections offered. One forth of the respondents (13) ended up choosing this open-ended option. The reasons listed in this option among other included professionalism, innovative approach to teaching, hands-on learning, well-equipped facilities, international atmosphere etc. Other selections from respondents can be observed from Figure 14.

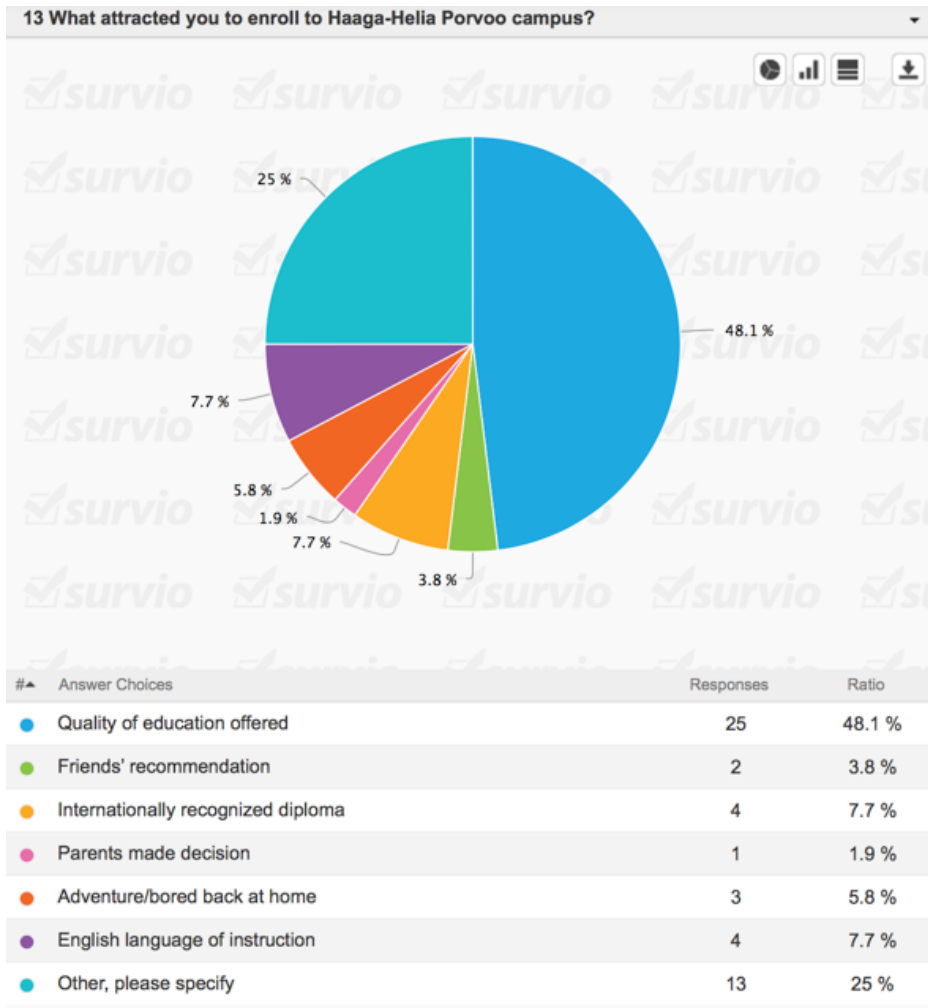


Figure 14. Reasons for applying to HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo campus

Students were also asked to rank in a scale question from 1 (not at all correspond) to 5 (fully correspond) how well their studies in Porvoo campus correspond to their expectation. The results were encouraging for the university with an average rating 4.0 which means that most of the students believe that their expectations concerning level of education have been met. The detailed results are shown in Figure 15. The outcome indicates that the students generally happy with the the education offered in HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo campus which is an important factor as it means that they would recommend the degree programme through word-of-mouth.

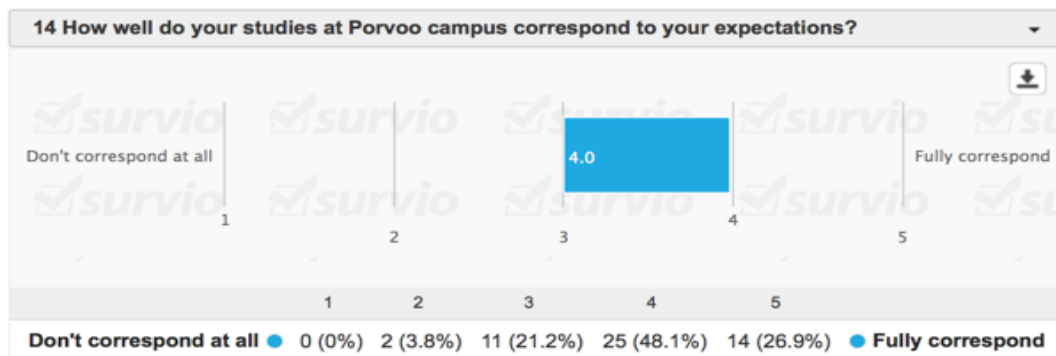


Figure 15. Expectations from studies at Porvoo campus

In order to propose some recommendation for commissioning university, the author needed to measure if the students were happy with universities' facilities and services offered to the students at campus. The results revealed that students are generally happy with the facilities at the campus (classrooms, computers, library). The improvements might be made in career and academic advising and campus activities as these categories received the low scores.

With tuition fees implementation starting from 2017, the natural question arose whether current students would have applied to the university if they had had to pay for it. The majority of the students, 63.5 % (33) answered they would not apply to HAAGA-HELIA if they had to pay tuition fees. Many students feel that there are other countries where the tuition fees and living expenses are cheaper. In addition, more renowned universities in UK and USA would be chosen in that case as they offer universities with higher ranking and recognition. All in all, it boils down to not being able to pay tuition fees as students generally chose Finland because they could afford it. With tuition fees coming up, not many can afford to pay them and cover the living cost and those who would, would choose another country.

Nevertheless, 36,5 % (19) of the respondents indicated that they would have paid tuition fees. The majority of those student 75 % (27) believe that the reasonable range of tuition fees they would be able to afford is between 1000-2000 Euros. Only 13, 9 % (5) of these respondents could afford to pay between 2001-4000 Euros. The ranges between 4001-6000 Euros and from 6001-8000 Euros are acceptable to 5,6 % (1) respectively. This results shows that current range of tuition fees set for the year 2017 (8500-9500 Euros) would not be in the range of affordability for the current students at all.

In order to make Porvoo campus more attractive for the students, students themselves are the best source of valuable input on this issue. Therefore, their views were gathered to understand how to improve Porvoo's campus image. The students' suggestions were grouped and all the responses can be viewed in Appendix 2 with number of students suggesting improvements put in breaks. The most common response among the respondents on the measures that could be taken to attract more international students outside of EU/EEU was to provide scholarship for students so that they would be able to pay for education. In addition, students proposed that the tuition fees to be paid in instalments so that to make it easier for the students to pay the fees. Beside that, many students feel that if HAAGA-HELIA will charge the fees, it should

guarantee employment after graduation or at least practical training. Career advising was also mentioned as student feel it should be improved.

When it comes to promotion, the respondents feel that HAAGA-HELIA lack visibility outside Europe so it should be promoted more as Finland's excellent education system is not known worldwide compared to education in UK or USA. The city of Porvoo can be better promoted as well emphasizing the benefits of living in Porvoo and the unique atmosphere of Porvoo campus. Social media as marketing platform was also mentioned as in important source of information to search about HAAGA-HELIA and the respondents feel it should be utilized much more.

The interviewees mentioned that the entrance exams may be held in future outside of Finland, that correlates to students' wish that there would be more opportunities to take entrance examinations outside Finland which is bound to increase number of applicants outside of EU/EEU countries.

Improvements on teaching methods was mentioned by several respondents. Some feel that unique very practical teaching methods should be emphasized in HAAGA-HELIA's promotion, while others believe that while practical teaching method is good, more theoretical approach should be implemented as well, as knowing fundamental of a subject is important before going to project works. However, all in all, when asked to identify on scale question (1-5) whether they would recommend HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo campus to their friends, the average rating 4.4 revealed that the majority of students would definitely recommend the university to their friends which indicate the overall satisfaction with the university (Figure 16).

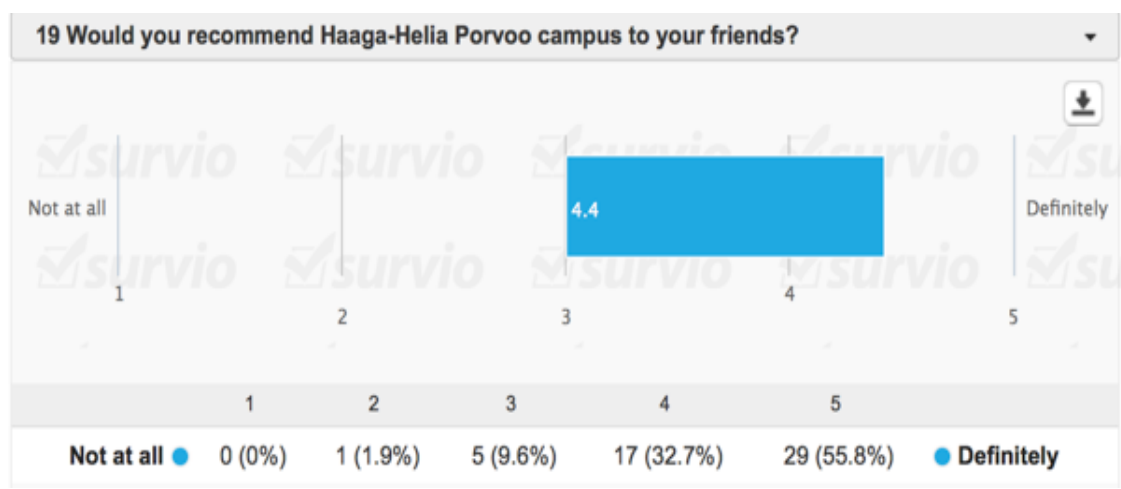


Figure16.Students recommendations concerning HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo campus

5.4 Marketing Mix

Marketing mix presents all the 7 P's of the programmes in HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo campus. In this section, the author will examine and make a conclusion of the current situation in the university. Due to the nature of this research work, some of the P's were more vital than others as the author's main emphasis is on promotion, product and process. Therefore, other P's are only attended succinctly.

Product

For HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo campus, it is evident that products are the programs or services offered in the university. They are intangible as students cannot touch or feel physically the programs, the education is intangible. In addition, education is heterogeneous as all the lectures are diverse, the style of teaching can differ among the professors, learning styles of students are also dissimilar and everyday study day generally can differ a lot depending on different circumstances. Education is also inseparable as lectures cannot be separated from students and other way around, both parties should be present for knowledge transfer to take place. In addition, education is perishable, unlike a product education cannot be stored or returned if not liked.

All international Bachelor's programs in HAAGA-HELIA's include besides academic lectures, real hands-on cases for companies where students can apply their academic knowledge to acquire practical experience which can help them in the future work life. Different kind of teaching modes and learning methods are used in the class, sometimes there is an exam at the end of the course, in other cases exams can be replaced by a final presentation with a written report. The content of the courses could not be directly affected by the students, however, students are encouraged to leave feedback after the completion of the courses. In addition, students have to do a practical training as part of their studies to get real job experience and taste of working life. Student exchange is also possible but not compulsory for international students.

Price

As it was mentioned earlier, price is a very important issue among students impacting their choice of the university. The fact that the student will have to pay for the education may deter many potential students from applying even though scholarship system is in place. Because education is intangible students cannot judge beforehand if it the price worth paying especially which is why they may allude to other things when comparing universities for e.g. ranking.

In HAAGA-HELIA price for international bachelor's programme is set to be between 8500-9500 euros per academic year for citizens outside of EU/EEU areas who do not possess a certain type of resident permit. In addition, a scholarship system is in place. Student meeting the requirement of 55 completed ECTS credits during two consecutive academic semesters will be offered a scholarship value of 20% of the tuition fee. (HAAGA-HELIA webpage.)

Any eligible Bachelor level student finishing the degree in 6 academic semesters or less will be offered a scholarship of 30% value of the tuition fee. Any eligible Master level student completing the degree in 2 academic semesters or less will be offered a scholarship of 30% value of the tuition fee. No scholarships available for the first year of study apart from a student graduating in two academic semesters or sooner. (HAAGA-HELIA webpage.)

Place

All teaching and study related activities related to service (education) are arranged in HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo campus. The classrooms are used for lectures. In addition to that, there are designated areas for students to book and work on their project assignments.

Promotion

HAAGA-HELIA has been promoting itself as whole without distinguishing between campuses.

The following methods are currently used in promotion:

- Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat
- Special educational sites in a target area (e.g. China)
- Offline marketing
- Educational fairs
- Agents (in India)
- Visits to schools (inside Finland)
- Word-of-mouth marketing (alumni, tutors)

Word-of-mouth marketing as was already mentioned above has been an important factor in students' choice of university as survey results showed that most of the students chose the university due to recommendations of friends or family. Thus word-of-mouth play an important part in attracting students to the program. Therefore, it is important to create good impressions among existing students so that they could spread good word-of-mouth about Porvoo's degree programs.

Social media presence:

HAAGA-HELIA has social media presence in Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat. In the future Vkontake is also considered for Russian target group.

HAAGA-HELIA's Porvoo campus has separate page in Facebook which has over 2000 likes and posts regularly. In addition, in spring 2016 Porvoo campus's students launched Ambassador Porvoo campus page on Facebook aiming at promoting Porvoo campus, connecting alumni to HAAGA-HELIA, and establishing connections with companies to bring projects for students. The page has only about 70 likes. Official HAAGA-HELIA's page is Facebook has over 11000 likes. Porvoo campus does not have separate page on Twitter, instead, if something happens in Porvoo, it is published there. HAAGA-HELIA's Twitter page has over 3000 followers.

In Instagram, HAAGA-HELIA's Porvoo campus has separate page with around 300 followers. Official HAAGA-HELIA's Instagram page has over 3000 followers. In other platforms, (LinkedIn, Snapchat) there is also no separate page for HAAGA-HELIA's Porvoo campus.

People

According to Yee, Yeung & Cheng (2008) employee (in this case customers) satisfaction is crucial to achieving quality and profitability in the service industry. Human are at the core of the university as they provide the services, lecturer and professors in university are responsible for students' satisfaction with the service (education) they provide. Good experience has to be sustained to ensure positive word-of-mouth marketing and collaboration with the students.

Many lecturers and professors in Porvoo campus have rich working experience and some have international background. They use multiple learning methods and very collaborative with students from different backgrounds. However, there is room for improvement, as interview results showed that some students, even though appreciated the practical learning methods practiced by professors, they also wanted that more academic, lecture type of sessions be organized more often to learn about the subject deeply before starting doing group works.

In addition, other personnel members (personnel in international office, library etc.) also have an influence on the service quality. So they quality of they service should be measure and improved as the author's research finding show that career consulting is lacking in the university.

Physical evidence

Physical evidence help students evaluate the quality of service provided. For HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo campus program that might include brochures offered to the prospective students during fairs. In addition, hands-out related to studies, the transcript of records and proof of learning documents can be considered as physical evidence. Even though there is a library in Porvoo campus, many studying and reading materials are provided in forms of hands-outs so students do not have to hassle with heavy books. Furthermore, Porvoo campus's facilities and classrooms can be considered as physical evidence. Physical evidence can become an ideal way for Porvoo campus to communicate its message and quality standards through marketing to the prospective students.

Process

The application process to Porvoo as to other UASes is done through studyinfo.fi. The portal is very convenient includes everything from the information of different degree programs, how to apply, to choosing different universities (up to 6) through joint application students can apply to, there is also separate application to UASes available. Some of the students complained that as entrance examination are often held in Finland only which made it difficult for them as travelling cost are not covered. Not having examination centres (satellites) outside Finland can be a major disadvantage and may deter prospective students from applying. Moreover, if some of the competitors have this option, HAAGA-HELIA generally can lose a lot of prospective students to competitors. One of the interviewees mentioned that satellites can be an option in the future, but it was not certain yet. HAAGA-HELIA should try to open new examination centres abroad, especially in target countries (e.g. Russia, Vietnam) so that larger amount of students could apply.

6 Recommendations

In this chapter the author presents some recommendations and suggestions for HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo campus to implement in order to attract students coming from non-EU/EEU countries.

6.1 Content Marketing plan creation

Inbound (content) marketing is achieved through web pages, social media, value-added content and it is believed to be beneficial for attaining brand awareness and marketing. Content marketing should be aimed instead of “selling” to “helping”, which will demand various marketing objectives, tactics, metrics and skills as opposed to those correlated with more conventional marketing techniques (Rowley & Holliman, 2014.) At the moment there is no definite marketing plan for degree programmes in HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo campus which is why it is important to create one before marketing strategy could be put in place. The author believes it would be beneficial to start with content marketing plan as education provided at the university represent a service rather than a product, so it lacks tangible elements makes the service more difficult to market as compared to tangible products. HAAGA-HELIA’s message concerning Porvoo campus should be consistent throughout all the marketing elements and channels.

To attract prospective students to the program, good positioning should be implemented with clear value proposition. It is integral to offer students what they desire. This why all materials, webpages and social media accounts should illustrate HAAGA-HELIA as desirable as possible, if the selected education appeals to them that will incite them to look more. HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo’s page can design its own promotional slogan to attract students for e.g.: “Small campus, limitless possibilities”. Subsequently how that possibilities could be achieved could be interactively emphasised. For instance, percentage of student that followed successful career paths in different countries after graduation, alumni’s testimonials and their positive study experience should be easily accessible for prospective students to see. Posting right content in right channels could be an effective way for the university to spread their message and attract more students to choose Porvoo campus. Engaging with prospective student through the inspiring content can be far more effective than just through simply ads. The university should emphasize how studying experience could bring not only professional but emotional fulfilment to student’s lives, as survey results showed that the students choose education abroad also because they are bored back home. Publishing this kind of content can incite shares and likes in different social

media platforms, in other words, word-of-mouth marketing (electronic version of word-of-mouth).

From the survey results, several target group has been established, so content marketing plan can be a perfect tool for attracting the right students to the program.

Content plan should include the following steps:

1. Objectives
2. Target group (audiences)
3. Content plan (what to publish)
4. Promotion (where to publish)
5. Engagement (co-creation of value)
6. Control (measurements)

SMART objectives should be defined for marketing plan. SMART objective means that the objectives are concrete, attainable, realistic and easily measurable (Williams, 2012). From the research, the author discovered several target groups (audience), so when considering promotion stage (where to publish) individual countries preferences should be taken into consideration, as it is known that in Russia people prefer Vkontakte to Facebook and in China they do not use Facebook at all, WeChat is used instead where companies are also present and market their services there.

It is very integral for Porvoo campus to establish what kind of content and information to publish on their different platforms. Their message and value proposition should be consistent throughout different platforms so that student can have a consistent image what program in Porvoo campus has to offer. During the research, student answered that they would like to see more information about:

- Porvoo as a city (how to travel there, what to do there)
- More information about Porvoo campus
- Career possibilities after graduation

Promotion of Porvoo campus is important as not many students know about it, some of the respondents answered that they knew absolutely nothing beforehand. Due to the fact that Porvoo campus is not promoted separately but rather as a part of HAAGA-HELIA, it is important to start promoting Porvoo campus more intensively separately so people would know


that even though the location is not central, the program and teaching there is as good as in the main campus and the student life is as vibrant there. Due to limited marketing budget HAAGA-HELIA has and no separate budget for Porvoo's campus, existing students can be utilized to co-create value like Porvoo campus already done with Porvoo's ambassador Facebook page. The students' engagement in content creating and marketing plan for Porvoo campus could be further stimulated through course assignments in the marketing courses, so students could come up with the right content to be shared through different platforms. The university can even create video competition where student shortly in two minutes describe their studies in Porvoo campus. The best video can be used in Porvoo's promotional activities and all participating students can get a prize (e.g. university's hoodie) and the winner can get a special prize like a gift card. Therefore, by engaging students more actively in content creation, Porvoo campus can really benefit as student themselves are the target groups and they know better than anyone else what kind of content they would like to see. However, in the end, the university should be in charge what kind of content get published so that in will not go against the university's quality standard and message.

6.2 Brochure for Porvoo campus

At the moment, HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo campus does not have separate brochure which is a disadvantage as the brochure can be a good addition to content marketing strategy. In the brochure, similar content as in official HAAGA-HELIA's brochure can be posted. The statistics about students' employment after graduation, their testimonials, description of degree programs and advantageous of studying and living in Porvoo, and in Finland in general could be highlighted. The brochure should be very informative, with a lot of numerical infographics to catch prospective students' attention, and not long text as students might not want to read long texts. Bullet points, photos and tables could also be added between text to make it easier for the reader to follow.

The single brochure can have information about different degree programmes in Porvoo campus, scholarship system, student life in Porvoo campus, career progressions in each degree programme (first job, in 5-10 years, 15-20 years), so that a prospective student could have an idea of how his/hers career future could look like. Moreover, many respondents stated they felt that information about career possibilities were lacking when they applied so that information would be beneficial to include in the brochure. Furthermore, information about employment possibil-

ities during studies (part-time job) and after graduation for foreign students should also be included as many students are interested in working in Finland during the studies and after graduation. Par-time job is especially important issue because with tuition fees implemented student want to know how they could support themselves to ease the financial burden. Figure 17 shows an example of what brochure can include.



CONTENTS	
DP in Aviation Business	3
DP in International Sales and Marketing	4
DP in Tourism	6
Our alumni	7
Your outstanding career	8
Student life in Porvoo	15
Survival guide in Finland	16
Check list before arrival	17
Scholarships	18
International mobility	20
Graduate degrees	21
Admissions	22
Entry requirements	23
Contact us	Back cover

Figure 17. Example of brochure's content

General information about how to survive in Finland could also be beneficial as it could be hard for students to adjust in the beginning of their studies. Information about possible student mobility (exchanges) could also be presented in interactive way through infographics and photos for example, so that the students will know about the exciting exchange possibilities the degree programme offers.

Some of the respondents stated that the selection of elective courses offered in English was scare in comparison to the ones offered in Finnish. As a solution to this problem, one of the interviewees mentioned the cooperation between HAAGA-HELIA and Metropolia UAS will be made so that students from both universities could attend courses in both universities. This solution could be highlighted in promotional activities in different social media platforms and in brochure as well so that prospective student will know that they could take interesting courses offered in other university.

Good scholarship scheme is one of the things respondents claimed could be a way to attract

paying international students to Porvoo campus. Information about scholarship can be presented in a clearer way, in a table for example so the prospective students will not get confused as at the moment the information is presented in somewhat unclear way. For example, Oulu University of Applied Sciences presented its scholarship system in clearer and very visual way (Figure 18). In addition, Oulu UAS creates the sense of urgency to accept study place within first seven days in order for students to receive better scholarship.

Study year	Tuition fee	Scholarship	Requirements	Final scholarship
1st	8 000 €	4 000 € (50 % of the tuition fee)	Application	4 000 €
		+ 1 000 € Early Bird	Confirming the study place within 7 days from the publication of results	3 000 €
2nd	8 000 €	4 000 € (50 % of the tuition fee)	Application, 55 credits done in the previous academic year	4 000 €
3rd	8 000 €	4 000 € (50 % of the tuition fee)	Application, 55 credits done in the previous academic year	4 000 €
4th	4 000 €	2 000 € (25 % of the tuition fee*)	Application, 55 credits done in the previous academic year	2 000 €
	8 000 €	4 000 € (50 % of the tuition fee*)		4 000 €
Next study years		—	—	8 000 €

Figure 18. Examples of scholarship scheme in Oulu UAS

Therefore, scholarships system could be improved because other UASes, for example Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences (JAMK) offers scholarship that cover 50% of tuition fees upon completion of 55 credits which is more attractive option for prospective students than HAAGA-HELIA's 20 % coverage of the tuition fees. In addition, many UASes offers scholarship directly starting from first year of studies with scholarship coverage of 80% (Oulu UAS) and even up to 100% of tuition fees (e.g. Saimaa UAS).

All in all, the brochure can be a good addition to promotional material as it will make it much easier for the student to have information in one place rather than have to look for it in different places. In addition, it is easy to share it in different media and to hand out during educational fairs as well. To target Russian audience, the brochure can be translated (at least partly) in Russian and handed out to parents of prospective Russian students during educational fairs as parents are the ones who is paying for education and Russian students represent such an important demographic group.

7 Conclusion

With tuition fees being introduced, it is important for HAAGA-HELIA in general and for its Porvoo campus in particular to stand out from the competition in order to attract international students to the campus. Incoming international students outside of EU/EEU areas represent a big demographic group in the international degree programmes and in order for Porvoo campus to remain internationally diverse, the number of the incoming students should stay high to ensure international learning environment in the campus. The international degree programmes are specifically design to attract international students and with tuition fees introduced that can prove to be challenging as a lot of current international students studying in Porvoo campus came from areas outside of EU/EEU. This is why it is integral to maintain their high numbers so that international degree programmes in Porvoo campus could truly remain international.

From the survey, the author gathered 52 responses from current students coming from outside of EU/EEU areas. The results showed that most of the students come from Russia and Vietnam which makes it evident that those two groups should be targeted more actively in order to attract them to the university in future. Content marketing could be a viable option to reach that goal as through putting the right content in right channels, the university can reach their target groups. Creating interesting content and publishing it in different marketing channels will help pull prospective student to Porvoo campus.

Developing content in collaboration with existing students is cheap and efficient way to truly understand what kind of content appeals to students. This content co-creation with students can help Porvoo campus to develop competitive advantage and attract more international students to the campus. In addition, from the survey results, it became clear that career advising and possibilities of future employment are very important for the students, which is why that information should be explicitly included in promotional materials. As prospective students have a lot of universities to choose from, clear value proposition and positioning should be created so that Porvoo campus can really stand out on its own and become attractive for the prospective students. Brochure can be one way to communicate the message easily and informatively with the right content in one place for the prospective student to see. By having the right content in one brochure, with the interactive description of degree programs and infographics, the university can persuade the prospective students that Porvoo campus has a lot to offer for a successful career.

At the moment, HAAGA-HELIA's Porvoo campus does not lack in the number of applicants.

However, soon the situation may be changing as Porvoo campus is facing problems how to communicate its values and marketing message to the prospective students so that it would be appealing to their needs and values. Through careful marketing planning, choosing right marketing channels and implementing content marketing strategies the university could position Porvoo campus attractively and improve its visibility.

In the end, as a last recommendation for HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo campus the author suggests that after the first year with tuition fees being introduced, if the university will not have desirable number of international students outside of EU/EEU, the university should conduct benchmarking of other Finnish UASes in order to see how other UASes performed. After assessing good practices of other UASes, HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo campus could create and implement corrective actions in order to match the attractiveness of its campus.

7.1 Suggestions for future research

First of all, future research could be replicated in other small campuses of HAAGA-HELIA or even in all the campuses to get a comprehensive picture by conducting a broader research. Thus validity and reliability of the research data could be improved and generalization could be made. However, due to the larger scope of the research encompassing all the campuses, the research would be more suitable for Master's thesis.

In the process of the research, two main target groups emerged, Russians and Vietnamese students in Porvoo campus. In order to find deeper understanding of what this target groups use when searching for information (channels) and their preferences overall concerning university's chose, these groups could be targeted and interviewed separately to perfect marketing and get deeper insights about their consumer behaviour. That could be done in all HAAGA-HELIA's campuses that way the sample will be big enough.

In addition, future research could target potential non-EU/EEU students who have not yet decided on the university but wish to study in Finland or abroad to ask about their attitudes and expectations from a university. This could be done during educational fairs which potential students and their parents are visiting. To collect their views and opinions, a form can be created for potential students (and their parents) which they can fill in. Conversely, that can also be done in oral form unobtrusively as not many people would like to spend their time on filling in a form during education fairs.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview questions

1. What is HAAGA-HELIA's primary market?
2. What kind of market tools are used by the university? (advertising, programs offered, price, people, location). Which of them in your opinion, have worked better?
3. What kind of marketing channels are used to promote HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo campus at the moment?
4. Do you know how your institution rates among its competition in factors that influence student's decision?
5. How do you attempt to position yourself advantageously within the student market place with introduction of tuition fees?
6. Do you periodically seek the opinion of your own students and alumni in order to determine how fully their original expectation have been met, how valuable the overall education have proven to be, how ell specific degree programs served them?
7. Is your university preparing a contingency plan for possible enrolments decline?
8. How do you market HAAGA-HELIA's Porvoo campus to high-school (if you market it)?
9. Do you have a comprehensive financial aid policy for student coming for outside EU/EEU?
10. How active are you marketing activities in social media?
11. What would be you actions if you will experience enrolment decline?
12. What do you think differentiates degree programmes in HAAGA-HELIA Porvvo campus from other universities?
13. Do you use a strategic marketing plan?

Appendix 2. Students suggestion on improving Porvoo campus's image

- Grants or scholarship or even free for best students (10)
- More promotions (especially outside Europe, Finland provides good quality education, not many know about it), international branding (HAAGA-HELIA and Porvoo lacks recognition). Benefits of living at Porvoo and Finland must be emphasised, more information about benefits studying in HAAGA-HELIA (9)
- International diversity
- No changes, no definite answer (5)
- Career advising should be improved (future work opportunities better explained) (6)
- Security to employment (8) or job placement (8)
- Close tights with companies (2)
- More info shared and promoted on teaching methods and real case work (3)
- Teaching methods should be improved (4): inquiry learning is good, but ordinary lectures with explaining the subject should be also held, so real project must be combined with lectures. In addition, some of the teacher don't have in-depth knowledge about the subject they teach. Online communication between teacher and students. Improvement for orientation programme. Better training for tutors (they were not able to answer questions) or take more international students for tutoring.
- Entrance examination held in other countries beside Finland (or assisting students with visa process) (2)
- Tuition fees should be cancelled (2)
- More opportunities
- More part-time job opportunities
- Housing conditions should be improved
- More activities across different campuses, trips, sport activities (2), culture theme events
- Social media should be more informative, and campus more promoted there (4), no info there about the school
- Nothing can be done as people will choose another English speaking countries where unlike Finland, there is language barriers and they can work (2)
- More programmes in English
- Monthly allowances for students outside EU, possible loans (2)
- Easier transportation to Helsinki (2)
- To lower tuition fees to make them payable (3)
- Charge fees after 1st year (not straight away)
- More courses in English (like Finnish students have), also more flexible course schedule
- Collecting feedback
- Agents for marketing abroad