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PERUVIAN CONSUMER RESEARCH ABOUT DECISION-  
MAKING AND EVALUATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
ALTERNATIVES ABROAD

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This study is placed in the context of the buying process because Peruvian students experience a buying situation, or a process of educational services consumption before deciding to which university abroad they will go to study. Consequently, the purpose of this thesis was to study and develop a better understanding of how Peruvian students make decisions when choosing universities abroad since such knowledge is crucial to formulate marketing objectives and strategies in order to market international higher education in Peru.

Basically, four objectives are developed to undertake this study. First, finding the reasons by which Peruvians students go to study abroad. Second, finding the sources they use to search information and learn about universities abroad. Third, finding the set of factors, benefits and perceived risks that might influence the choice of their university. Fourth, determining how the consumer decision-making process contributes to the development of marketing objectives. The objectives lead to cite theoretically the three-stages service consumption model, the stages of consumer decision-making process and the customer-driven service marketing strategy.

Once the objectives were established, the most practical and flexible qualitative method to compile recent and in-depth information was conducting interviews. Before interviewing officially 8 Peruvians, a pre-test was conducted. The interviews were carried out face-to-face and online. Similarly, data were compiled from online sources, in form of testimonials and experiences of Peruvian students abroad. Both primary and secondary data were analyzed, codified and categorized in order to find patterns or trends as described in the results displayed.

Conclusions indicate that the most ranked motivational factors to study abroad are grants and expenses, and experiences. Word-of-mouth impact their decisions; student fairs work as distribution channels for international higher education and personal contact with prospect students. The most ranked attributes are specific programs and degree courses, opportunities for employment, expenditure; nonetheless, the cultural factor, financial, skills and lack of information about opportunities abroad may minimize the access for higher education abroad. There may be preferences for English-speaking countries universities; however, other international universities have huge potential as their methodology and culture are highly valued and often are referred to as quality models. Finally, having analyzed the outcome, in terms of marketing strategy, it is advisable to consider the channels described in order to build awareness and encourage prospects to purchase educational services.

## CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION .....	5
2	PROBLEM SETTING AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK .....	6
2.1	Research problem.....	6
2.2	Research objectives.....	6
2.3	Conceptual framework.....	7
3	LITERATURE REVIEW .....	7
3.1	The three-stage model of service consumption .....	8
3.1.1	Pre-purchase stage or stages of consumer decision-making .....	8
3.1.2	Service encounter stage and post-purchase stage.....	9
3.2	Stages of consumer decision-making and evaluation of alternatives .....	10
3.2.1	Need awareness .....	11
3.2.2	Information search.....	12
3.2.3	Evaluation of alternatives .....	12
3.3	Factors influencing the choice of HEIs abroad.....	13
4	CUSTOMER-DRIVEN SERVICES MARKETING STRATEGY .....	15
4.1	Marketing audit.....	16
4.2	Segmentation, targeting and positioning.....	16
4.3	SWOT analysis .....	17
5	METHODOLOGY .....	17
5.1	Exploratory and qualitative.....	18
5.2	Data collection .....	18
5.2.1	Primary data.....	19
5.2.2	Secondary data.....	20
5.3	Reliability and Validity.....	20
5.4	Limitations .....	21
5.5	Ethical issues.....	22
6	INTERVIEWS AND TESTIMONIALS ANALYSIS .....	22
6.1	Analyzing the testimonials.....	22
6.2	Analyzing the interviews .....	23
6.2.1	Need awareness .....	24
6.2.2	Information search.....	25
6.2.3	Evaluation of alternatives .....	26
7	CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING RESULTS .....	30
7.1	Needs and motivations .....	31
7.2	Sources of information.....	32

7.3	Choice criteria and factors .....	32
8	MARKETING STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT.....	34
8.1	Customer-driven marketing audit .....	34
8.1.1	Customer.....	34
8.1.2	Market trends.....	35
8.1.3	Competition .....	35
8.1.4	Company.....	36
8.2	Developing positioning strategy .....	37
8.2.1	Strengths and weaknesses.....	37
8.2.2	Opportunities .....	37
8.2.3	Threats .....	39
8.3	Key assumptions .....	39
9	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	41
	REFERENCES.....	44
	APPENDICES	

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The topic of my thesis is Peruvian consumer research about decision-making and evaluation of higher education alternatives abroad. I chose to research about the topic because of two reasons. First, one of the biggest purchases I have made is my education. During my experience and learning International Business at Satakunta University of Applied Sciences, I have found differences between higher education services in Finland and Peru. Indeed, when Peruvians want to study abroad, they experience a buying situation and follow a buying decision process to select the university in which they decide to study. Hence, my motivation in exploring Peruvian consumers' behavior towards higher education leads me to positioning education in the context of buying process or service consumption. Second, it is the consumer who makes the final decision, therefore uncovering the reasons and factors that impact his or her purchase decisions is important to gain valuable insights on how Peruvians choose a university abroad in order to assess the suitability of international higher education services for the Peruvian market.

Having explained the reasons above, my thesis is important because it demonstrates that consumer-driven study is essential to service marketing; moreover, it provides insights into the buying process and critical factors involved in purchase decisions. Therefore, the thesis outcome is useful for developing concrete marketing strategies by understanding key aspects of customers' buying process in an unknown market. Furthermore, the thesis can be used as reference to conduct further studies towards other international markets by organizations, service marketers, students, and myself. The aim of the thesis is to develop a better understanding of how Peruvians make decisions when choosing universities abroad. Thus, the thesis is structured in ten chapters to provide knowledge of how the study is addressed. The study begins by introducing the research problem and the objectives framed in the field of research in which the thesis is positioned. Subsequently, two chapters including the literature review are introduced to describe the theoretical basis of the study. The methodology and data collection tools used explain how the study is conducted and how the primary results are achieved. Finally, the outcome is reported and goes through examination to develop a positioning strategy based on the key assumptions. The study ends by drawing conclusions and giving recommendations to promote the client SAMK in Peru.

## 2 PROBLEM SETTING AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Research problem

The research problem is basically to know how Peruvian students make decisions about choosing higher education abroad. This clear expression addresses the research problem and forms the basis for the research. At the same time, the research problem statement leads to formulate clear objectives and appropriate questions to improve the existing knowledge about the Peruvian market in terms of higher education abroad.

### 2.2 Research objectives

The specific objectives identified not only answer the research problem, but also determine what the research process seeks to accomplish. The research objectives are:

1. To find out the reasons why Peruvian students go abroad to study.
2. To find out the sources of information that Peruvian students use.
3. To find out the choice criteria formed by factors that Peruvian students weight up to go abroad to study.
4. To determine the reasons and the importance of the relationship between the study of consumer decision-making and marketing.

Based on the objectives determined, appropriate research questions have been developed to examine the research problem in order to figure out the problem statement in the best possible way. The research questions developed are the following:

1. What triggers Peruvian students to study abroad?
2. Where Peruvian students look for information about higher education alternatives abroad?
3. What do Peruvian students look for when choosing higher education alternatives abroad?
4. How does the study of customer decision-making contribute to the development of marketing objectives and strategies?

### 2.3 Conceptual framework

The following conceptual framework depicts the relationship between the concepts used in the research. At the same time, it outlines what is going to be done.

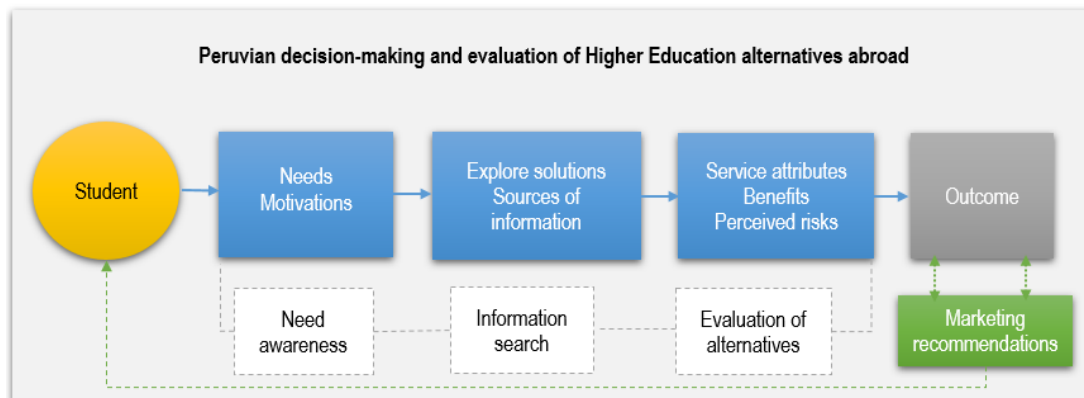


Figure1. Conceptual framework of the study

## 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

As Peruvians consume higher education abroad; that is, they make decisions about choosing higher education institutions abroad (HEIs) in which they decide to study. Both the research problem and the objectives of the study are framed in the theoretical context of service consumption, consumer decision-making process and customer-driven services marketing strategy. Therefore, the theoretical overview justifies the research questions developed to answer the research problem and provides guidelines to deduce what is necessary to analyze in the buying process of education abroad.

The theoretical context leads to introducing the three-stage model of service consumption to discuss the origin of the research topic and the importance of approaching it in the framework of buying situation. Moreover, the stages of consumer decision-making discuss the key factors that influence the choice of HEIs abroad, identified also among Peruvians and from international perspective. Consequently, linked service marketing theories and concepts are used to explore and profound the research problem to develop objectives towards the Peruvian market from the customer-driven perspective.

### 3.1 The three-stage model of service consumption

The three-stage model of service consumption is a sequence of three main stages: the pre-purchase stage, service encounter, and post-encounter stage. The model is aimed at achieving special understanding of consumer behavior in different buying situations such as initial purchase or repeat purchase because in marketing, firms need this understanding to create and deliver services that will satisfy customers.

The three-stage model of service consumption is also referred as the model of decision-making behavior that is useful to understand the influences and the buying decision process, by which Peruvian consumers go through when making a purchase decision in services consumption or buying situations. The buying situations are different since consumers may have knowledge about the services, the intangible characteristics, or experience in the delivery process that influence (Kasper, Van Helsdingen & De Vries 1999, 164). The service process and the service outcome generate consequences, determined by the delivery process and the service attributes that are intended for meeting the needs of the consumer (Kasper, Van Helsdingen & De Vries 1999, 164). Hence, the interaction between a decision maker and factors in the buying process stages make purchase decisions happen.

#### 3.1.1 Pre-purchase stage or stages of consumer decision-making

The pre-purchase stage is the broad stage in which consumers make purchase decisions. From a customer focus, the broad stage is also referred to as the stages in consumer decision-making, consisting of three steps or stages known as need awareness, information search, evaluation of alternatives, which are discussed in detail in section 3.2. stages of consumer decision-making and evaluation of alternatives.

In regard to the three steps, the importance of gaining insights into them is worth to be discussed promptly since such knowledge has implications for developing marketing strategies. Starting out by needs, learning consumers' needs is important not only because these influence the set of alternatives they take into account (Lovelock 2001, 124), but also because firms can use learned insights to develop marketing strategies that build awareness, provoke interest and drive to the consecutive stages in the buying process (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 199), and to spot new trends (Fahy & Jobber 2015,



65). Regarding information search, firms need insights into the information sources used, and promotional sources that allow the exposure to advertising since promotional messages and distribution provide basic information available in the market (Hawkins, Best & Coney 1998, 528- 530). Sources of information are used also to reduce perceived risks, which in turns, increase confidence about a choice. Thus, customers trust on personal sources for complex and higher perceived risks services (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 126), and consumers seek information from trusted personal sources since these provide information about experience qualities (Wilson, Zeithmal, Bitner, Grewler 2008, 33).

Having identified potential suppliers, in evaluation, consumers evaluate suppliers by weighing benefits and risks of each option before deciding. Customers can use other strategies to reduce perceived risks such as relying on good reputation; visiting services facilities to examine tangible cues, i.e. service setting, awards won (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 44), and look for direct consultation or transactions (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 126). By gaining insights into the attributes and benefits used to evaluate, firms can encourage prospective customers to buy by communicating messages that emphasizes attributes by which a firm stands out (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 41).

### 3.1.2 Service encounter stage and post-purchase stage

The service encounter stage is that stage where customers keep going to the core of the service experience, and the interaction between customers and the firm occurs. The service encounters are referred to as “moments of truth” in which customers perceive the quality of service delivered by the representative of a firm (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 48). The post-purchase stage is the last stage in which customers’ attitudinal and behavioral responses to the service experience occur. These responses regarding the service are satisfaction, quality perceptions, repeat purchase, and loyalty (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 53).

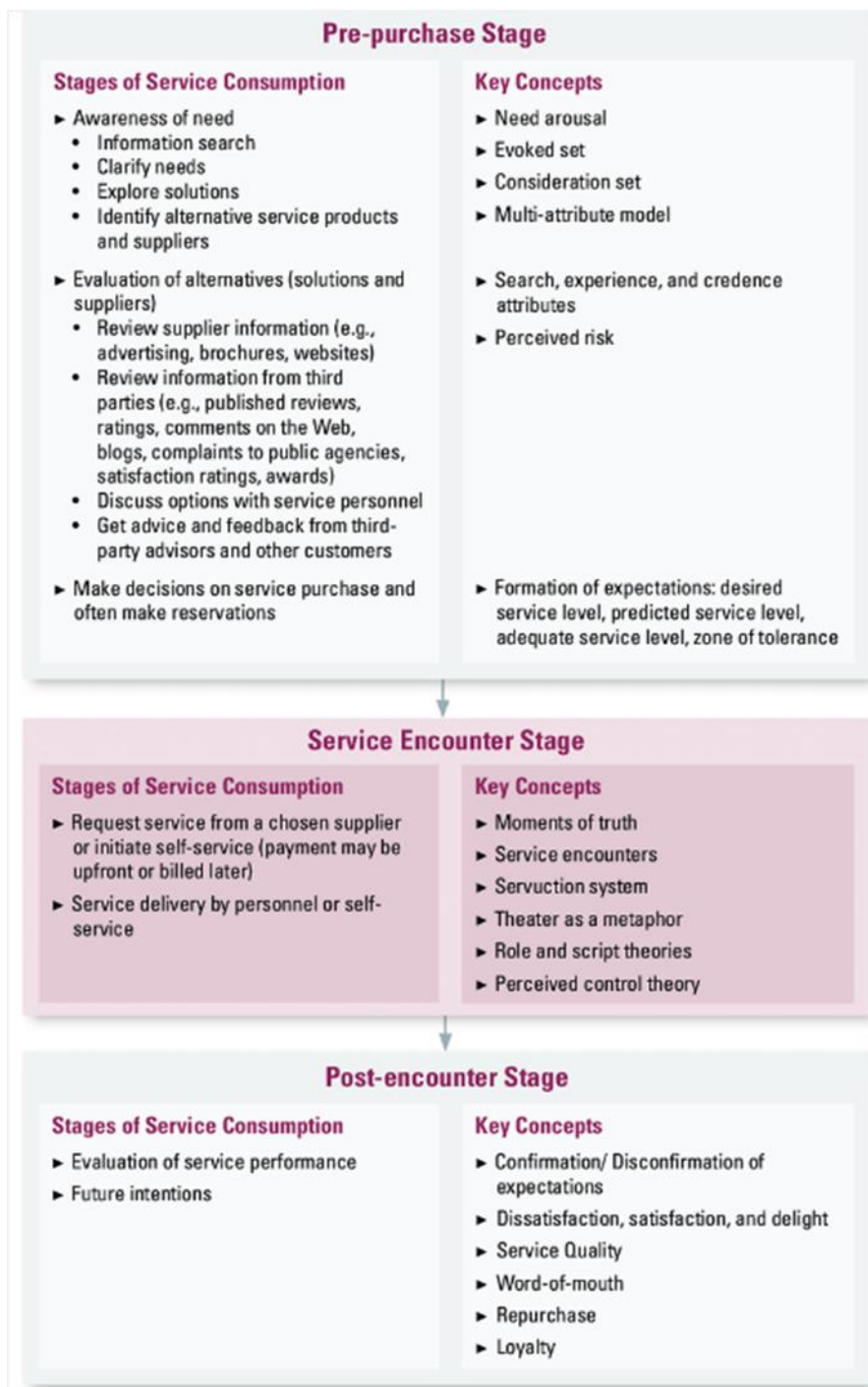


Figure 2. The three-stage model of service consumption (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 38)

### 3.2 Stages of consumer decision-making and evaluation of alternatives

The consumer decision-making and evaluation of alternatives is a sequence of stages within the pre-purchase stage or the consumer decision-making process for services consumption. For this study towards the Peruvian consumers, the sequence is used to analyze the buying process of higher education abroad; therefore it serves as

framework of reference to gain insights into the buying process, and into important factors involved in purchase decisions, through the analysis of Peruvians' consumption experiences. The sequence includes the following stages: need recognition; information search; evaluation of alternatives, in which the consumer choice is linked into them, and the purchase decision occurs.

### 3.2.1 Need awareness

Need awareness refers to problem or need recognition which derives from underlying needs, i.e. personal identity and aspirations; physical conditions or the stimulation of a need from other external sources, i.e. firms' marketing activities, advertising, word-of-mouth, online media and social network (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 39-40). Therefore, the buying process is triggered by needs since the recognition motivates people to seek for solutions before making a purchase decision. As stated, uncovering the reasons that trigger needs is important to spark customers interest towards a firm. Such reasons include people's needs and motivations.

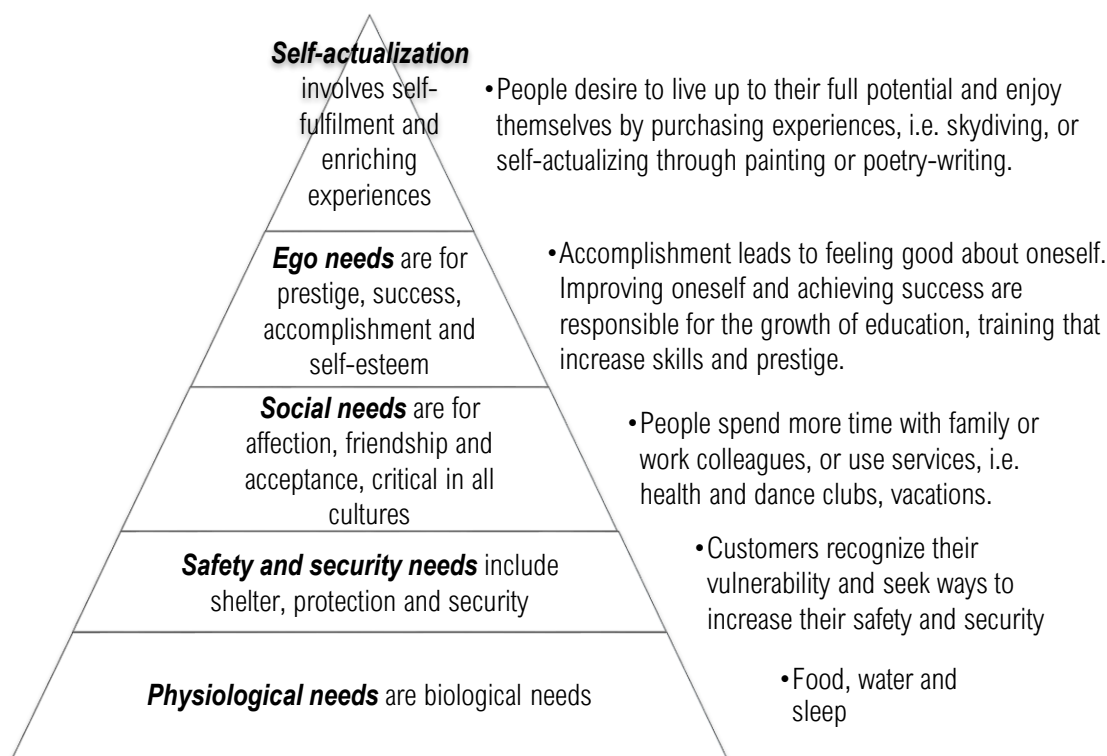


Figure 3. Types of needs (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler 2008, 32)

### 3.2.2 Information search

Having recognized a need, customers conduct information search activities to find solutions to satisfy such need. Information search activities involve thinking through the situation, recalling experiences, searching information from different sources (Hollensen 2003, 119), and evoking suppliers or solutions derived from experiences or external sources (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 40.) In other words, consumers learn throughout the information search not only about service suppliers or competing alternatives, but also about a bundle of service attributes and benefits, which in turn, form choice criteria (Fahy & Jobber 2015, 69.) desired to use. Such competing alternatives form the evoked set that will be reduced to a smaller consideration set of alternatives (Wirtz, Chew & Lovelock 2013, 38).

The different sources by which consumers search information or learn about solutions or alternatives are as follows: personal sources are family, friends, experts about services, reference groups. Non-personal sources are mass media, advertising, websites (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler 2008, 33.) Commercial sources are information disseminated by service providers and have an informing function for consumers. These are media advertising, promotional brochures, salespersons. Public sources are non-commercial, professional organizations, or individuals who provides advice, i.e. government agencies, travel agencies (Hollensen 2003, 119.) Nowadays, the Internet has become a key source of information because the convenience, depth, and variety of information available on social networks in which customers share and update online WOM or word-of-mouth (Wirtz, Chew & Lovelock 2013, 207.)

### 3.2.3 Evaluation of alternatives

Basically, evaluation of alternatives refers to the stage in which consumers evaluate and compare the set of competing alternatives or service suppliers identified or learned. In theory, the evaluation leads consumers to performing different activities. Such activities are weighing up a bundle of service attributes and benefits, perceived risks; using sources of information to review information about the competing alternatives or evaluate others' experiences with the competing suppliers before choosing. The performance of such activities may depend not only on the buying situation that

consumers experience but also on risks associated to the offering, lacking information about the competing suppliers, or if the alternatives in the consideration set will meet the desired choice criteria (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 40). The choice criteria are attributes and benefits also referred to as factors learned in the information search, desired and weighed up by consumers. On the other hand, perceived risks are factors that influence decisions negatively. Such risks are as follows: financial, psychological, physical, social. Attributes or characteristics incorporate three types: search attributes or tangible features that allow customers to evaluate a service before purchasing it; experience attributes, i.e. reliability, ease of use, customer support; credence attributes are impossible to evaluate; therefore, customers are forced to trust that certain benefits are delivered at the promised level of quality (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 41-42.)

Consumers tend to evaluate experiences because of the perceived risk in a service that has not been experienced or a service is difficult to evaluate since it is higher in experience and credence attributes or lacking knowledge about the service (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 43). Experiences are often available through websites and experiences of family members and friends (Wirtz, Chew & Lovelock 2013, 40). Finally, customers tend to rely on word-of-mouth (WOM), or their purchase decisions may be influenced by factors such as WOM that stands for recommendations and comments from customers, service providers, family, friends, reference groups. WOM is seen as more credible and powerful to influence buyers' choice. The Internet widens the impact on customers' decisions by speeding up WOM virally on websites, blogs, forums and social networks (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 216).

### 3.3 Factors influencing the choice of HEIs abroad

Studying abroad is an attractive possibility among Peruvians because they associate it with the professional success, better opportunities and the recognition. Likewise, young people make decisions to study abroad based on these reasons: better education quality, professional improvement, opportunity to live abroad (Gestion 2019). The factors that reduce applicants' access to studies abroad are language skills that is determinant factor; cultural that ends up influencing, the parents are afraid of their children's departure abroad; financial; the lack of knowledge about opportunities for

studying abroad; and studying abroad is perceived as excessively expensive but future rewards are not considered (Correo 2019).

Speaking internationally, following are the motives to study abroad: quality of education; possibility to study in English; tuition free education; chance to improve employability; chance to explore a foreign country; family recommendations; reputation of Finnish education industry, institution image (Vierimaa 2013, 34). The Internet is used as key source of information when searching about country of origin information, study programs, costs of living and finance, education and immigration laws (Vierimaa 2013, 45). Following are other factors that influence students' choices when selecting higher education institutions abroad (HEIs): sources of information used, reference groups and pull motivational factors. The most used sources of information include university's website; educational recruitments agencies; friends and acquaintances; school counsellor or teacher in my country; someone from the university. The least used are direct communication (e-mail, letter, fax) from the institution; institutional recruiter; advertising or stories in magazines, newspapers or on TV or radio shows (James-MacEachern & Yun 2017, 350). Following are the reference groups: people (teachers' opinion, recommendation from my teachers in my home country, recommendation from my professors/teachers, someone who has studied or is studying at the university). The institution (positive interaction with university personnel, information supplied by the university, previous correspondence or contact with the faculty). Family and recruitment include opinion or recommendation from my parents or from other family, a recruiting agent recommended this institution (James- MacEachern & Yun 2017, 355-356). The pull motivational factors are labelled in seven dimensions, each dimension consist of one list of items as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1. Pull motivational factors and items (James-MacEachern & Yun 2017, 354)

Motivational factors	
Reputation and academic programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university's reputation</li> <li>The prestige of a degree/diploma from this institution</li> <li>The university ranking</li> <li>Teaching reputation of this institution</li> <li>High academic standards of this institution</li> <li>Special/specific programs I was looking for</li> <li>Specialized degree that would aid in employment opportunities</li> </ul>

Expenses and grants	Reasonable accommodation costs Reasonable overall living costs Affordable tuition fees/cost of the study Opportunities for scholarships after the study
Opportunities after the study	Opportunity to stay after the completion of study Opportunities for permanent residence Potential employment in a foreign country Employment opportunities after completion of study
Ease of process	Ease of visa process Easy process to apply Admission requirements Ease of transferring credits
Environmental cues and educational facilities	English-speaking environment Clean and safe environment The educational facilities
Values in home country	Potential employment in my home country Degree valued in my home country
Physical environment and recreational facilities	Location of the university The size of the university The recreational facilities

#### 4 CUSTOMER-DRIVEN SERVICES MARKETING STRATEGY

The customer-driven strategy is the framework intended for understanding not only the customer but also the competitor and the company in order that companies find a niche position, to identify aspects that firms can use to articulate their desired position, emphasize their competitive advantage or differentiate themselves from others in a particular market where lots of competition exists. Therefore, the identification of key aspects and trends is only achieved by using the customer-driven strategy as framework to analyze the categories customer, competitor and company.

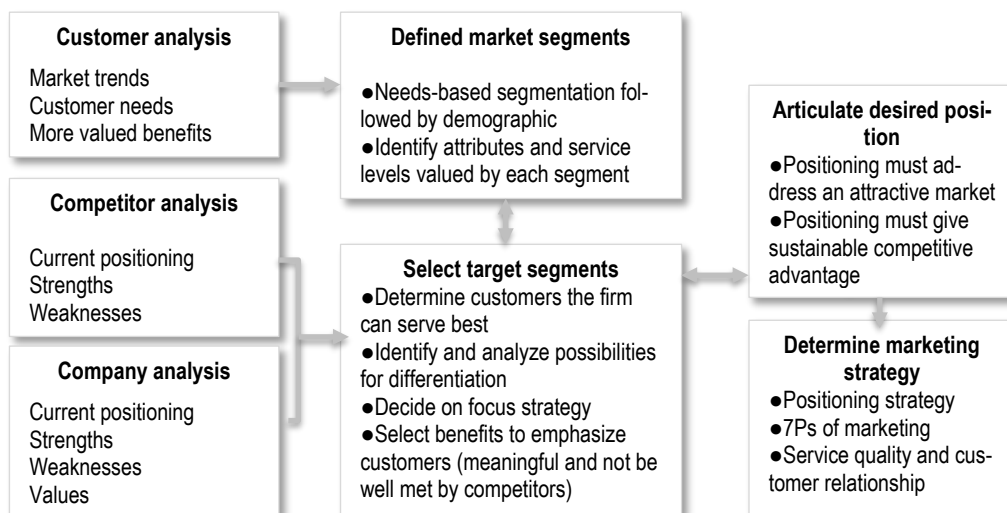


Figure 4. Customer-driven services marketing strategy (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 66)

#### 4.1 Marketing audit

The marketing audit consists of carrying out a review or audit of the current market situation by collecting primary or secondary data to gain useful insights into three categories: customer, competitor and company in order to determine how an organization can succeed and compete in a chosen market. To be useful enough, the data should be comprehensive to provide not only the current situation insights, but also trends and their significance for the study towards Peruvian students.

Having explained the purpose of marketing audit, the review is aimed at gaining insights into these aspects: regarding consumers, their needs and choice criteria, buyer behavior. Regarding the market, trends and market size. Concerning competitors, current positioning, actions and strategies. In relation to company, current positioning and brand image; values; actions and strategies.

#### 4.2 Segmentation, targeting and positioning

**Segmentation** involves dividing the population into groups, to identify a segment of buyers who share common needs, purchasing behavior (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 68). Having carried out the overall examination and identification of determinant attributes versus important attributes, the analysis outcome is aligned to the attributes that determine buyers' choice between comparing alternatives; therefore, segmenting is



crucial for effective positioning that makes a firm's service stand out in the minds of target customers (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 71).

**Targeting** is aimed at addressing attractiveness of segments identified to which a firm should focus its efforts to target and serve best in order to gain competitive advantage (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 68). Companies can serve best and achieve competitive advantage by using these approaches: First, fully focused refers to provides a limited range of services to a narrow and specific market segment, while market focused is to offer wide-ranging of services to a narrowly defined target segment (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 71-72). Second, service focused refers to offer a narrow range of services to a fairly broad market, while unfocused is to serve broad markets and provide a wide range of services (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 73).

**Positioning** occurs once target segments are defined, a positioning strategy is articulated by the following principles: to position a company in minds of its targeted customers; the position should be singular and provide simple a consistent message; to set the company apart from its competitors by focusing its efforts (Wirtz & Lovelock 2018, 75).

#### 4.3 SWOT analysis

Having conducted the marketing audit, SWOT analysis is used as marketing tool to identify the trends, conditions and threats which have a potential impact on the formulation on implementation of marketing strategies; furthermore, SWOT analysis is used to evaluate competitors position in relation to its strengths and weaknesses, and evaluate Finnish organization's position in relation to its strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, market opportunities and threats are weighed against internal strengths and weaknesses to provide the basis for objectives and strategies (McDonald & Payne 2006, 45).

## 5 METHODOLOGY

Conducting the research requires of methods and procedures for collecting and analyzing data needed for the given research problem and research objectives; therefore, the most appropriate research design, research method, data collection techniques are

specified in the following sections above as well as ethical issues regarding the primary and secondary data sources. The study consists of two data categories, primary data collected through interviews, and secondary data collected through online sources.

### 5.1 Exploratory and qualitative

In the first place, the research design is exploratory approach. Exploratory research is flexible since it enables the researcher to examine any source identified as necessary to get an idea about the research problem. In addition to being flexible, it helps to gain background information to clarify an unexplored problem (Burns & Bush 2014, 101). Thus, as there is little information about Peruvian students in the context of higher education abroad, it is necessary to be as flexible as possible to understand the reasons why Peruvians decide to study out of the country.

Second, the research method is qualitative research. The choice of this method depends in part on the research design approach and the data collection techniques used for this study. Moreover, qualitative research is appropriate because it implies in-depth study of small samples to gain deep customer insights (Fahy & Jobber 2015, 99). In addition, as the research propositions and objectives of this study are built to some extent deductively or from existing theory. The propositions are tested and compared with the data collected; therefore, it means that in qualitative research, data collection, data analysis, the development and verification of propositions are very much interrelated, and form an interactive set of processes (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016, 571).

### 5.2 Data collection

As qualitative research involves observing, collecting, analyzing and interpreting what people do and say. I believe that best way to gain deep insights into Peruvian consumer behavior to provide in-depth understanding of the topic, is preparing and conducting interviews. The interviews are conducted by using a flexible structured framework. Therefore, the interviews consist of a mixed structure that follows a sequence guide of questions aligned to the stages of buying process. The interview guide includes general and open-ended questions to dig into participants' experiences mainly. Furthermore,

the questions were developed to steer them towards answers relevant to the research purpose or to respond in the direction that seems important to them.

As my geographic location differs from the participants, it has been necessary to establish a virtual environment and manage computer-mediated communication between the participants and me to conduct the interviews. Thus, some E-interviews were conducted by Skype, WhatsApp and Facebook videocalls.

As sampling and recruiting refer to whom interview, 8 Peruvian participants were recruited by social networks and personal channels. They follow these criteria: First, participants are Peruvians because the study is focused on the Peruvian market. Second, Peruvians who study abroad or have already studied abroad because the purpose is to gain in-depth insights from Peruvians' decision-making experiences towards higher education institutions abroad or (HEIs) abroad.

### 5.2.1 Primary data

The primary data is collected by conducting interviews face-to-face, and E-interviews or online interviews. All interviews are transcript in English to be analyzed. The answers are interpreted deductively from the theory studied.

Before conducting the official interview, a pilot test was conducted to test the accuracy of the questionnaire formulated. The questionnaire was delivered to 3 participants who responded by mail. Later, the questionnaire was adjusted to personalize the interviews and avoid problems of meaning that derive from the translation from Spanish into English. An interview pre-test was conducted between 18.05 to 11.06.2019 online by using Skype, WhatsApp and Facebook videocalls, and face-to-face interview.

The sample size was 7 participants who have the following characteristics: their nationality is Peruvian; the youngest participant is 27 years old and the oldest one is 44 years old; most of them are male; most of them work and hold a bachelor's degree. They have studied in countries such as Argentina, Canada, Chile, Finland and Spain. For this pre-test, general questions were also considered to use regarding the buying process experience since using only personalized questions could limit the quality and quantity of information from the answers. Finally, the official interviews are conducted from 26.09 to 05.10.2019 by using E-interviews through WhatsApp videocalls and face-to-face interviews to a community of Peruvians living in Finland. A total of 8

participants are interviewed and their characteristics are described in chapter 6. Basically, their answers are transcribed to be analyzed. The approach used to analyze the content of their responses is deductive approach from the theoretical framework written as factors that influence choices. In addition, the testimonials are also analyzed by using the same approach. It means that the results of secondary data serve as background information to answer the research problem.

### 5.2.2 Secondary data

Secondary data play a significant role in this study since it is compiled to gain sufficient insights to answer the research question and increase validity and reliability for this study. The secondary data used are compiled mainly from online sources. The secondary data are divided into two categories: First, non-text data compiled from students' testimonials published through videos on the Net. Second, text data from universities' blogs and the web pages of Peruvian newspapers. The content of both testimonials and blogs go through a process of transcription and analysis respectively in order to provide exploratory information. Furthermore, the content of the Peruvian newspapers websites comprises sets of descriptive qualitative and quantitative information which are used to craft every category of the consumer-driven marketing audit in chapter 8.

### 5.3 Reliability and Validity

Reliability demands consistency and replication of the research findings. In contrast, validity stands for the appropriateness of the measures used; besides, the accuracy of the results analysis and findings generalizability (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016, 202). Actions have been carried out to avoid bias in the research, to assurance the quality of the study and to follow the principles of reliability and validity.

In reliability, the data collection methods used have produced consistent results and these are replicable. Proof of consistency and replication is the pilot test and pre-test conducted before the official interviews, by which participants' answers have been repetitive. In addition, the same results have been found in less or greater coincidence in both the primary and secondary analysis. One reliability issue is that the findings

derived from interviews may not be repeatable since they reflect reality when they were collected, in a situation that may change (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016, 398). Particularly, I believe this issue has been overcome because participants recruited reflect the same reality in a situation that has not change. In other words, they were interviewed in the context of their experience when they decided to go abroad to study. Concerning participants characteristics, they are Peruvians who study or have studied abroad; thus, their experiences summarize their needs, desires and motivations. They were asked for their availability for the interview to prevent that the lack of availability affects their answers; therefore, participant error threat has been overcome. In validity, testing bias has been overcome because participants were informed about the research project and the purpose. They were asked for their consent, and they have not expressed doubts or rejection towards the interview, on the contrary they have showed interest about opportunities to study in Finland. Also, the validity of this research can be measured in terms of suitability of data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016, 334). Secondary data gathered provide valid information to answer the research questions because Peruvians' testimonials disclose details relating to factors that trigger to Peruvians study abroad, knowledge about sources of information used, and the choice criteria they form when they evaluate universities out of the country.

#### 5.4 Limitations

Following represents some limitations within this study: First, limited access to data. At the beginning during the development process, secondary data was expected to use in order to answer the research questions completely. However, because of the lack of particular information, the objectives and research questions were formulated again to change the data collection tool for empirical data. Second, there is a lack of previous research studies about the topic towards about Peruvian students. This lack leads to cite other research studies focused in other nationalities that may possess different criteria. In any case, the prior studies provide theoretical foundation for the research questions I research. Third, the sample size may be insufficient. The target of 8 participants could generate an inaccuracy in the results. Therefore, secondary data is used to support the reliability and generalization of this study since secondary data contains quantitative data.

## 5.5 Ethical issues

In overall, the interviewed participants have consented to be a part of the study before an intentional exchange. Participants' identity is verified and protected. If the participant accepts, the interviews are recorded, and the participant is informed that the purpose is only for analysis of the results and transcriptions. If the participant expresses not to be recorded, the interviewer meets the participant decision. Any other information regarding the participant or the higher education institutions such as universities names, participants' personal information or whatever they consider important is not revealed unless the participant expresses her or his consent.

## 6 INTERVIEWS AND TESTIMONIALS ANALYSIS

Basically, the analysis is divided into two parts. The first part involves analyzing and interpreting secondary data derived from the content of Peruvians' experiences in universities abroad in order to provide an overview of the factors that influence their choices. Similarly, the secondary data serves as standard for evaluating primary data. The second part involves analyzing the content of interviews. The primary analysis is broken down into the stages of consumer decision-making process since the interview guide is aligned to these stages to respond the research questions. The transcripts of interviews and testimonials go through a coding and categorization process. Deductively, the words or concepts found are coded and categorized using of predetermined frameworks explained in the literature chapter. Finally, trends or patterns are identified according to frequencies of the citations found.

### 6.1 Analyzing the testimonials

The results of the analysis of five testimonials demonstrate that there are several attributes and benefits recognized by students through their study abroad experiences. The students have valued the following service attributes: First, university ranking; prestige of the institution; university reputation. Second, wide-ranging courses; degree length; specific programs or degrees. Third, transportation costs; university location.

The experience attributes valued are as follows: First, outdoor and recreational activities; traveling. Second, responsiveness; customer support and orientation; learning new cultures and multiculturalism. Third, natural environment and city infrastructure; experiencing lifestyle; safe city; contact with important people. In addition, quality of teaching is a credence attribute valued and the complementary services identified are tutoring, students' organizations.

By studying abroad, students have recognized the following benefits: First, personal growth by becoming more independent; professional growth by the employment opportunities during studies and employability. Second, networking or opportunities to make bigger network of contacts, friends internationally. Third, reasonable expenses that make possible to study abroad.

## 6.2 Analyzing the interviews

As stated before, consumer decision-making analysis is broken down in three sections that stand for the stages of consumer decision-making and evaluation of alternatives. To respond the research questions, the participants are interviewed, and their responses represent the primary data of this study. The transcriptions of the interviews are analyzed and categorized to provide accurate and reliable interpretations of the findings within the stages of the consumer decision-making process. The participants are identified as "I".

Table 2. Characteristic of participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Occupation	Degree level	Study abroad country
I1	40	female	work	bachelor	Argentina
I2	27	male	work and study	bachelor	Canada
I3	30	male	work	master	Finland
I4	45	female	work and study	master	Finland
I5	30	male	work and study	master	Finland
I6	31	male	work	master	Finland
I7	30	female	work and study	master	Finland
I8	51	female	work and study	master	Finland

### 6.2.1 Need awareness

In order to uncover the reasons by which Peruvians go abroad to study, participants have responded the needs and motivations that motivated them to study abroad. As known, the desired to satisfy a need such as studying abroad may be stimulated by external sources; therefore, participants have responded the ways in which they got interested in studying abroad. Having analyzed the content of the transcribed answers, the following responses have been codified and categorized:

*Experiencing life abroad, knowing another country, knowing another culture, traveling, difficult entrance examination in my country, expensive universities in my country, quality of life, favorable prices, studying abroad is cheaper than in my country, experiencing life abroad, personal growth, learning new cultures, learning new foods, learning new customs, open your mind and nourish your soul, opportunity to continue researching, doing more things, opportunity to study doctorate, the scholarship to study, achievement and success, opportunities for professional development, the scholarship to study, better opportunities abroad, living expenses provided by abroad university, opportunities in my field of study, better education in Finland, the money, less spending, another kind of life, better job, better income, permanent residence, people's experiences, compatriots abroad, specialists in the area of study in Peru, opportunity to study abroad, free tuition, the scholarship to study, I want to demonstrate I was good, people studying doctoral degree, limited technology in local university, people's experiences, development of field of studies abroad.*

Table 3. Coding and categorization of needs and motivations

Coding	#citations	Categorizing
Experiencing life abroad or another kind of life	3	Enriching experiences
Knowing and learning another country	1	
Knowing and learning another culture	2	
Traveling	1	
Admission issues	1	Admission issues
Expenses	6	Grants and expenses
Environmental cues	1	Environmental cues
Learning new foods	1	



Learning new customs	1	
Personal growth	4	Personal growth
Opportunities (professional growth)	6	Professional growth
Opportunities before and after studies	4	Opportunities before and after studies
References and experiences	5	References and experiences
Reputation and academic	3	Reputation and academic
Total citations	43	

### 6.2.2 Information search

Information sources are used for two purposes. First, to look for information about universities abroad. As Peruvians seek for information about universities abroad, they learn not only about the characteristics of the universities and their benefits, but also about the set of competing universities that could meet their requirements. Second, to learn about universities abroad. Knowing how Peruvians find out universities abroad is important to determine potential channels used, for promotional and distribution purposes.

Having explained the purpose of analyzing information sources, participants have responded where they looked for information about universities abroad; similarly, they have responded the ways by which they learned about universities abroad and opportunities abroad since opportunities abroad make up universities abroad too.

Following are the information sources found, the numbers in brackets refers to the frequency of the responses.

*Teacher (5), consulate (2), people (4), department in charge (3), student (2), fair (4), online (1), website (2), internet (2), organizations in the university (1), government platforms (1), Finland good reputation (1), researchers (1), faculty (1), international students office (1), students' associations (1), supervisor (1), mails (1), brochures (1), posts (1), my university (2), friend (1), cooperation agreement (1), information kit (1), Peruvian in Finland (1), Peruvian Finnish project (1), online sources (1), forums (1).*

Table 4. Categorization of sources of information

Categorization	#citations
Reference groups	15
Public sources	4
Service delivery points	8
Marketing activities	6
The Internet	5
Rely on reputation	1
Direct communication	1
Commercial sources	3
Personal sources	1
Online word-of-mouth	1
Total citations	45

Other aspects that deserve to be analyzed represent the competing universities or countries that make up the evoked set, and the choice criteria formed during the information search. Starting out by the evoked set, following is the set of universities and countries: *Oxford, Harvard, Yale, Spain, England, Argentina, The Netherlands, England, Germany, Finland, Sweden, University of Turku, British Columbia in Canada, University of Sao Paulo, Finland, Canada, Belgium, Spain, Missouri, England.*

As seen, the responses do not show a specific evoked set of universities and a marked preference towards one of them; nonetheless, the results give rise to assume that Peruvians may apply for more than one option depending on their requirements, choice criteria, convenient benefits and references, as mentioned:

*“They are very popular.” –11. “They were countries I wanted to see, and they all had something familiar with me.” –13. “International ranking, security, quality of life of these countries.” –14. “I thought to study a master’s degree here because if I compare the price of a master’s degree in Canada than doing it here; in Canada you have to pay for the master’s degree. Here the master’s degree in that time, it was free... so I decided on Finland.” –16.*

### 6.2.3 Evaluation of alternatives

In the evaluation process, Peruvians evaluate and compare competing universities by weighing up wide-ranging of characteristics or factors, benefits, and risks associated to the educational services of the universities also learned during the information

search. Therefore, Peruvians might consider reviewing more details or information concerning those universities by using various sources or channels. Such details may consist of others' experiences or recommendations, to reduce perceived risks associated or to gain confidence about their choices before purchasing.

In order to find out the choice criteria, participants have responded regarding the information they looked for about the universities abroad. Similarly, they have answered regarding the specific characteristics of the universities they considered.

Additionally, to explore the benefits attached to the choice criteria found, participants have responded how the characteristics mentioned were beneficial for them and the reasons by which studying abroad was beneficial. Such insights are reported directly in results chapter. Regarding choice criteria, following are the responses analyzed and the numbers in brackets correspond to the frequencies found:

*Special program I was looking for (6), Students residence (1), Available rooms (1), Overall costs (2), cost of the study (1), Accommodation costs (2), Reasonable costs (3), Security (2), Security, Overall costs, Reasonable costs, Reasonable studies costs (1), Reasonable accommodation costs (1), Special program I was looking for, Special program I was looking for, University location (4), students experience (1), Courses and career program (5), The syllable (2), Degree length (1), Accommodation costs, Living costs (1), quality of life (1), Social activities (1), extracurricular activities (1), The university I was looking for (1), Courses and career program, Courses and career program, admissions requirements (1), admissions issues (1), Application period (1), Courses and career program, Special program I was looking for, Teacher's advice (1), Opportunities abroad (1), visa information (1), Exchange programs offices (1), Seminars (1), Special courses I was looking for (2), special program I was looking for, Reasonable costs, university location, no discrimination (1), special program I was looking for, university location, university and faculty ranking (4), university location, university and faculty ranking, The syllable, quality of teaching (1), special program I was looking for, university and faculty ranking, university and faculty ranking, international environment (1), the lifestyle (1), Courses and career program, University reputation (2), prestigious university (2), special courses I was looking for, Degree that aid in employment opportunities (1), University reputation, prestigious university, The safest option (1), Project (1).*

Following are the bundle of categories used by Peruvians to evaluate universities abroad:

Table 5. Categorization of attributes

Categories	#citations
Academic programs and reputation	30
Expenses and grants	9
Admission process	5
Environmental cues and educational facilities	7
Physical environment and recreational activities	6
References	2
Others	4
Total citations	63

In addition, the risks associated with the educational services were also analyzed. As mentioned, perceived risks might impact negatively on consumers' decisions. Therefore, Peruvian students' decisions might be influenced by perceived risks, depending on the degree of knowledge that they have regarding the university.

In order to gain insights into the risks, participants have responded the risks they considered when choosing their universities abroad. Following are the responses categorized:

*Health and health system (2), security and climate (2), Price of medicine, costs of medication (2), Expenses and monetary (3), personal fears such as loneliness, get lost easily, people take advantage of you (3). Adaptation, protective parents, being far away from family (3).*

The occurrences found gives rise to interpret the responses as follows: Physical risks (4), Financial (5), Psychological (3), Cultural (3). The description of each risk and items are given in results chapter.

With the aim of exploring the determinants of their selection, the participants have answered what influenced their university choice. The occurrences found through the analysis of factors that influence Peruvian students' choice are the following: *family, university location, quality of life, thesis work, researchers, program length, university in Finland, researchers, scholarship, the university was proposed to me, field of working, job opportunities, courses related on other areas, job opportunities, the project objectives.*

Table 6. Categorization of the factors that influence choices

Categorizing	#citations
Academic programs and reputation	6
Opportunities	3
Physical environment and environmental cues	2
Reference groups	2
Family	1
The university was proposed to me	1
Total citations	15

Other aspects that deserve to be analyzed are from whom and where Peruvian students consider and review recommendations and comments before choosing universities. Since recommendations and comments, also known as word-of-mouth (WOM), are recognized to have an impact on customers' choices; therefore, Peruvians may rely on word-of-mouth not only because of perceived risks, but also because of lacking information about a service offering or for comparing alternatives.

In order to gain insights into word-of-mouth, the following content derived from transcriptions is analyzed and data in brackets stand for the number of occurrences.

*Family (2), friends (4), the internet (1), websites(2), other students(1), academic advisors or program coordinator(2), researchers (4), the dean of the university (1), Peruvians in Finland (2), teacher (3), the consulate (1), forums(2), Blogs (2), Finland's reputation (1), ranking of universities (1), faculties rankings (1), the ambassador of Finland(1).*

Table 7. Categorizing sources of information to reduce risks

Categorization	#citations
Personal sources	6
Internet	3
Reference groups	11
The institution	2
Public sources	2
Online word-of-mouth	4
Rely on reputation	3
Total de citations	31

Finally, participants were also asked about the importance of the recommendations and comments on the choice of their university abroad. The most ranked reason is

learning. As they have mentioned, to learn benefits of universities; learn first-hand experiences of the kind of life abroad and people's experiences abroad; to learn the process of studying abroad. Next, other reasons are that recommendations and comments help to decide quickly, gain confidence about decisions, motivate the selection, help to analyze risks and clarify doubts.

## 7 CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING RESULTS

Consumer decision-making chapter is intended for reporting the results obtained by analyzing the content of the interviews primarily. Basically, the results respond the research questions stated as objectives for this study. Therefore, the needs and motivations uncovered are the reasons that trigger Peruvians to go abroad to study; similarly, the sources or channels found refers to where or how Peruvians learn about universities or opportunities to study abroad. Finally, the choice criteria or bundle of characteristics, perceived risks and influences, make up the bunch of factors learned during the information search and used as standard to weigh up universities before choosing. Figure 5 summarizes the results.

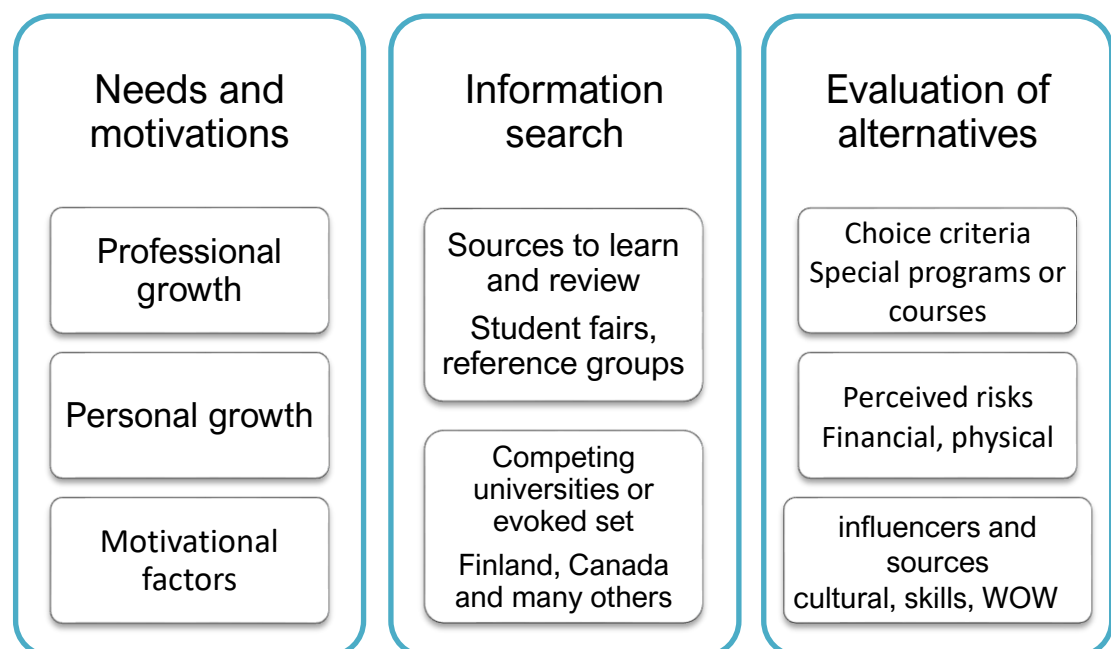


Figure 5. Peruvian consumer decision-making and evaluation of alternatives insights

## 7.1 Needs and motivations

Reasons that trigger Peruvian students go abroad to study consist of needs and motivations. Starting out by needs, among the participants, there is a greater need for professional growth driven by ego needs that leads them to pursuing training and education abroad. On the other hand, studying abroad is also associated with personal growth. Therefore, the most ranked need by which Peruvian students go abroad to study abroad is professional growth while the least ranked is personal growth. Following are the needs ranked:

**Professional growth** through these opportunities: opportunities for continue researching, opportunities for further studies, opportunities in my field of study, opportunities to study abroad, opportunities for doing more things, opportunities for professional development.

**Personal growth** achieved by needs such as oneself improvement, new outlooks, achievement and success.

Other reasons why Peruvian students go abroad to study consist of motivational factors or motivations. The most ranked motivations are grants and expenses, enriching experiences, references and experiences, opportunities before and after studies. The least ranked are reputation and academic, admission requirements and environmental cues. Following are the pull motivational factors:

**Grants and expenses** identified are scholarships to study abroad, free tuition, living expenses granted by abroad university, favorable prices, less spending, studying abroad is cheaper than in my country, expensive universities in my country, the money.

**Enriching experiences** are experiencing life abroad/another kind of life, knowing and learning another culture, knowing and learning another country, learning new customs, learning new foods, traveling.

**References and experiences** from people's experiences, Peruvians or compatriots abroad, specialists in the area of study and people studying same degree. **Opportunities before and after studies** that motive Peruvian students are better opportunities abroad, better job, better income, permanent residence.

**Reputation and academic** include the following: better education in Finland, development of field of studies abroad, better technology abroad, limited technology in local university. Finally, the least ranked factors are **admission issues** such as difficult entrance examination in my country and **environmental cues** such as quality of life.

## 7.2 Sources of information

The most ranked sources of information are reference groups, service delivery points, marketing activities, the Internet and public sources. The least ranked sources of information are commercial sources, personal sources, direct communication. Following are the information sources, starting by the most ranked:

**Reference groups** consist of teachers, people, students, researchers, supervisor, friend, Peruvian in Finland. **Service delivery points** consist of the department in charge, university, faculty, international student office, students' associations. **Marketing activities** comprise fairs, cooperation agreements, Peruvian- Finnish project. **The Internet** consist of websites, online sources, online word-of-mouth. **Public sources** incorporate the consulate, government institutions platforms, organization in the university. **Commercial sources** include brochures, posts, information kit. **Personal sources** consist of friends. **Direct communication** consists of mails. In addition, the reputation of Finnish education has been also considered.

## 7.3 Choice criteria and factors

When choosing universities out of the country or higher education alternatives abroad, Peruvians look for or use the choice criteria formed by the following attributes and their attached benefits with positive impact in the following order:

First, **special/specific programs and degree courses** refers to curricula or courses that would aid in employment opportunities or further studies. **Specialized degree that would aid in employment opportunities** refers to employment opportunities after completion of study, opportunities for scholarships after the study or continue studies, residence.

Second, **university reputation** refers to university and faculty ranking indicates quality of education, quality of teaching and prestige. **University location** refers to easy access to the city, transportation, makes positive the student experience abroad and ease of experience culture.

Third, **reasonable and affordable fees, costs and overall expenditure** refer to convenience and tentative. **Convenience** refers to be reasonable or free because high tuition



fees in home country, opportunities for employment abroad, personal and professional growth.

Fourth, *syllabus and quality of education* refer to understanding of different teaching methods and education, use of technology and better equipment.

*International environment, recreational activities and lifestyle* improve personal growth, more tolerance towards culture shock, improve experience. Fifth, *quality of life* refers to security and lifestyle.

On the other hand, most of the interviewees have agreed on perceived risks as follows: financial refers to overall costs of the studies, tuition fees, living costs, costs of medication; cultural refers to culture shock by cultural differences, family bonds that do not allow students go abroad to study; social refers to discrimination, racism; and physical refers health, safe city and environment.

The most ranked factors that may influence Peruvian students' choice are academic programs and reputation, opportunities, reference groups, physical environment and environmental cues. The least ranked is family.

*Academic programs and reputation* consist of courses related on other areas, program length, thesis work, field of working, the project objectives and university in Finland.

*The opportunities* that influence their choice are job opportunities and scholarships.

*Physical environment and environmental cues* such are university location and quality of life influence too.

Finally, as reported in the analysis chapter, the most ranked sources of information used to review information and gain confidence before deciding, are as follows: Reference groups (researchers, teachers, Peruvians in Finland, other students), personal sources (friends, family), online word-of mouth (forums, blogs), the Internet and rely on reputation (rely on reputation of Finland, ranking of universities, ranking of faculties). The least ranked are public sources and the institution.

## 8 MARKETING STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

### 8.1 Customer-driven marketing audit

The audit is a compilation of information from online sources described in the section of secondary data in chapter 5 in order to provide a general outlook about the important aspects of the customer-driven strategy categories (customer, competitor and company). The results reported regarding the experiences in Finnish universities are used as set of data to craft the category company. In addition, other sets of secondary data compiled for the other categories reflect similarity to the primary findings.

#### 8.1.1 Customer

Regarding the customer, from the empirical results and the secondary data respectively, the following conclusions are drawn: First, Peruvians pursue higher education abroad because they perceive it as an investment that will bear a high return over time, as they mention it, professional growth through employment opportunities, opportunities to study and continue studies abroad; personal growth by becoming more independent, improve oneself, success, achievement. Other benefits are traveling experience, and experience other cultures, to learn new outlooks, networking. Also, in terms of consumption, they consume education abroad because free tuition fees and expenditure, reasonable overall costs, quality of education, reputation of the institution, convenient studies length. Second, Peruvians consume higher education from abroad through different distribution channels in Peru. The prospective channels identified are Pronabec, student fairs and Peruvian universities' delivery points. Pronabec is a Peruvian public institution that promotes and offers wide-ranging opportunities to study abroad by its different touch points, and by which Peruvians and the most talented students have access for scholarships and educational loan programs. In addition, student fairs such as Edu Expo, Expo Estudiante, Edufindme, Concytec fairs, offer Peruvians personalized consultation and serves as touch point with other students who study or have studied abroad. Third, among the factors that limit the consumption of higher education abroad are financial, cultural, and language as stated in the study.

### 8.1.2 Market trends

Regarding the market, first, the market is grouped demographically into 2 sectors: urban 79% and rural 21%. The most urban cities are Metropolitan Lima 41.1 % and Arequipa 4.1% (Website of CPI). Second, households in Metropolitan Lima are classified in higher resources A: 4.7%, consolidated middle-class B: 23.2%, emerging middle-class C: 41.3%, emerging lower middle-class D: 24.4%, lower class-scarce economic resources E: 6.4% (Website of APEIM). Other trends identified include: First, education expenditure. Urban Peruvians in all segments spend in education as follows: A/B: 16%, C: 12%, C1: 13%, C2: 11%, D: 9%, E: 7% (Website of APEIM). Second, preferences for degree levels and scholarships. Of 4000 university students surveyed, 75% of professionals and students prefer postgraduate studies abroad, while 47% prefer scholarships for master's degree, 17% for undergraduate studies, and 6% for doctorates and research. In addition, the study programs with the greatest demand for scholarships abroad are Engineering 28%, Business Sciences 23% and Humanities 17% (Andina 2009). Third, the new university reform is aimed at ensuring quality and academic excellence, country development, inclusion and equity by improving education quality in Peruvian higher education institutions or HEIs (El Comercio 2019); therefore, universities should follow a process of accreditation in order to assurance quality and to be granted with a license.

### 8.1.3 Competition

Peruvians have preferences towards the United States as country to study both undergraduate and postgraduate, followed by the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands and public universities in Germany (Gestion 2019). Also, the universities of English-speaking countries have good reputation. First, The United States is popular not only because its higher education system is recognized as one of the best, but also because universities are at the forefront of technology, research and the most innovative teaching techniques. Second, The UK education system is valued because the quality of British education has a great international reputation. Third, Australia is valued because its HEIs are highly valued internationally in terms of training, research, employment opportunities, multiculturalism (Universia 2018).

Currently, the universities from English-speaking countries are positioning in the Peruvian market through strategic alliances with local universities. The competitors identified are Northern Consortium of United Kingdom Universities (NCUK), University of Arizona, University of Queensland. These universities operate in partnership with the Peruvian University of Applied Sciences (UPC), so their market share in Peru is still unknown. The two first universities offer a joint degree, the third one offers a double degree program. NCUK universities are promoted as the UPC International Degrees: NCUK through which Peruvians can access to studies in the UK. The objective is to recruit Peruvians to study first in their local university in order that they mature and adapt to university life before transferring to the UK to continue their studies, and to graduate from some of the best universities in the world; thus reducing investment costs of their academic studies in the UK (Peru 2018). Similarly, Peruvians can pursue bachelors' degree and master's degree together in five years from the University of Arizona, having the same benefits as regular students, i.e. virtual library, exchange programs and so on (La República 2019).

#### 8.1.4 Company

Exchange programs between Peruvian and Finnish universities offer positive opportunities for Peruvians students to come to study in Finland. The results obtained from the analysis of Peruvians' experiences in Finnish universities are highly positive and lead to conclude on the following: Besides the infrastructure, the wide ranging of courses offered is highly valued to the extent that the student perceives to be in *one of the best universities in the world* (appendix 4), another attribute valued is university location. As part of post-purchase evaluation, the experience that Finnish universities offer is high because as country, Finland offers safety, different lifestyle and natural environment, easy to be perceived through recreational, outdoor activities and events organized. Another attribute valued is responsiveness and customer support; as well as tutoring and students' organizations as complementary services.

## 8.2 Developing positioning strategy

The results of the primary data as well as secondary data are used in combination with the SWOT tool to identify key aspects, in order to find the most accurate marketing objectives and strategies towards positioning and promotion the Finnish client in Peru.

### 8.2.1 Strengths and weaknesses

As strengths, key aspects are identified in terms of Finnish education and the experience offered. Finnish education is perceived as high quality of education and technology. The impressions about Finnish higher education institutions are very positive among Peruvians students. They have found value in experience attributes such as tutoring, teachers and personnel response, outdoor activities and travels to Finland's neighbor countries. They have perceived quality of life by experiencing the university infrastructure, environment, and the city security. Benefits such as discount in transportation prices, customer support and elective courses in bachelor's degree and master's degree are valued.

In contrast, other aspects stand for weaknesses. Finnish universities are operating slightly in the Peruvian market. Their strategy is exchange programs with seeking-profit and non-profit private universities, international research agreements with public local universities to pursue master and doctoral degrees. Interviews and testimonials data shows that Finnish universities focused on attracting students from different socio-economic status, which is positive, considering that the talent is widespread within the whole Peruvian market.

### 8.2.2 Opportunities

Three opportunities are identified. First, the new reform of higher education requires to improve the quality of Peruvian education and quality educational services in order to be granted with the license, authorization of their educational programs as well as receive incentives. Therefore, public universities, profit-seeking and non-profit private universities, as well as institutes, are seeking for technology, new teaching trends, internationalization, cooperative agreements in research and science; investing in

training teachers, infrastructure, scholarships; reinvesting in all that promote quality, technology, social projection.

Second, Urban Peruvians in all segments spend in education. Peruvians from segments A/B spend more in education: 16%. The most urban city is Metropolitan Lima 41.1 % where the most profitable segment in terms of high resources is A: 4.7%, while consolidated middle-class B: 23.2% may still make efforts to study abroad.

Preference towards native English-speaking countries universities exists, this preference is influenced by marketing activities carried out actively through different programs and agreements for all socio-economic segments; however, universities from other countries are not ruled out and there is still lack of knowledge about other universities abroad. In addition, Peruvians demand for scholarships to study abroad and in different programs; master's degree programs; undergraduate studies; doctorates and research, respectively.

Third, in terms of Peruvian consumer behavior towards higher education, Peruvians rely on WOM especially because it helps them to clarify their doubts in respect to the university abroad that they decide to choose. Studying abroad is beneficial because they perceive it as investment that will yield in earnings through better job opportunities; on the other hand, they perceive it as the consumption of a service, for which it is worth paying. Consequently, the following universities attributes are weighted up: benefits, reputation and prestige, ranking, ease of process; nonetheless, when choosing a university abroad, the determinant attributes are expenditure, language barriers, cultural. In addition, everyone cannot afford education abroad; therefore, reasonable expenses and costs are important attributes when choosing a university abroad. Similarly, scholarships are popular and job opportunities required. Finally, other benefits valued are travel experience, cultural, networking than the service quality or degree program quality. This perception may be related to the general scale of needs within the market, job requirements locally, or the way in which competitors promote studies abroad, i.e. as travel experience, opportunities for international networking, better quality endorsed by international rankings that may influence and it is widespread in all socio-economic status.

### 8.2.3 Threats

The English-speaking nations universities hold a strong position endorsed by their positions in the world ranking of the best universities, and the Peruvians preferences. Competitors' market entry strategy is oriented towards partnerships, strategic alliances in agreements with potential seeking-profit local universities. They are positioned as prestigious, high reputation, internationally recognized, and high-quality universities; however, the quality of service is still being assessed and proven in the Peruvian market and their offerings are considered highly expensive. Their operations and marketing efforts focus on targeting young high-school students from socio-economic A and B in order to study abroad and graduate there. It means to offer international higher education in a micro campus in Lima within their partner university to reduce somehow the costs of the living experience abroad, with the possibility to travel to the UK, USA, Australia or Canada to obtain a degree from there. As their Peruvian partner universities targets student from diverse socio-economic status, everyone can have access and be aware of their wide-ranging degree programs. According students' education profile, the pathway could be directly to study abroad or to enroll in one-year foundation to continue studying abroad and graduate there.

### 8.3 Key assumptions

The general study outcome leads to the conclusion of an internal position assessment in relation to particular strengths and weaknesses, and in comparison, with the opportunities and strengths pointed out within the situation analysis. The analysis includes: ***Regarding to strengths***, Finnish education is recognized as high quality education and innovative methodology. Finland as country offers enriching experiences. Its educational programs offer technology, research competence, qualified personnel and cultural values. Some actions needed are promote capabilities and attributes through specialized programs and projects; to use the attribute to emphasize quality and reputation, use advertising to make experiences more tangible. In case of being required, training about Peruvian culture, recruit possible partners that fulfill Finnish parameters and maybe possesses the same accreditation or use technology.

**Regarding to weaknesses**, ranking, no overseas representation at all, discrete market strategy entry and promotion. Some actions needed are to strength position, urgent feasibility study for a centre in Lima, Peru to strengthen presence, more aggressive advertising, and entry strategies, agreements and programs.

**Regarding to opportunities**, lack of information about Finnish universities, new higher education reform, identified socio-economic segment, exploit customers' needs. Peruvians expend in education. There is a demand for postgraduate programs, master's degree, degree programs and specialization.

Actions needed, more aggressive advertising, promote higher education representatives, use the situation to leverage in negotiations and new opportunities to develop education programs, plan how to target them, align needs to create awareness through advertising.

**Regarding to threats**, competition, perceptions towards education abroad: excessively expensive and future rewards are not considered. Some actions needed are to plan and develop positioning strategy, marketing strategy, to educate customers through advertising, to promote scholarships in agreement with other public institutions such as Pronabec and evaluate the feasibility to recruit students online.

**In respect with segmentation**, a broad description of the socio-economic levels is given and a description of determinant factors that influence the access to education abroad. However, the study results give rise to assume that Peruvians make use of different choice criteria to weigh up universities abroad, but it has not been possible to determine which factors by segments are determinant and important. Based on the information, some possible students' segments are suggested as prospects below.

**In respect with targeting**, SAMK (Finnish client) could focus on the service strategy within the Peruvian market by provisioning a specialized range of services to a fairly broad market. The segment of those students would be made up of Peruvians who have technical studies background. Some studies background may include Nursing, Tourism, Business Management, Logistics, International Trade, Industrial Safety and Risk Prevention. As students have theoretical knowledge and working experience, they would just need to complement with an international master's degree in English that benefits them professionally and personally in Peru. The master's degree would reinforce their soft-skills and hard-skills by doing projects, communicating digitally in English and learning teamwork.



Another segment would be represented by students within the socioeconomic segments A, B in profit-seeking universities and non-profit private universities. As the market is saturated with international universities programs. A and B students could be targeted with exchange programs through international agreements with their local universities or masters' degree. I consider that the most meaningful benefit would be Finnish language and culture, learning by doing methodology and gamification.

In regard with positioning, having carried out the overall analysis, the marketing strategies and objectives should be oriented to create awareness of SAMK higher education programs in the Peruvian market as follows in the recommendations section.

## 9 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes answering the research problem how Peruvian students make decisions about choosing higher education abroad. Basically, Peruvians are triggered by needs for improving oneself and achieving success professionally and personally. Other motivational factors to study abroad include free tuition fees and expenditure, quality of education. They use wide-ranging of channels to learn about universities abroad such as reference groups, service delivery points, the Internet, public sources, fairs. Their choice criteria consist of special programs and degree courses refers to curricula or courses that would aid in employment opportunities or further studies. University reputation is an attribute easy to evaluate through the ranking that indicates quality of education, quality of teaching and prestige. University location that makes easy access to the city, transportation to make positive the student experience abroad and ease of experience culture. Reasonable and affordable fees, costs and overall expenditure are seen as convenience and tentative. Word-of-mouth influences powerfully on decisions. On the other hand, the factors that influence their choice are financial, cultural, skills and lacking information about other universities abroad.

The evoked set of universities is wide-ranging, some preferences exist but it is not determinant because Peruvians may base their choice on other factors. However, the client must create awareness of its brand to get it into the evoked set of universities. Another aspect to discuss is whether or not the information search is extensive or is quick. Apparently, it is not the case for this group of Peruvians interviewed because most of them have not conducted any extensive search for comparing or leaning

information. Conversely, they have chosen their universities abroad based on other determinant attributes and references, i.e. the interview 5 (Appendix 3) revealed that *when you heard Finland you start thinking about the quality of education.*

Another conclusion is also given, regarding the contribution of the consumer decision-making study towards the development of marketing objectives and strategies.

Basically, the study of decision-making process contributes substantially because it provides in-depth understanding to assess and determine the suitability of new higher education services for Peru. In other words, the analysis of the consumer comprises the identification of needs, buying behavior and decision-making criteria linked up systematically with the analysis of these categories: competitor and company. In consequence, the overall analysis outcome is intended for developing marketing objectives and articulating the most essential aspects to formulate positioning objectives towards the Peruvian Market. These aspects include important and determinant factors related on higher education services abroad or universities abroad, recognized by analyzing the decision-making process; besides, relevant for Peruvians when choosing universities abroad. Therefore, the following recommendations are proposed:

First, promote Finnish higher education institutions platform through integrated communication channels: online, and in student fairs in order to create awareness. Evaluate the feasibility of having Finnish education representatives internationally. Focus on positioning strategy to recruit students and lead them toward the recruitment platform. Evaluate the feasibility of providing educational services to Peruvian institutions through agreements that promote cooperation, educational training, pasantias for teachers and students, improvement of studies curricula towards internationalization. Second, as Peruvian universities follow the ranking of universities around the world, then, I suggest evaluating the possibility of creating Finnish Nordic parameters for recruiting and evaluating possible Peruvian partner universities in order to promote Finnish universities and add value to the Peruvian partner university. Promote the Finnish study programs, representing them together with the name of their own country of origin.

Having identified that the new reform in Peruvian higher education is creating a need for quality improvement among all Peruvian institutions, I suggest the following marketing communication plan basis, including the positioning strategy and objectives:

As marketing objective, the client may focus on introduce new services into the market by increasing technological newness, cultural and language skills and competitive

teaching trends globally. In addition, the client may focus on targeting Peruvian students by using service focus strategy in order to create a long-term relationship with a Peruvian education institution. In addition, the client may diversify the educational offer in order to recruit more students from other institutions.

As marketing strategy, the client may apply service focused– highly innovative education method with specialized degree program to a fairly broad market, i.e. institutes, universities, colleges.

As position strategy, the client may focus its strategy on positioning itself away from competition, focusing on culture and language; digital, technological and gamified experience; and cooperation.

Communication decisions should be aimed at making tangible the technological experience, Nordic infrastructure, quality of education, ease of process and responsiveness, digital experience and learning style “learning by doing”.

Target audience could be made up by students with theoretical knowledge and practical experience that can adapt to news technological educational trends in order to develop soft skills during course projects. In addition, different marketing mix can target other students’ segments.

Communication objectives should be intended for creating awareness of the Finnish higher education institutions. Promote culture and language skills, technology, research, science, projects. Promote inclusion, cooperation, social responsibility, sustainability. The Message should be consistent: Learning by doing or learning for life in digital environment and add value by learning another language and emphasizing motivational needs to persuade prospects.

Promotional mix may include marketing channels such as student fairs (EduExpo, Expo Estudiante, ExpoMaestrias) locally in Peru. Use online channels such as the website of the Embassy of Finland, and newspapers online to publish opportunities to study in Finland. Promote Finland through student fairs and online channels to recruit students.

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## Interview questions in English

Age:

Gender:

Study abroad country:

Interview setting:

1. What motivated you to go abroad to study?
2. How did you get interested in studying abroad?
3. In what ways did you learn about opportunities to study abroad?
4. What information did you look for about universities abroad?
5. Where did you search information about opportunities to study abroad?
6. How did you learn about your university abroad?
7. Which foreign universities or countries did you think about during your search for studies abroad? why?
8. In general, why was studying abroad beneficial for you?
9. When choosing your university, what characteristics about the university did you consider?
10. How the characteristics you have mentioned were beneficial for you?
11. What influenced on your university choice?
12. When choosing your university abroad, what risks did you consider?
13. From whom did you consider recommendations or comments for your university choice?
14. Where did you look for recommendations and comments about your university?
15. In general, why recommendations and comments were important for you university choice?

## Interview questions in Spanish

Edad:

Género:

País de los estudios extranjeros:

Escenario de la entrevista:

1. ¿Qué te motivó para ir al extranjero a estudiar?
2. ¿Qué te inspiró ir a estudiar al extranjero?
3. ¿En qué formas te enteraste sobre oportunidades para estudiar en el extranjero?
4. ¿Qué información buscaste acerca de las universidades en el extranjero?
5. ¿Dónde buscaste información acerca de las oportunidades para ir a estudiar al extranjero?
6. ¿Cómo te enteraste acerca de tu universidad en el extranjero?
7. ¿Cuáles son las universidades o países que pensaste durante tu búsqueda de los estudios en el extranjero? ¿Por qué?
8. En general, ¿Por qué para ti estudiar en el extranjero fue beneficioso?
9. Al elegir tu universidad, ¿Qué características sobre la universidad consideraste?
10. ¿Cómo las características que mencionaste fueron beneficiosas para ti?
11. ¿Qué influyó en la elección de tu universidad?
12. ¿Qué riesgos consideraste al elegir tu universidad en el extranjero?
13. ¿Dónde buscaste recomendaciones y comentarios acerca de tu universidad?
14. ¿De quién consideraste recomendaciones o comentarios para la elección de tu universidad?
15. En general, ¿Por qué las recomendaciones y comentarios fueron importantes para la elección de tu universidad?



## APPENDIX 3

Interview #1

Age: 40

Gender: female

Study abroad country: Argentina

Interview setting: Interview conducted online at 19.22 on Tuesday 24.09.19.

(Start of the interview)

Interviewer: What motivated you to go abroad to study?

Interviewee1: *Well, to have a life experience abroad, I like to know another country, another culture, I love to travel, I was delighted to have a different life experience, a part from that, the entrance examination in my country is terribly difficult, and... the universities that are not so difficult are very expensive, so I compare prices and quality of life and all that, well... we got into conclusion that it was positive and favorable for me as student, I realized it was cheaper to study abroad than in my own country...*

Interviewer: How did you get interested in studying abroad?

Interviewee1: *I think that like everyone, the money. The money is fundamental, if I was going to spend less and maybe I could have another kind of life, so it was tentative. Yes, it is very attractive the offer. I spent little monthly, I hold the idea that after finishing my studies I could get a good job and better income, permanent residence.*

Interviewer: In what ways did you learn about opportunities to study abroad?

Interviewee1: *By the Internet, through student fairs.*

Interviewer: Could you mention some names of educational fairs?

Interviewee1: *Edufindme, EduExpo, one from Canada but I don't remember and...*

Interviewer: What information did you look for about universities abroad?

Interviewee1: *First, if they had the program, if they had services of residence, available rooms; the prices of everything, studies prices, rooms prices, if these were reasonable, security. There are wonderful places, but they are dangerous. Mainly the prices, these must be reasonable, the studies as well as rooms and there must be the program, I look for... it must have all I need.*

Interviewer: Where did you search information about opportunities to study abroad?

Interviewee1: *Nowadays, by the website. At that time, at the consulate I was informed, then directly in the city, also people recommended me the universities. Nowadays, by the Internet, it is definitely the number one search engine because you don't need to*

*travel and you watch by yourself, you can travel with the Web, the websites have 360-degree vision of universities where cafeterias, students' residence, sports fields are shown.*

Interviewer: How did you learn about your university abroad?

Interviewee1: *Well, eh... it was by the consulate, a list of universities was given there; the truth is that I did not know of any, I was inquiring and people in the consulate recommended me Cordova University. I got my scholarship for Cordova but not the program I wanted, I got it for Kinesiology, but I wanted Odontology, it was a chaos... I was told I could be one year there and then to change to another city.*

Interviewer: Which foreign universities or countries did you think during your search for studies abroad? Why?

Interviewee1: *Well, actually if I had the money I would go to Oxford or Harvard, but it's not possible because they are very expensive. They are very popular, but it is necessary to have a lot of money to enter... Yale, Oxford, Harvard are very expensive... I was looking for a university that is like a home, small, cozy, where teaching is good, quiet and not extremely difficult.*

Interviewer: In general, why was studying abroad beneficial for you?

Interviewee1: *It enriched me a lot, I grow a lot as person, as student. You learn to value more your country, your family all. You grow a lot as person as a human being. You learn to see things from different perspective, also I had classmates from Brazil, Taiwan incredible to share different outlooks, points of view. At the end, the satisfaction of having grown reminded I learned from another educational system... I learned to appreciate my family and to be empathetic.*

Interviewer: When choosing your university, what characteristics about the university did you consider?

Interviewee1: *it should have the program I wanted, it should be economical, it should be accessible, not difficult access I mean not to take three busses. Well, I think that is the important. Eh, there were comments about discrimination against... students, so that makes to think about and investigate a lot about the university.*

Interviewer: How the characteristics you have mentioned were beneficial for you?

Interviewee1: *They made me to choose and decide for a university. They make me to feel like in home. The tranquility for a student is worth as gold and I always perceive that in my life, and I think I got it in the Plata University. Currently, I have checked its*

*website and this university is so comfortable that it is full of Brazilians and Chinese students.*

Interviewer: What influenced on your university choice?

Interviewee1: *My family supported me a lot and motivated to improve.*

Interviewer: What risks did you consider when choosing your university abroad?

Interviewee1: *I suffer from asthma, so I was worried about not to find the medicine and imagine! I found the inhaler at half price. In Peru it is so expensive, but there was at less than half-price. Another was the loneliness, a woman alone on the streets... I tried to come back earlier... the security in the city is very important... another thing I did not consider was the climate, in there, it snows, and I was not prepared I suffered a lot the first year. I went to the hospital...*

Interviewer: From whom did you consider recommendations or comments for your university choice?

Interviewee1: *Family and friends, nowadays the Internet, I search on various websites, google maps.*

Interviewer: Where did you look for recommendations and comments about your university?

Interviewee1: *In the consulate, family and friends.*

Interviewer: In general, why recommendations and comments were important for your university choice?

Interviewee1: *One always seeks advice from other people, friends, family if they know the benefits of universities. I have family in Argentina in a province. I had friends studying in Buenos Aires and another friend in the Plata who recommended it me.*

Interview #2

Age: 27

Gender: male

Study abroad country: Canada

Interview setting: Interview conducted online at 23.00 on Wednesday 02.10.19.

(Start of the interview)

Interviewer: What motivated you to go abroad to study?

Interviewee 2: *Going abroad to study is never a bad idea, the kind of life you experience in the few years in a strange new land is invaluable to your growth as a person. The new cultures, foods and customs you experience open your mind and nourish your soul.*

Interviewer: How did you get interested in studying abroad?

Interviewee 2: *I got interested in studying abroad by many people who told me about their experiences in foreign countries. Their stories and adventures lit a fire in me to go and live my life to the fullest.*

Interviewer: In what ways did you learn about opportunities to study abroad?

Interviewee 2: *All you have to do is ask, there should be a department in your school that handles that. After asking I was connected with some people who went and learned more about it.*

Interviewer: What information did you look for about universities abroad?

Interviewee 2: *I looked at if they offered the program I was pursuing, location to the main city and previous experience from other students studying abroad.*

Interviewer: Where did you search information about opportunities to study abroad?

Interviewee 2: *You can find that information online, from students who went there and in the university you attend.*

Interviewer: How did you learn about your university abroad?

Interviewee 2: *I learned it through my university and through online sources. There are many forums that are dedicated to students studying abroad.*

Interviewer: Which foreign universities or countries did you think during your search for studies abroad? Why?

Interviewee 2: *Spain, England, Argentina. They were countries I always wanted to see, and they all had something familiar to me.*

Interviewer: In general, why was studying abroad beneficial for you?

Interviewee 2: *It was beneficial because it gave me a new perspective in life as well as many opportunities for immigration and a new life.*

Interviewer: When choosing your university, what characteristics about the university did you consider?

Interviewee 2: *The characteristics were not as important as the programs they offered and distance to a major city. However, it also helped if I saw that the department for my program was highly ranked in the country.*

Interviewer: How the characteristics you have mentioned were beneficial for you?

Interviewee 2: *They were beneficial because ones with the program I was in allowed me to continue my studies uninterrupted and the distance to a major city allowed me to take in the culture, food and people much easier than if I was in a university with nothing in the vicinity. As well as helping with travel times like getting to classes on time and getting home.*

Interviewer: What influenced on your university choice?

Interviewee 2: *My University choice was also influenced by the closeness to the place where I was living. Travel can be expensive if you do not plan ahead.*

Interviewer: What risks did you consider when choosing your university abroad?

Interviewee 2: *There are risks whether you are abroad or at home. The worst about being abroad is that you can get lost easy and people can take advantage of you. So, these risks are always in the back of my mind.*

Interviewer: From whom did you consider recommendations or comments for your university choice?

Interviewee 2: *I looked at other students who went there, as well as some academic advisors that were kind enough to sit down and explain some things about the university for me.*

Interviewer: Where did you look for recommendations and comments about your university?

Interviewee 2: *I looked in online forums and on the website of the universities I was interested in.*

Interviewer: In general, why recommendations and comments were important for your university choice?

Interviewee 2: *They were important because they gave first-hand experience of what life was like there. They also answered many questions I had about the process and problems I had. This put my mind at ease and made the whole process that much better.*

Interview #3

Age: 31

Gender: male

Study abroad country: Finland

Interview setting: Interview conducted face-to-face on Saturday 05.10.19.

(Start of the interview)

Interviewer: What motivated you to go abroad to study?

Interviewee 3: *Mainly because what I did in Peru was working in research and development of medicine but the problem was the following as I was formulator, I realized that I would be formulator junior, then formulator senior and finally at some point in my life I would end as head of formulations and in there I would be the top but I wanted to continue researching and see more things. So, then it was the main reason I wanted to study abroad.*

Interviewer: How did you get interested in studying abroad?

Interviewee 3: *Well, Today, there are many compatriots who went abroad, and they are generating first-hand knowledge.*

Interviewer: In what ways did you learn about opportunities to study abroad?

Interviewee 3: *Mainly, through the fairs that are organized by Concytec. I learned about different universities that offers certain careers and well, the range of studies that can be generated respect to my career, likewise, I had gone to these fairs and I had found three universities which were attractive and from which two of them offered the master degree program... one was the UCL and the another was the University of Turku, but a part from that I had the chance of studying... in The Netherlands, I was admitted but the problem was the program I wanted was in The Netherlands I discarded it, and between the UCL or University College London and University of Turku, in the UCL I could do the master's degree in one year, instead in Turku I could do it in two years but in the one year I just needed to do paper presentation but in Turku it would be thesis, so I would seem to be better to do a thesis by reason of academic weight, so that is what motivated me and I finally decided to come to Finland.*

Interviewer: What information did you look for about universities abroad?

Interviewee 3: *First, the courses, the syllable of each university. Second, the master's degree length. Third, the housing expenses, the living expenses, the quality of life too because definitely, I do not like the idea of coming to study and then to become an*

*automaton and I just study and not to have free time to do other extracurricular activities.*

Interviewer: Where did you search information about opportunities to study abroad?

Interviewee 3: *Ahhh, through the fairs that Concytec offered.*

Interviewer: How did you learn about your university abroad?

Interviewee 3: *Mainly, through the website, through the fair itself, and well I should thank to a friend Oskari who was a Finn, who gave me lots of information about the University of Turku, since he is a graduate and he made an exchange in Peru and when the fair was held I met him in there and we exchanged information.*

Interviewer: Which foreign universities or countries did you think during your search for studies abroad? Why?

Interviewee 3: *The Netherlands, England, Germany, Finland, Sweden. Mainly, because the ranking internationally, by reason of security, quality of life that these countries offer.*

Interviewer: In general, why was studying abroad beneficial for you?

Interviewee 3: *Well, mainly, I was given first-hand knowledge, I complemented many things that I used to only learn theoretically in Peru and well, now more than be a Latin American scientist I fell more like a world scientist.*

Interviewer: When choosing your university, what characteristics about the university did you consider?

Interviewee 3: *Mainly, the university location should be centric, it should be within a good position in the raking of its country, and well, as I said the syllabus and quality of teaching.*

Interviewer: How the characteristics you have mentioned were beneficial for you?

Interviewee 3: *Well, mainly, these help me to have a more bearable and not so chocking experience when I have to migrate from my country, to the kind of education to which I am get used, and above all the culture shock was not so dramatic.*

Interviewer: What influenced on your university choice?

Interviewee 3: *Mainly, one was the quality of life once living in the country, and the another, I was interested more on the thesis work for graduation, this seemed to have more weight academically speaking.*

Interviewer: What risks did you consider when choosing your university abroad?

Interviewee 3: *Mainly, monetary before to end the masters' degree or while I was looking for job, and the other one was maybe I could not adapt.*

Interviewer: From whom did you consider recommendations or comments for your university choice?

Interviewee 3: *As I commented, I had my friend a Finn called Oskari who recommended me the University of Turku, and well it was one of the main reasons I am in Turku now.*

Interviewer: Where did you look for recommendations and comments about your university?

Interviewee 3: *In several blogs, forums, the university' blog in which people write opinions, the news is published, and this convinced me.*

Interviewer: In general, why recommendations and comments were important for your university choice?

Interviewee 3: *In some way, these did influence because before to make a decision you need to know what were the previous people's experiences who have already studied in the university, and well to make an analysis to know how risky it is to go there or not.*



Interview #4

Age: 45

Gender: female

Study abroad country: Finland

Interview setting: Interview conducted face-to-face on Saturday 05.10.19.

(Start of the interview)

Interviewer: What motivated you to go abroad to study?

Interviewee 4: *Initially, I did not come to do a doctoral degree, it was because many years ago, I had worked with the Amazon project of the University of Turku, I had worked with the Iquitos... I had come before like four times to analyze the data I collected there, then the last time I came as researcher- student... guest researcher I realized the opportunity to do the doctorate and I enrolled to the doctorate. As I had data collected, I had material with me to work.*

Interviewer: How did you get interested in studying abroad?

Interviewee 4: *I did not have an objective to study abroad, simply it occurred because what I wanted to study because the specialists in that area were here.*

Interviewer: In what ways did you learn about opportunities to study abroad?

Interviewee 4: *Through the researchers who went to Iquitos.*

Interviewer: What information did you look for about universities abroad?

Interviewee 4: *None.*

Interviewer: Where did you search information about opportunities to study abroad?

Interviewee 4: *None of information.*

Interviewer: How did you learn about your university abroad?

Interviewee 4: *I supposed because I had already come before as guest researcher.*

Interviewer: Which foreign universities or countries did you think during your search for studies abroad? Why?

Interviewee 4: *None.*

Interviewer: In general, why was studying abroad beneficial for you?

Interviewee 4: *In the case of my specialty because the experts, researchers of the topic are here, and they had all the equipment to do my research.*

Interviewer: When choosing your university, what characteristics about the university did you consider?

Interviewee 4: *Non applicable...*

Interviewer: How the characteristics you have mentioned were beneficial for you?

Interviewee 4: *Because having the things mentioned, the development of my project has been more effective. Um, because I had the data, I had the equipment, the experience of researchers here.*

Interviewer: What influenced on your university choice?

Interviewee 4: *The fact that the researchers of ferns, what I study is ferns, are in this university. Let's say the researchers or specialists in my area.*

Interviewer: What risks did you consider when choosing your university abroad?

Interviewee 4: *No risk.*

Interviewer: From whom did you consider recommendations or comments for your university choice?

Interviewee 4: *From no one.*

Interviewer: Where did you look for recommendations and comments about your university?

Interviewee 4: *Nowhere.*

Interviewer: In general, why recommendations and comments were important for your university choice?

Interviewee 4: *No recommendation. As I said, I came to study the doctorate because of previous experiences, nobody recommended me... or I looked for information.*

Interview #5

Age: 30

Gender: male

Study abroad country: Finland

Interview setting: Interview conducted face-to-face on Saturday 05.10.19.

(Start of the interview)

Interviewer: What motivated you to go abroad to study?

Interviewee 5: *Eh, the university in which I studied in Lima, the Agrarian University had an exchange agreement with the Turku University directly; and the students of the top positions could access to this scholarship, and it is was one of the main reason when I learned about it and I wanted to access.*

Interviewer: How did you get interested in studying abroad?

Interviewee 5: *Well, it is not that I thought that the education in Peru is not of quality... For me, it was sufficient to study in a university of such prestige as the Agrarian University, but when I learned that there was the possibility of studying abroad for free with an scholarship with everything payed, I thought If I try little harder and I get to be on the top and access to education abroad, why not... so basically was to learn that there was opportunities to study in Finland.*

Interviewer: In what ways did you learn about opportunities to study abroad?

Interviewee 5: *In the university, in the faculty of forestry where I studied, eh there were always opportunities, meetings in which the faculty or the students made known different options, i.e. Me, before going to Finland, I wanted to go to Brazil for the advancement in forestry but I learned through the faculty, students' associations, the different opportunities... The international student office.*

Interviewer: What information did you look for about universities abroad?

Interviewee 5: *Well, in the first place, when I decided to start looking for options, first is that university you are interested in, to see the programs they have, the issues that one seeks. Once when you find a career or program that you are interested in, to see the requirements you need, how complicated can be, the time when you apply or not, basically those but first the programs and if those programs are in accordance what you are looking for.*

Interviewer: Where did you search information about opportunities to study abroad?

Interviewee 5: *Eh, I think I could not say specifically... it was through different organizations within the university, and once I learned about the option, one logically looks*

*for more. I can't not tell a platform where exactly, but then, the President scholarship appeared. This is more recently, now there are more options offered by the government and the same government has platforms in which you can access to President scholarship and national scholarships.*

Interviewer: How did you learn about your university abroad?

Interviewee 5: *Well, particularly, there was a cooperation agreement between my university and the university in Finland. There were already ties, I learned directly in my university in Peru.*

Interviewer: Which foreign universities or countries did you think during your search for studies abroad? Why?

Interviewee 5: *Well, the University of Turku because there was an active cooperation, then the British Columbia University in Canada because I heard many professionals who did doctorate there; and in the forestry field it was well recognized, and it had good programs; and the University of Sao Paulo because the technological advancement in the forestry field.*

Interviewer: In general, why was studying abroad beneficial for you?

Interviewee 5: *Well, definitely, go out from your environment makes you to grow up personally and professionally, when you experiment different. Academically, in the field there are not many options, maybe in other careers like Business, or International Business, in there, there is many options but masters' degree in forestry what I am doing I did not find lots of options.*

Interviewer: When choosing your university, what characteristics about the university did you consider?

Interviewee 5: *In my case, it was easier because I got a scholarship directly, but If had to decide eh, through a normal process and evaluate more criteria, I think I would have chosen whether the university has the program I want, a part from the international ranking and faculties ranking, the international environment, the environment in which the university is immersed, the lifestyle of the place.*

Interviewer: How the characteristics you have mentioned were beneficial for you?

Interviewee 5: *Um, to be in a friendly environment, for instance, where I live in Turku, to be in a student environment you have nature, there's no traffic, there's no pollution, so those characteristics; itself it is not a big city but all those characteristics make more peaceful your life. In respect living abroad is beneficial because in a typical Latin family you live at home, in my case, I lived alone, but to leave your environment*

*makes you to appreciate different things, makes you to grow personally, to value more the things you achieve, you care more about money.*

Interviewer: What influenced on your university choice?

Interviewee 5: *As I commented you, there was an agreement, I was the first top student in my faculty, so automatically I accessed to the university, but I did not limit myself to that university, I still looked for other options. At the end, maybe to know that it was a program that continue for more years, to know it was a university in Finland. I knew that there was a group of researchers that worked in the Amazon for thirty years and knowing that I had the economic support “the scholarship”.*

Interviewer: What risks did you consider when choosing your university abroad?

Interviewee 5: *When I chose the first time Finland it was an exchange. I did not think many risks, I did not have to pay my studies but If I would have thought about paying the studies, there had many risks to think about it. For instance, when I finished the masters' degree I back to Peru to work and I decided newly for doctorate, so I quit my job and logically you have to look for financing and this is a risk one has, ... so the financial is always a risk.*

Interviewer: From whom did you consider recommendations or comments for your university choice?

Interviewee 5: *Well, professionals in the sector, many participate in cooperation and agreements, so many of them recommended me.*

Interviewer: Where did you look for recommendations and comments about your university?

Interviewee 5: *Well, in that moment, it was more professionals who knew it. Logically, when you heard Finland you start thinking about the quality of education here, but If I had to choose other options, on the website pages you can take of the international rankings of universities or faculties rankings.*

Interviewer: In general, why recommendations and comments were important for your university choice?

Interviewee 5: *Well, if you are convinced about your university, maybe opinions cannot influence a lot, but logically if they are people of your field, important persons, professionals, teachers so listen their opinions I think they have something important.*

Interview #6

Age: 31

Gender: male

Study abroad country: Finland

Interview setting: Interview conducted face-to-face on Saturday 05.10.19.

(Start of the interview)

Interviewer: What motivated you to go abroad to study?

Interviewee 6: *Um, it is little difficult because ahh, it has one personal motive and one academic motive. The personal was to feel I did not fit in Peru, and the second was I had very good grades in the university, so this helped me to get a scholarship and to come to Finland.*

Interviewer: How did you get interested in studying abroad?

Interviewee 6: *Um, I think I liked the challenge to demonstrate I was good in the country I was and demonstrate I can be good here. Eh, the big difference is that in the Finnish system is not very competitive like in Peru. In Peru, for instance, you can calculate how good you are by your grades, you can know the position of merit you have and if your average is better than others. In fact, if you are better than others, you have more benefits, if you low grades you have to study more, you have to take the course again... instead here, there is no way to verify how good you are, it is more considered from the experience, and I think that Finns don't mind a lot if you learn very well or very bad, the important is that you learn how the things are done on a practical level and a bit theoretical. Then, when I came to Finland it was a bit shocking because I like to compete a lot but finally, I got used to it...*

Interviewer: In what ways did you learn about opportunities to study abroad?

Interviewee 6: *Um, my university had lots of publicity about universities abroad. As I had good grades, I always get opportunities to study abroad. My teachers in Peru always told me, you should go abroad to explore and then return, what they don't know is that I didn't complete that part of returning... yes...I had had very good education thanks to my parents who put me in a private school... so this helped me in the university to be given opportunities, among those to come to Finland. My teacher of research told me you should take advantage of this because Finland is interested in Analytical Chemistry... so for this reason, I came.*

Interviewer: What information did you look for about universities abroad?

Interviewee 6: ... *I did not know so much about Finland... I knew about Canada, Chile, Argentina, by then, I was offered opportunities to end my studies there, but I think I trusted more that my teacher said. I considered her as a key piece of knowledge in my studies, then I considered here advice, so that is why I came here. She was like dean of faculty, then we had a good relationship. In fact, the scholarship I had was to end the university and it consisted of nine months, then I had to back to Peru to validate those courses in my university. That process of validation and to get the degree could last one or two years but as the teacher was the dean, she made it very fast, and I had just applied for a master's degree, so I needed my degree....*

Interviewer: Where did you search information about opportunities to study abroad?

Interviewee 6: *Newly, I do not think I really searched lots of information. I had lots of luck because the secretary of the rector always informed me about opportunities of scholarship you can use it... at the beginning I was not interested in studying in South America, I was interested in going out from South America. I was interested in going to Canada because I spoke English, I wanted to study French, and Canada gave lots of opportunities but at the end, I came to Finland because the country was good and recommendations from my teacher in that time, so I didn't search information, I was given information.*

Interviewer: How did you learn about your university abroad?

Interviewee 6: *I think, this come in the information kit of the scholarship I was given. I was said you are going to study in this university. In fact, when I came to study to ... Yliopisto, I had lots of problems because the scholarship I had was for Biology students and not for Chemistry students... if you realized, most of the students here have studied Biology, Biochemistry, Genetics. The scholarship for Finland was only for those faculties, but in my case, as I was top student, I could not be denied...the scholarship was given to me... and in the scholarship was included an information kit.*

Interviewer: Which foreign universities or countries did you think during your search for studies abroad? Why?

Interviewee 6: *Canada because I lived in USA for a while, New York. I like USA for visiting not for living. Ahh, I found Canada interesting, until Finland came up, before Finland, I think I did not have so much knowledge, always I had the idea to end the university in Peru but I got the opportunity to end the university in Finland, so I found the option good and that helped me to apply for masters' degree. And I thought to study a master's degree here because if I compare the price of a master's degree in*

*Canada than doing it here; in Canada you have to pay for the master's degree. Here the master's degree in that time, it was free... so I decided on Finland.*

Interviewer: In general, why was studying abroad beneficial for you?

Interviewee 6: *I think for everyone, not because of studying, because of exploring new cultures. If you stay in your bubble... where you live, you cannot know how other cultures are, you cannot know how other people think, I think this helped me a lot. Coming from a very conservative family, living here it is completely different. Even, I had traveled a lot for my job and studies, so it is good. Unfortunately, in Peru, there are not many opportunities for students, unless you are a very good at you are doing, then you can go abroad, but I think the fact that of visiting more countries, even the nearest should be more encouraged. Santiago, Argentina, because there is a big difference between just staying in Lima and go to Santiago, people in there think different or if you go to Argentina or another country, so it is always good to explore.*

Interviewer: When choosing your university, what characteristics about the university did you consider?

Interviewee 6: *Well, I did not choose ... Yliopisto. It was proposed to me, but the problem I had when I came was there were not courses in English for my degree, so for that reason I had lots of problems to get the university. Then, they offered me to take the courses in..., there it is where I started my career ... Akademy is a very good university in chemistry and in analytical chemistry research. Eh, then, my story was complicated. I was student from ... Yliopisto but I took credits in a different university. After that, it was ruled for everyone not to take... but when I applied for master's degree I decided on ... Akademy because the courses I took there and I knew their level of research it has, I had friends in there... in fact, I speak Swedish than Finnish. I found Swedish is easier.*

*I think I consider the courses; it is difficult to explain because now I am telling you from the point of view when I came first time to Finland. Ok, I am going to study in this university, compared with Peru, it is much better, and I have to take the courses... Now, my point of view is a university of prestige... if you go to the ranking of universities in Europe... Gothenburg has a good position... So, when I came, I did not look for how good the university was but the courses I can take, and If I compare it with San Marcos University, the difference was abysmal. Now, I have and education from... Akademy, I did the Business Master's degree in ammattikorkeakoulu because I wanted a degree quickly and that it does not cost a lot, and to study in there is not so difficult.*



*About Toxicology, I thought it a lot because of my job, I wanted a good university with prestige...*

Interviewer: How the characteristics you have mentioned were beneficial for you?

Interviewee 6: *Well, basically, the education that I had here in Finland helped me to get the job I have now. Now, I choose, the prestige at level of Europe. It is easier for the recruiter to know your education is much better by a university of prestige.*

Interviewer: What influenced on your university choice?

Interviewee 6: *Well, ... Yliopisto was proposed, it was the only option, so there was no influence, but with my experience in ammattikorkeakoulu, yes, I can give you a more personal data. My studies in Business Administration was influenced because it was easier. Basically, all people who work in industry, if they want to become manager it is not only enough to have experience, they need to have studies. Then, in that time I was working, and I could not study full time. Then, in ammattikorkeakoulu you can do it intensive... then, that is why I did it. It is practical, and it is a degree. In Peru, it is an institute but here, it is considered as university, then I decided on ammattikorkeakoulu. For Gothenburg, what influenced was the prestige, then I can give you those options. I choose Business because it is fast and flexible, I do not know anything about Business, I just applied because I need the degree; and the Gothenburg I did it because the prestige.*

Interviewer: What risks did you consider when choosing your university abroad?

Interviewee 6: *I think, I did not consider risks... I think my parents took the risks because I was the only child and they are very conservative. In my case, I wanted to go abroad because I did not want to live in that system all my life. You know, in Peru you are thirty years old and you are still living with your parents. Here, in Finland, Finns are more independent. I came when I was twenty, then it helped me to be more independent. I never worried about risks because people here are very friendly, you can leave at midnight... and nothing happens to you. You leave your mobile while you are going to the bathroom within a restaurant, you come back and you find your phone there. At economical level, I was lucky I had a scholarship. Ahh, as I did many credits, my teacher in... found me a job in research. I did the master's degree and I got salary at the same time. I did not have to pay anything...*

Interviewer: From whom did you consider recommendations or comments for your university choice?

Interviewee 6: *As I said before, the dean of the university, if it would not have been by her, I could not have been here. She helped me a lot to validate my studies and to finish my studies. Generally, in Peru, this process takes long time.*

Interviewer: Where did you look for recommendations and comments about your university?

Interviewee 6: *Three examples. When I came to ... Yliopisto, it was by my teacher. I changed to ... Akademy... Now, when I studied in ammattikorkeakoulu, in fact, the recommendations I got were from a Peruvian friend who was doing a doctorate. She quit it because she was doing bad. She did the master's degree, she found a job, ... About Toxicology, in fact, I did it because my job..., and many of my colleagues are studying Toxicology and they recommended me to study in...*

Interviewer: In general, why recommendations and comments were important for your university choice?

Interviewee 6: *Um, I think to be able to make a choice. About ammattikorkeakoulu, I decided to do it in there instead of Turku Business School because my friend recommended me... About Toxicology, I did it because my colleagues at job, so this helped me to decide quickly.*

Interview #7

Age: 30

Gender: female

Study abroad country: Finland

Interview setting: Interview conducted face-to-face on Saturday 05.10.19.

(Start of the interview)

Interviewer: What motivated you to go abroad to study?

Interviewee 7: *Well, since I studied in San Marcos, I realized that I would have better opportunities abroad that was my main motive, and well, I was always looking for opportunities, but it seemed to be difficult. There was an agreement between Turku University and San Marcos University, I belonged to a study group, and just the ad came out, I saw it and I applied to be here by nine months at first. During these nine months the Finnish government provide us the living expenses...*

Interviewer: How did you get interested in studying abroad?

Interviewee 7: *In the laboratory... there, I was bachelor and there were people of doctoral degree, post docs. They told their stories, they had traveled to Germany, Brussels, they told they did this, we found this technology, this thing was a bit limited in San Marcos. So that was what got me, to see others to go out and experience. On the other side, I wanted to live alone and grow up, to stop living with my parents.*

Interviewer: In what ways did you learn about opportunities to study abroad?

Interviewee 7: *In the San Marcos University, there is a department that is in charge of this programs abroad for students. They constantly publish scholarships, exchange programs but our supervisor a woman who made a doctoral degree in Chile. She is very active leader, so she inspired me too. She motivated a lot to students.*

Interviewer: What information did you look for about universities abroad?

Interviewee 7: *I looked for possibilities for Spain because my English was not so good. This is a problem for San Marcos students. I have friends who are very intelligent, but they do not speak English... I was looking for opportunities through offices of exchange programs, seminars where you get information also about visas.*

Interviewer: Where did you search information about opportunities to study abroad?

Interviewee 7: *Well, in our case our boss was very active, she had contacts in Brussels, USA, Argentina, Brazil. Apart from that in San Marcos, we have a department in charge of that, so they published all the opportunities abroad. The teacher was who sent us a mail about Finland, I was interested in, so I applied.*

Interviewer: How did you learn about your university abroad?

Interviewee 7: *To be sincere, when they said Turku, I said what? where is Turku? Is it in Turkey?... I did not imagine coming and I was doubting because I did not have contacts here related on what I was doing, and it was very new for me. However, the teacher was who motivated us. She contacts to one Peruvian here, so I wrote her to ask her how does Finland look like? how did she come? Traveling details, I was oriented then I met another Peruvian one.*

Interviewer: Which foreign universities or countries did you think during your search for studies abroad? Why?

Interviewee 7: *Thought first Belgium because my teacher had contacts there, then I thought Spain because the language, I said Spain will be easier because my English... So those countries were my options. Also, I thought Argentina because the language.*

Interviewer: In general, why was studying abroad beneficial for you?

Interviewee 7: *Mainly, I could access to a master's degree. In Peru, you have to pay too much. I came from a humble family..., ahh you know what this was another reason I wanted to travel because I wanted to work. My plan was to back and to take my family forward... Now, I have a master's degree and doctoral degree. This is something that I could not have achieved in Peru. So, I feel I grew up professionally and personally. If I had to talk little more personally, I was very protected and unsecure, so with this travel I grew up. To change my way of thinking.*

Interviewer: When choosing your university, what characteristics about the university did you consider?

Interviewee 7: *Well, to be sincere. This opportunity came up and I applied to see what can happen. I did not plan it... I always looking for the safest option.*

Interviewer: How the characteristics you have mentioned were beneficial for you?

Interviewee 7: *Well, at the beginning, I thought maybe it is not very known, but then I said it is the first time I go abroad, I got this scholarship... So maybe after that, I will have the opportunity maybe to go another university or another group... then I did not have a list of this yes or this is not... I just wanted to leave.*

Interviewer: What influenced on your university choice?

Interviewee 7: *Well, I did not choose the university. The only I tried to consider my field of working. I was working in the camelid production area. There were opportunities of job, there were interested courses related on other areas, I have been always*

*open to new things. My objectives were opened. So directly, I did not say it has to be this university.*

Interviewer: What risks did you consider when choosing your university abroad?

*Interviewee 7: Um, well, in general, it is very important about my health, I had lupus. Then, in Peru I had to be very controlled. So, to come to a country that is far away it was difficult. So, I had to contact to a coordinator that oriented me about the health system here and costs of medication. Another thing is the economical fact. Hopefully, the scholarship covered all the expenses, before to come here I had to work. I applied to scholarship to Concytec to come too. I wanted to anyways to leave. Professionally, I did not have any problem I knew that If I leave anyways it would be good for me. Finally, my parents understood. The emotional part was that in Peru, children leave with our parents until they get married. In my family, we are very close, and they are very protective.... So, it was another risk.*

Interviewer: From whom did you consider recommendations or comments for your university choice?

*Interviewee 7: The comments I got were from people who were living here. The teacher contacted me with two Peruvians here in the same field of study. So, they oriented me.*

Interviewer: Where did you look for recommendations and comments about your university?

*Interviewee 7: Also, the good thing of this program in Finland. There was a coordinator... who oriented us about all, we need just to follow all. She had a manual where she informed us about the visa, how to look for an apartment here, about the courses, the moment for registration, everything about the university was given by her. We were in communication with her constantly. It was like that, and the other Peruvians who helped.*

Interviewer: In general, why recommendations and comments were important for your university choice?

*Interviewee 7: Well, in particular, it was good for me to hear from Peruvians say that leaving from Peru, you will grow up personally and professionally. It was important because it motivated me more and gave me more confidence about thinking this is the right university.*

Interview #8

Age: 51

Gender: woman

Study abroad country: Finland

Interview setting: Interview conducted face-to-face on Saturday 05.10.19.

(Start of the interview)

Interviewer: What motivated you to go abroad to study?

Interviewee 8: *Well, the possibilities I could have, abroad to be open to a bigger field of studies. I could have a better education here than in Peru, because the doctorate in Peru was in dippers. It did not seem to be enough strong, so something better had to be found.*

Interviewer: How did you get interested in studying abroad?

Interviewee 8: *Well, I thought that Biology was more developed abroad. Firstly, I did not think about Finland, I thought about Missouri, the science was more developed there.*

Interviewer: In what ways did you learn about opportunities to study abroad?

Interviewee 8: *In that time, there was mails to the teachers or any information, so they showed brochures. There were posts on the boards.*

Interviewer: What information did you look for about universities abroad?

Interviewee 8: *The courses I can apply for.*

Interviewer: Where did you search information about opportunities to study abroad?

Interviewee 8: *The same, I did not look for it. As I was related on Taxonomy, people who came to the museum I got references about the places where to study or countries. I was interested in Biology too.*

Interviewer: How did you learn about your university abroad?

Interviewee 8: *Well, it was because I was working in a Peruvian-Finnish project of the University of Turku...*

Interviewer: Which foreign universities or countries did you think during your search for studies abroad? Why?

Interviewee 8: *Missouri because it has a big herbal and the persons from there came to collaborate with us worked in there. Another was England.*

Interviewer: In general, why was studying abroad beneficial for you?

Interviewee 8: *Personally, you meet more people from different cultures, you improve your English, you benefit from the development, in my case in Taxonomy. The laboratories are better equipped, all that. The facilities in general was better.*

Interviewer: When choosing your university, what characteristics or factors about the university did you consider?

Interviewee 8: *I did not choose it, so I just took it. There was a project about the Amazon with the University of Turku to preserve it. For that reason, I got interested. It was not Taxonomy itself; it was the project itself to preserve the Amazon forest in a sustainable form.*

Interviewer: How the characteristics you have mentioned were beneficial for you?

Interviewee 8: *It was because this project was a combination of basic science with applied science, in other words, Taxonomy with ecology process. Also, many people worked, so we can do a plan that could work of using to identify the different types of forest to preserve them or use them in a sustainable form.*

*I could get my master's degree, then maybe the doctorate, so I can continue my studies. The research never ends. I think is this, it can allow to be in research.*

Interviewer: What influenced on your university choice?

Interviewee 8: *The objective of the project and the job that this demand. This has hooked me from the beginning. The Amazon projects.*

Interviewer: What risks did you consider when choosing your university abroad?

Interviewee 8: *Well, maybe to be far away from my family. After that risks, none. On the contrary, there are more possibilities.*

Interviewer: From whom did you consider recommendations or comments for your university choice?

Interviewee 8: *Through the lecturer and professor.*

Interviewer: Where did you look for recommendations and comments about your university?

Interviewee 8: *I did not look for lots of. It was a project, these researchers in Peru gave talks, in that moment, it was the ambassador of Finland who was in Peru very active. He likes to work with birds, we knew him in the Natural museum. It was like the personal contact with them.*

Interviewer: In general, why recommendations and comments were important for your university choice?

Interviewee 8: *It was more by knowing them in action. I was conducted through the studies by knowing the researchers, the ambassador during the project. Maybe I was not so critical.*



Education program: The UPC International Degrees: NCUK

Testimonial 1:

My name is... I am currently studying International Business Management at the University of Sheffield in the United Kingdom. The why did I decide to study in the United Kingdom... when I did some research, I found out it that it was actually very feasible. The course duration was really convenient for me because it only takes 3 years or maximum 4, you decide to do a placement year and also, the expenses weren't as higher as I expected and the prestigious you get from this world-class university is just amazing. The university of Sheffield is ranking the 75<sup>th</sup> position in the world rankings. I think those were the main reasons why I decided to go to UK. Well, this experience has been tremendously beneficial to me because it has allowed me to become independent, also, I managed to start working for the first time since I have been in the UK... The grow that you get out is truly valuable, and you will become so employable that you won't have a problem when you finish your studies (UPCedupe 2018).

## Peruvian public institution: Pronabec

### Testimonial 2:

The university I chose was the University of Queensland in Australia because Australia and Peru both have lots of solar energy, both have lots of sun during almost the whole year; therefore, Australia has lots of experience in renewable energies and it was there where I could learn more (Pronabec 2019).

### Testimonial 3:

I did a Master in Public Administration, it's a program of two years... having contact with a very large international community has helped me a lot, the university and the city are very dynamic and active, lots of immigrants, so you meet people from every corner of the world, this is positive because it helps you to learn about more cultures, new experiences, to have new outlooks, and to make a bigger network of contacts and friends (Pronabec 2019)

### Testimonial 4:

I applied for master's degree in Public Administration in the Columbia University... I knew I wanted to study a master's degree and which university. I searched universities. I searched the ranking of universities. I checked in England, the United States and Singapore but at the end I chose the United States. In my experience, I become independent, I remember the quality of teaching, the internationalization I can contact people in Sudan, Germany. I was in front of ministers, United Nations people. My job opportunities have increased since then (Pronabec 2019).

## Exchange programs Finland-Peru

### Testimonial 5:

... I could see that I was in one of the best universities in the world. Not only for the range of business courses, but also, I could enroll courses of different programs. The city of Helsinki is quite and organized. In winter, it was a surprise to see more than 3 people walking out. The city looks amazing cover with snow. I could see the beautiful infrastructure walking on frozen sea. The first friends I had were my tutors, with them I had my first activities, e.g. skiing, bonfires. The organization of business students organized many events. I was in the "... city challenge" riding a bike in the city. You can travel by ferry to other countries "Tallinn" (Pacífico 2019).

### Testimonial 6:

My experience in "... university" was very positive. The international relations office helped a lot. They always answered my mails and questions even when I was in Lima. Housing is well located and near transportation. Since I arrived, I had activities to be joined with other exchange students. In the orientation week I was helped to do paperwork for transportation card... if not it would be very expensive... I recommend a lot join the activities through the student's organization. Finns are friendly, the city is safe and organized. You can travel by ferry to Sweden, Estonia by 10 euros even San Petersburg. I really recommend the exchange program in... the university is spectacular; I could join to bachelor's degree courses and master's degree courses (Pacífico 2019).