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THE MARKETING EFFICIENCY OF ENGLISH DEGREE PROGRAMMES IN FINNISH UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES – CASE TUAS



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BACHELOR'S THESIS | ABSTRACT
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THE MARKETING EFFICIENCY OF ENGLISH DEGREE PROGRAMMES IN FINNISH UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES – CASE TUAS

In 2014 Turku University of Applied Sciences (TUAS) was transformed into a corporation following the Ministry of Education and Culture's national polytechnic reform. While the main reasons for the overhaul were to better and more independently support the labour market and to facilitate flexibility and internationality, also the financing and government funding of polytechnics in Finland was revamped. This in turn has increased the independence and decision-making of each polytechnic and given the newly incorporated higher education institutions the possibility to more easily differentiate themselves in the eyes of their target audience.

The following thesis focused on investigating how TUAS markets its English degree programmes and studying the concepts of services marketing with an emphasis on marketing of education. The main objective of this thesis was to explore the marketing possibilities for TUAS and to gain insight on what marketing channels and methods work best when advertising a degree program for a target audience consisting of young adults.

Data collection for this thesis comprised of both qualitative (interview of two current students of TUAS) and quantitative (online survey for students of TUAS) methods. The interviewees and respondents of the survey were asked about their usage of social media, radio, printed media and the Internet as well as their views on various questions regarding advertising and the most effective marketing channels.

The findings of the research revealed that currently TUAS reaches the public most efficiently via the social media, whereas the overall media coverage of TUAS is weak. The importance of social media presence and activity is discussed extensively while also other marketing channels such as radio, printed media, Internet and television were analyzed.

KEYWORDS:

Marketing, services, social media, education

Alex Stenvall

ENGLANNINKIELISTEN TUTKINTOJEN MARKKINOINNIN TEHOKKUUS SUOMALAISSA AMMATTIKORKEAKOULUISSA – CASE TURUN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

Vuonna 2014 Turun ammattikorkeakoulu muuttui osakeyhtiöksi osana opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriön valtakunnallista AMK-uudistusta. Vaikka pääsyitä olivat parempi ja vapaampi työmarkkinoiden tukeminen sekä joustavan ja itsenäisen toiminnan helpottaminen, myös ammattikorkeakoulujen rahoitusmallit uudistettiin. Tämä uudistus on kasvattanut ammattikorkeakoulujen itsenäisyyttä ja päätöksentekoa antaen vastikään yhtiötetyille ammattikorkeakouluille mahdollisuuden erottua helpommin kohdeyleisön silmissä.

Tämä opinnäytetyö keskittyi selvittämään, kuinka Turun ammattikorkeakoulu markkinoi englanninkielisiä tutkintojaan ja tutkimaan palvelumarkkinoinnin käsitteitä painotuksen ollessa koulutuksen markkinoimisessa. Opinnäytetyön päätavoitteena oli tutkia Turun ammattikorkeakoulun markkinoinnin mahdollisuuksia ja perehtyä siihen, mitkä markkinointikanavat ja metodit toimivat parhaiten tutkinto-ohjelman markkinoimisessa nuorista aikuisista koostuvalle kohderyhmälle.

Tietojen kerääminen tässä opinnäytetyössä koostui sekä kvalitatiivisista (kahden nykyisen Turun ammattikorkeakoulun opiskelijan haastattelu) että kvantitatiivisista (online-kysely nykyisille opiskelijoille) metodeista. Haastatellut ja kyselyyn vastanneet vastasivat kysymyksiin koskien sosiaalisen median käyttöä, radiota, printtimediaa ja internetiä sekä näkemyksiään mainoksista ja tehokkaimmista markkinointikanavista. Tutkimustulokset paljastivat, että tällä hetkellä Turun ammattikorkeakoulu tavoittaa yleisönsä parhaiten sosiaalisen median välityksellä, kun taas yleinen medianäkyvyys Turun ammattikorkeakoululla on heikko. Näkyvyys ja aktiivisuus sosiaalisessa mediassa käsitellään kattavasti sekä myös muut markkinointikanavat kuten radio, printtimedia, Internet ja televisio analysoitiin.

ASIASANAT:

Markkinointi, palvelut, sosiaalinen media, koulutus

CONTENT

| | |
|--|-----------|
| LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS | 7 |
| 1 INTRODUCTION | 8 |
| 1.1. Background of the thesis | 8 |
| 1.2. Research questions | 9 |
| 1.3. Thesis structure | 9 |
| 2 FOUNDATIONS OF MARKETING | 11 |
| 2.1 Marketing | 11 |
| 2.1.1 Services Marketing | 14 |
| 2.1.2 Degree Programme Marketing | 19 |
| 2.2 Higher Education Marketing | 21 |
| 2.2.1 Social Network | 21 |
| 2.2.2 Google AdWords | 22 |
| 2.2.3 Traditional channels | 23 |
| 2.3 Branding | 23 |
| 2.3.1 Service branding | 24 |
| 2.3.2 Importance of branding in higher education | 24 |
| 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY | 26 |
| 3.1 Introduction | 26 |
| 3.2 Approaches and data collection methods | 26 |
| 3.3 Research strategy | 27 |
| 3.4 Research reliability and validity | 28 |
| 3.5 Sampling | 29 |
| 4 FINDINGS | 31 |
| 4.1 Students' views on the marketing of TUAS | 31 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 4.2 Online survey | 33 |
| 5 CONCLUSION | 47 |
| 5.1 How does TUAS market its English speaking degree programmes? | 47 |
| 5.2 What could be done to efficiently and effectively market English speaking degree programmes in TUAS? | 48 |
| 5.3 Suggestions for further research | 49 |
| REFERENCES | 51 |

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Questionnaire form

FIGURES

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1. Age of respondents | 33 |
| Figure 2. Gender of respondents | 34 |
| Figure 3. Usage of social media | 34 |
| Figure 4. Social media channels | 35 |
| Figure 5. Newspapers or their digital editions | 36 |
| Figure 6. Selection of newspapers | 37 |
| Figure 7. Reading news on Finnish websites | 38 |
| Figure 8. Popularity of Finnish websites | 38 |
| Figure 9. Sections of news | 39 |
| Figure 10. Radio listening | 40 |
| Figure 11. Selection of radio channels | 41 |
| Figure 12. Notices of marketing from all schools | 42 |
| Figure 13. Marketing channels of all schools | 42 |
| Figure 14. Marketing from TUAS | 43 |
| Figure 15. Notices of TUAS's marketing | 44 |
| Figure 16. Memorable advertising | 45 |
| Figure 17. Reasons for studying in TUAS | 45 |

TABLES

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1. Comparison of Marketing 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 (Kotler; Kartajaya & Setiawan, 2010) | 12 |
|--|----|

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 2. US Total Media Ad Spending Share, by Media, 2012-2018 (eMarketer Inc, 2014) | 13 |
| Table 3. Four broad categories of services (Wirtz; Chew & Lovelock, 2012) | 15 |
| Table 4. The 7Ps of Marketing (Wirtz;Chew;& Lovelock, 2012) | 15 |
| Table 5. Threats to reliability (Saunders;Lewis;& Thornhill, 2012) | 29 |
| Table 6. Cross-comparison of answers of the interview | 31 |

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS

| | |
|------|--------------------------------------|
| TUAS | Turku University of Applied Sciences |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| HRM | Human Resource Management |
| CTR | Click-through rate |
| UAS | University of Applied Sciences |
| FNA | Finnish Newspapers Association |
| PR | Public relations |
| CSR | Corporate social responsibility |

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the thesis

In 2014 TUAS was transformed into a corporation following the Ministry of Education and Culture's national polytechnic reform. While the main reasons for the overhaul were to better and more independently support the labour market and to facilitate flexibility and internationality, also the financing and government funding of polytechnics in Finland was revamped. This in turn has increased the independence and decision-making of each polytechnic and given the newly incorporated higher education institutions the possibility to more easily differentiate themselves in the eyes of their target audience. As of 2015, there are 26 universities of applied sciences in Finland with a total number of students at 143 200. While the number of universities of applied sciences has been on the decline as a result of merges, many of the schools have been able to stably operate without exterior pressure to change. One such school is TUAS, among the biggest universities of applied sciences in Finland with 9 300 students in 2014. (Statistics Finland, 2015) (Turku University of Applied Sciences, 2015)

During my studies in TUAS I began developing an interest in marketing, whether it was of high-tech products, basic products or services. During my internship at the admissions office my foreman Anu Lehtinen and I spoke of the possibility of me doing my thesis about a subject that is of the admissions office's interest. This was a fortunate coincidence for me to make my thesis about a subject I have developed an interest in and have the possibility to do it by request.

This thesis studied the current marketing efficiency of English degree programmes in TUAS and explored the possibilities of improving the marketing aspect. At the moment, there is not a large marketing campaign behind those programmes because there is already a good amount of people applying each

year, but to ensure TUAS will get the best applicants and to ensure TUAS's success, a good marketing campaign is of use. I was curious to explore more efficient ways to bring knowledge of TUAS and learn about its current state.

I will thus conduct a study of marketing with an emphasis on service marketing both to learn valuable information of the topic and to find the most efficient marketing channels for TUAS to market its English speaking degrees.

1.2. Research questions

I will first identify how TUAS currently markets its English speaking degree programmes and lastly investigate effective ways for TUAS to market.. In order to achieve these objectives, two research questions are formed as follows:

1. How does TUAS market its English speaking degree programmes?
2. What could be done to efficiently and effectively market English speaking degree programmes in TUAS?

1.3. Thesis structure

This thesis will be divided mainly into three parts:

Firstly before the results from the research are drawn, essential knowledge of marketing is presented. Books and articles will be studied in order to understand what is marketing and how it works, especially in the context of a service. Several theories will be discussed in this part as well to understand the fundamentals of marketing.

After the literature review of the fundamentals of marketing, the marketing of TUAS will be examined.

Finally a pragmatic discussion about the research questions using theories found in the literature review and the found results. It discusses the current

state of English degree programme marketing and with the aid of researched theories aims to improve the effectiveness of marketing of TUAS and to give the organization constructive recommendations.

2 FOUNDATIONS OF MARKETING

2.1 Marketing

Marketing is a widely covered form of communication in business. Possibly because of the extensive research directed towards this key element of value communication, there is still no consensus on the definition of market. What the researchers do agree upon is that marketing is virtually everywhere; on the radio, television, newspapers, billboards, posters and packaging. These examples are merely the tip of the iceberg of what is marketing because selling and advertising are not the only, but the most visible forms of marketing. (Groucott, 2005, ss. 4-5) (Kotler & Armstrong, Principles of Marketing, 2005, ss. 4-5)

The use of marketing is not essential to the success of only for-profit companies. Not-for-profit organizations such as schools, museums and hospitals also use marketing as a tool for public relations and publicity. Therefore we can conclude that even though marketing is complicated to define, the goal of marketing is the same whether it is used by a commercial organization or a non-commercial organization; attracting new customers and keeping and growing current customers. (Groucott, 2005, ss. 4-5) (Kotler & Armstrong, Principles of Marketing, 2005, ss. 4-5)

Marketing as an action has been around humanity as long as we have been able to communicate with each other and have been able to express our wants and demands to others. Simply put, marketing as an action is about interaction between people and organizations in trading and how to serve the relationships between one other especially in the client role. (Middleton, 2011, ss. 2-6)

In 1960 E. Jerome McCarthy released a book called Basic Marketing: A Managerial Approach. He proposed the now-famous 4 Ps Model which defines marketing's business tools, product, price, place & promotion. It became a framework for marketers around the world. Since then marketing has gone

through major transitions starting from a simple selling & promoting thinking towards the current competitive situation where there is almost always more supply than demand. Without competition marketing would not be nearly as vital as it currently is, but because marketing happens with everything and everywhere organizations will have to take action in order to ensure their success. (Repo, 2000, ss. 16-17)

Marketing has experienced three drastic changes during the last 60 years and we are currently experiencing the third one of them. In Table 1 the characteristics of these three phases are cross-compared by Kotler. (Kotler;Kartajaya;& Setiawan, Marketing 3.0, 2010)

Table 1. Comparison of Marketing 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 (Kotler;Kartajaya;& Setiawan, Marketing 3.0, 2010)

| | Marketing 1.0 Product-centric | Marketing 2.0 Consumer-oriented | Marketing 3.0 Values-driven |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Objective | Sell products | Satisfy and retain the consumers | Make the world a better place |
| Enabling forces | Industrial revolution | Information technology | New wave technology |
| How companies see the market | Mass buyers with physical needs | Smarter consumer with mind and heart | Whole human with mind, heart and spirit |
| Key marketing concept | Product development | Differentiation | Values |
| Company marketing guidelines | Product specification | Corporate and product positioning | Corporate mission, vision and values |
| Value propositions | Functional | Functional and emotional | Functional, emotional and spiritual |
| Interaction with customers | One-to-many transaction | One-to-one relationship | Many-to-many collaboration |

As one can see from Table 1,

First phase was Marketing 1.0 which was a product-centric phase that started after the industrial revolution. Second phase was Marketing 2.0 that was a consumer-oriented phase that started after the emergence of information technology. Communication between consumers was on an increase and

companies changed their objective and perception of consumers to a customer-friendly position. The transition to the values-driven third phase Marketing 3.0 is happening right now. Companies want to make similar minded consumers come together in order to form customer communities and instead of differentiation, companies want to market their values and identity. Therefore the leap is not as drastic as it was between Marketing 1.0 and Marketing 2.0 because much of the similar ideas were already implemented in Marketing 2.0. (Kotler;Kartajaya;& Setiawan, Marketing 3.0, 2010)

Depending on the industry, many companies and organizations still conduct their marketing according to Marketing 1.0, while some have shifted to Marketing 2.0 but few companies or organizations implement and understand Marketing 3.0. It is important to also note that marketing needs to follow people and now that customers have moved to the Internet, so does marketing need to follow this trend of digitalism. Digital channels will surpass TV in 2018 as the most valuable media according to eMarketer Inc. The numbers derive from the U.S. but are as relevant to all developed western markets. (eMarketer Inc, 2014)

Table 2. US Total Media Ad Spending Share, by Media, 2012-2018 (eMarketer Inc, 2014)

| US Total Media Ad Spending Share, by Media, 2012-2018 | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <i>% of total</i> | | | | | | | |
| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
| TV | 39.1% | 38.8% | 38.1% | 37.3% | 36.9% | 36.2% | 35.7% |
| Digital | 22.3% | 25.2% | 28.2% | 30.9% | 33.2% | 35.3% | 37.3% |
| —Mobile | 2.6% | 5.7% | 9.8% | 14.0% | 18.7% | 22.6% | 26.4% |
| Print | 20.7% | 19.0% | 17.7% | 16.5% | 15.5% | 14.7% | 14.0% |
| —Newspapers* | 11.5% | 10.2% | 9.3% | 8.6% | 8.0% | 7.5% | 7.1% |
| —Magazines* | 9.2% | 8.8% | 8.4% | 7.9% | 7.5% | 7.2% | 6.9% |
| Radio** | 9.3% | 8.9% | 8.6% | 8.2% | 7.8% | 7.5% | 7.1% |
| Outdoor | 4.0% | 4.1% | 4.0% | 3.9% | 3.8% | 3.7% | 3.6% |
| Directories* | 4.5% | 4.0% | 3.5% | 3.1% | 2.8% | 2.5% | 2.3% |

*Note: eMarketer benchmarks its US newspaper ad spending projections against the NAA and its US outdoor ad spending projections against the OAAA, for both of which the last full year measured was 2012; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding; *print only; **excludes off-air radio & digital*

Source: eMarketer, June 2014

2.1.1 Services Marketing

What separates purchasing a service from purchasing a tangible object is the lack of transfer of the ownership when buying a service. In fact, services are more about rental than purchase for many times service is about access to facilities, networks, skills or expertise. Additionally it needs to be noted that services are produced and consumed simultaneously. Therefore when customer is paying for services, it should be considered as paying for experiences or solutions rather than paying for a tangible object. (Wirtz;Chew;& Lovelock, 2012, s. 13)

Considering that in 2013 70,4 % of Finland's GDP was produced by services, a bigger emphasis should be also put on service marketing. It is a growing trend because in 2004 services' share of Finland's GDP was only 63,7 %. While the value of services is ever growing it is also an international phenomenon because most of the highly developed nations account 67-75 % of their GDP in services. (Statistics Finland, 2014) (Wirtz;Chew;& Lovelock, 2012, s. 6)

However there are big differences between services depending on what is being processed; people, physical objects, information or data can all be processed. Processing itself can be tangible or intangible. Tangible actions relate to processes with people's bodies or to their physical possessions. Intangible relate to processes with people's minds or their intangible assets. With this classification different services can be divided into four categories as depicted in the Table 3.

Table 3. Four broad categories of services (Wirtz;Chew;& Lovelock, 2012, s. 15)

| Nature of the Service Act | Who or What is the Direct Recipient of the Service? | |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| | People | Possessions |
| Tangible Actions | People processing (services directed at people's bodies) • Health Care | Possessions processing (services directed at physical possessions) • Repair and Maintenance |
| Intangible Actions | Mental stimulus processing (services directed at people's mind) • Education | Information processing (services directed at intangible assets) • Accounting |

4 Ps of the marketing mix is a business tool that marketers use to market traditional manufactured goods. 4 Ps focus on *product, price, place* and *promotion*. 4Ps is also known as the traditional marketing mix. However, in service marketing 4 Ps is not compatible alone to fully form an efficient marketing plan and therefore it has been expanded to 7 Ps. The three added Ps are *process, physical environment* and *people*. This 7Ps model is also known as the extended services marketing mix. Table 4 will depict the 7 Ps. (Wirtz;Chew;& Lovelock, 2012, s. 20)

Table 4. The 7Ps of Marketing (Wirtz;Chew;& Lovelock, 2012)

| | | |
|------|------|----------------------|
| 7 Ps | 4 Ps | Product |
| | | Price |
| | | Place |
| | | Promotion |
| | 3 Ps | Process |
| | | Physical environment |
| | | People |

The added three Ps are therefore more related to services marketing. Process is about the understanding that *how* things are done is just as important as *what* things are done. Companies and organizations can gain value by carefully

designing service processes, managing to maintain a set service quality and employee training. All these elements can lead to a better, faster and more effective service delivery to the customer which will in turn benefit the organization from the marketing point of view. (Wirtz;Chew;& Lovelock, 2012, s. 23)

Physical environment is quite self-explanatory; it refers to the exterior and interior of the service factory. Interior and exterior of the service factory mean the furnishing, equipment, landscaping, and appearance of buildings, staff members' clothing and other tangible objects that provide evidence of the organization's service quality. Physical environment has to be managed rigorously because its elements also market the service to the consumer and affect satisfaction and service productivity. (Wirtz;Chew;& Lovelock, 2012, s. 24)

Last P of the extended marketing mix stands for people and it is an essential part of the marketing mix because it can provide a competitive advantage for service factories. Skills and attitudes of the employees are in the center of this element and the way an organization can foster these qualities is by human resource management. HRM can use the practices of training, motivating and selecting in order to provide the best performance from its workforce. (Wirtz;Chew;& Lovelock, 2012, s. 25)

IHIP is another framework designed by marketers to help companies separate services marketing from goods marketing. IHIP is an acronym of the words *intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability*.

Intangibility things are not physical and do not exist on their own. Examples of intangible things are such as goodwill or brand image. Furthermore, intangibility consists of two dimensions; mental and physical. Mental dimension is something that is difficult to understand and visualize. Physical dimension is that which cannot be experienced by the five senses. Intangible elements are processes, expertise, attitudes and transactions and these elements actually create the most value for a service performance. However, intangible services

are also hard for customers to evaluate pre-purchase or evaluate the quality of service itself. (Wirtz;Chew;& Lovelock, 2012, s. 22)

Heterogeneity refers to the problem of variability. Especially in labor-intensive services such as restaurants, heterogeneity is the challenge when managers strive their business to achieve a level of uniform. It is a hard goal to achieve when performance and behavior may vary between employees, but also between same employee's interactions from one day to another and from one customer to another. Heterogeneity is less of a problem in machine-intensive service industries because machines are able to meet the same performance without variation. (Sasser;Olsen;& Wyckoff, 1978) (de Chernatony p. 213-214)

Inseparability means that production, consumption and even purchase take place simultaneously and the service provider is usually physically present when the consumption occurs. Examples of inseparable services are for instance education, haircut or concerts. This is drastically different from goods marketing because there the customer can buy the product, take it home and use it on a later date. In addition, the manufacturer may never see the customer. (Pride & Ferrell, 2010, s. 359)

Perishability means that services cannot be resold, returned, saved or stored. Because services are perishable, demand and supply must be in balance. If demand exceeds supply, demand goes unfilled and business suffers and if supply exceeds demand unused capacity is lost. Good example is the airline industry. If a seat for a flight goes unsold, it perishes because that seat cannot be sold afterwards. Similarly when an airplane arrives to its destination passengers are not entitled to stay in their seats, their service contract has perished. However, perishability is not a definite feature to all service sectors. When a cleaner cleans a property, their output does not perish when the work is done. Perishability does not therefore relate to every service, but it is a useful characteristic nevertheless. (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003) (de Chernatony p. 216-217)

Benefits of services can be difficult to communicate to customers as traditional marketing communication strategies have been designed for manufactured goods. This is especially true when the service does not contain tangible actions to customers or to their possessions. Intangibility creates four problems for marketers that make it harder to communicate benefits of the service;

- Abstractness
- Generality
- Nonsearchability
- Mental impalpability

Abstractness means abstract concepts such as knowledge or financial security that do not correspond directly with concrete and tangible objects. The problem from marketing viewpoint is how to link the services with these abstract concepts. (Wirtz;Chew;& Lovelock, 2012, ss. 192-193)

Generality refers to the problem of creating a unique value proposition to communicate what makes a specific service noticeably different and better than the competitors' offerings. Although physical objects ensure abstractness is not a problem when trying to market some services, differentiation is still difficult. (Wirtz;Chew;& Lovelock, 2012, s. 193)

Nonsearchability is the problem of inability to find information of desired services beforehand. Some information such as appearance and other physical attributes can be investigated in advance, but due to high experience and credence attributes in some services, not all information is possible to obtain before experiencing the service. (Wirtz;Chew;& Lovelock, 2012, s. 193)

Mental impalpability is the difficulty of comprehending a service. In some services it can be hard for the consumer to understand what the service will be like and what its benefits are. Reasons for this can include the multi-dimensionality, complexity or novelty of the service. (Wirtz;Chew;& Lovelock, 2012, s. 193)

Another classification within the constraints of services marketing is the categorization to high contact, medium contact or to low contact services. Education along with for example health care services belongs to high contact category as a great level of contact occurs between customers and service providers. Low contact on the other hand is the opposite situation where only limited or none contact exists between the two, like for example a mail-order store. (Hoffman & Bateson, 2010)

2.1.2 Degree Programme Marketing

There are three types of attributes when evaluating and selecting a service;

- Search attributes
- Experience attributes
- Credence attributes

Search attributes are tangible characteristics that can be evaluated beforehand. Experience attributes are what cannot be evaluated beforehand, but is possible to evaluate after experiencing the service. Credence attributes are characteristics that are very difficult to evaluate even after experiencing the service. Degree programmes and education in general fall under the credence attributes for they are difficult to evaluate even after receiving education. (Wirtz;Chew;& Lovelock, 2012, ss. 40-41)

Services high credence attributes, such as education, have high perceived risk. With goods if a product turns out to be unsatisfactory for the consumer, that product can usually be returned and refunded. This however is not possible with most services. The perceived risk is also higher among first-time users. Perception of risk grows with worst possible outcome and the likeliness of it occurring. (Wirtz;Chew;& Lovelock, 2012, s. 42)

Marketers can however predict how consumers will try to reduce the perceived risk by learning about the variety of methods consumers use to relieve their uneasiness. These methods include:

- Seeking information from trusted and respected personal sources such as family, friends, and peers.
- Comparing services and searching for independent reviews and ratings on the Internet.
- Trusting a firm with a good reputation.
- Searching for guarantees and warranties
- Visiting the service facilities or trying out aspects of the service
- Enquiring expert employees about competing services

Customers are opposed to risk and will choose the service with the lowest perceived risk, if everything else among the services is equal. This is why organizations and companies will need to be proactive in reducing the perceived risk of their service. Methods of reducing perceived risk of their service include:

- Giving prospective customers a possibility to preview the service through brochures, websites and videos.
- Inviting prospective customers to visit the service facilities.
- Advertising prospective customers about the idea of the service and its value. Services with high credence attributes should especially message of the benefits and utilization of their service.
- Offer service guarantees such as refund and performance warranties.
- Using appearance of facilities, furnishings, equipment and employees' dress and behavior to envisage target image and value proposition.

With these methods organizations and companies can manage the risk perception of potential customers and therefore reduce uncertainty. The lower the uncertainty the higher the probability that consumer will choose that service over another. (Wirtz;Chew;& Lovelock, 2012, ss. 42-45)

There are five dimensions of risk and they are the basis for a consumer's judgement of why a brand is perceived to be risky.

- Financial risk

- Performance risk
- Social risk
- Psychological risk
- Time risk

Financial risk is the risk of losing money when buying an unfamiliar brand. Performance risk is the risk of the product not being of perceived quality. Social risk relates to the fear that the brand might not gain the approval of a respected peer group. Psychological risk is the fear of an unfamiliar brand not fitting in with one's self-image. Time risk is the risk of having to waste more time replacing the brand. While financial risk is not a likely issue with Finnish higher education schools due to the lack of tuition fees in Finnish education, the other risks are noteworthy points for a marketer to identify. If any of these risk dimensions are above the customer's threshold level, the customer is likely to choose another brand. (de Chernatony;McDonald;& Wallace, 2013, s. 112)

2.2 Higher Education Marketing

Universities and polytechnics can use a host of different methods to market their programmes including the Internet but also more traditional channels such as radio, bus advertising, newspapers and student counsellors visiting secondary schools. However as the main target audience of universities' marketing are young adults, aged 18 – 25, Internet-based marketing is the most useful because it is the most cost-efficient option in reaching the largest number of people. In 2014 99 % of 16 – 24 year olds had used Internet in the past 3 months and 89 % of them used Internet usually several times a day. (Statistics Finland, 2014)

2.2.1 Social Network

93 % of Finnish residents aged 16 – 24 followed social service networks in 2014. Popular social service networks in Finland are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram, unfortunately the respective shares of each platform

remained undisclosed by Statistics Finland. It is however not enough that a company advertises in the same network its target audience follows, marketers will need to find a way to reach the target audience inside that social network. Reaching the target audience is possible by learning about the target audience's social graph and demographics. (Statistics Finland, 2014) (Juslen, 2013, ss. 54-56)

Getting the most out of Facebook marketing requires creating a target group of specific demographics. Target groups can be created by variants that define what kinds of people belong to that target group. Different variants include:

- Location (Country or city)
- Gender
- Age
- Marital Status
- Interests (Broad or exact)
- Language
- Education
- Work history

The size of the target audience depends on how many variants are used. Usually adding a new variant reduces the target audience. For example, the gender variant typically cuts out half of the target audience, but using the right variants to limit the target audience can in turn increase the CTR. Improvement in the CTR means more cost-effective marketing. Generally a good CTR is considered to be 0,05 %, meaning that one click on the advertisement in 2000 showings of the advertisement. (Juslen, 2013, ss. 53-59)

2.2.2 Google AdWords

Google AdWords is an online advertising service launched by Google in 2000. It initially borrowed its idea from yellow pages as in both services marketers can place their advertisement related to the topic that the users are looking for. Main

difference is that Google AdWords is a real-time operating and dynamic format which means that marketers can make quick adjustments and changes based on the behavior of users. (Juslen, 2013, s. 50)

Universities are able to utilize Google AdWords by targeting advertisements of degrees, programmes, subjects and the school itself to people using Google to search about specific topics. So instead of using demographics to select a target audience, with Google AdWords marketers can display their advertisements to people searching with specific keywords. It is therefore even better than marketing in social media because in addition to being a potential applicant to a school, the person searching with these specific keywords is taking the initiative. (Juslen, 2013, s. 50)

2.2.3 Traditional channels

Traditional marketing channels such as newspapers, magazines, radio, bus advertising and visitations are mainly used by TUAS to promote its degrees. However, reaching the target audience with traditional channels is not as effective as with new media channels. Also, pricing between traditional marketing channels and new media channels is fundamentally different. Traditional marketing channels used fixed pricing that corresponds to the size of the advertisement, date when it is published and the channel where it is published. New media channels, such as Facebook and Google AdWords use a dynamic pricing. Dynamic pricing could be likened with an auction, for in both cases the real price of advertising is dependent on bidding price, generated interest and other advertisers. (Juslen, 2013, ss. 48-51)

2.3 Branding

The concept of branding is well established in marketing with the first brands in a modern marketing sense being established a century ago. In the second half of the 20th century branding and brands became essential concepts in

marketing. Although most people associate physical consumer goods with brands, service organizations also use branding. Brand is the identity of a product or service created by the marketer and brand image is the image of a product or a service which is formed in the customer's mind. The distinction of these two concepts is important to understand in order to successfully brand products or services. (Grönroos, 2000, ss. 285-287)

2.3.1 Service branding

Although the quick growth of value and importance of the service sector is widely acknowledged amongst marketers, the understanding of service branding is still far behind its potential. The intangibility of services further addresses the need to build strong service brands because it means that customers have fewer attributes to assess the brand. As such, brands are even more vital to services than they are to products. However, communicating the value of service brands is more difficult than it is for product brands where it is easier to convey a desired message via a television or an Internet advertisement. Service brands need to use their culture not only as an act of differentiation but also as a communicator of values. Every person involved in a service company is part of building and sustaining a brand with their everyday actions with customers. Training and informing employees about the consistent conveyance of the service brand via the service company's business culture is therefore essential for building and sustaining a service brand. (de Chernatony; McDonald; & Wallace, 2013, s. 208)

2.3.2 Importance of branding in higher education

Branding and education might seem like an unlikely pair due to the different perceived values of the two. Branding is commonly associated with short-term commercial benefit whereas education represents longer-term values. However, branding is more structurally complicated than mere logos. Intangible assets, including brands, form 75% of companies' value. Therefore branding along with

other intangible assets provides the most value to an organization's target audience and in education branding can help to attract the best talent in favor of the competitors. Higher education is thus no different from other organizations in terms of competing with intangible assets; schools will want the largest amount of applicants to provide them with the best possible pool of talent whereas business organizations compete on getting as many customers as possible to generate profit. (Pearman, 2013)

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will explain the different research methods, data collection methods and strategy of research for this thesis along with examining the reliability of the research. Main focus will be on a deductive approach with a mixed-methods research that was conducted via an online survey. The aim of the survey and the interviews was to learn about the current state of TUAS's marketing and to identify the most effective way for TUAS to market its degrees and ways to improve its marketing.

3.2 Approaches and data collection methods

Research methods are typically divided into three different approaches; deductive approach, inductive approach and mixed-methods approach. Which approach should one choose depends on one's research questions and whether the research project is developed to test a theory or to build up a theory. (Saunders;Lewis;& Thornhill, 2012, s. 48)

Using a deductive approach means to seek an existing theory to shape the approach one adopts to the qualitative research process and to the aspects of data analysis. Deductive approach will therefore aim to test an already existing theory and the hypotheses emerging from that theory by collecting observations to address the hypotheses. Deductive approach is therefore a theory driven approach. Quantitative research is usually associated with deductive approach as the generalization of a sample typically yields results in proving a hypothesis. Data is collected in quantitative method from statistics, graphs and questionnaires. (Saunders;Lewis;& Thornhill, 2012, ss. 145, 161)

Alternatively inductive approach can be used to commence a research project. Inductive approach is essentially the deductive approach reversed as in

inductive approach there is no theory at the initiation of the research as it is a data driven approach. However, a theory will emerge and evolve during the research as well as a deeper understanding of the subject. Qualitative research methods are associated with inductive approach as with qualitative methods data collection yields data in the form of experiences and views instead of numbers which are more related to the deductive approach. Data is collected in qualitative method with interviews and open ended questions in questionnaires. (Saunders;Lewis;& Thornhill, 2012, ss. 146-147, 161)

Mixed-methods are the third approach in researching and they are essentially a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Qualitative and quantitative research methods can be combined in a variety of ways from simpler convergent ways to more complex fully integrated forms. The use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods at the same time is known as concurrent or after one another it is sequential. (Saunders;Lewis;& Thornhill, 2012, ss. 166, 674)

3.3 Research strategy

The definition of strategy in general terms is a plan of action to reach a goal. Therefore research strategy could be defined as a plan of answering the research question.

As aforementioned, this thesis will use a deductive approach with a mixed-methods research but it should be mentioned that the distinction between the research methods is narrow. Qualitative data can be analyzed quantitatively and vice versa. The two methods can therefore be viewed as two ends of a continuum rather than the polar opposites of one another. Mixed-methods however will look to utilize both of them. (Saunders;Lewis;& Thornhill, 2012, s. 161)

Usually associated with a deductive research approach is the survey strategy. Surveys provide the researcher with a collection of standardized data that can be easily analyzed and compared. In addition, the perception of surveys is

authoritative in general and because its popularity, it is also effortless to understand for the respondents. (Saunders;Lewis;& Thornhill, 2012, ss. 176-177)

Google Forms was chosen as the platform for the survey of this thesis. Respondents were students and people associated with TUAS, both domestic and international. Respondents were reached by e-mail and provided with a link to the survey. Questions of the survey researched respondents' awareness of TUAS's marketing, respondents' behavior on the Internet and respondents' relationship with TUAS. The respondents remained anonymous but age and gender of the respondents were surveyed in order to obtain a perception of the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The survey was interviewer-completed instead of self-completed in order to ensure a higher response rate. (Saunders;Lewis;& Thornhill, 2012, s. 422)

Results were analyzed with graphs and charts made with Excel. The data will not be in numeral format, so a statistical analysis is not relevant. The survey included open-ended questions so both quantitative and qualitative data were yielded from the survey. Interviews with the current students yielded also qualitative data.

3.4 Research reliability and validity

Research reliability means that the data collection techniques and analytic procedures would yield consistent results should they be repeated on another time or conducted by another researcher. Ensuring research reliability is essentially about avoiding the usual threats to reliability. Avoiding those threats is not necessarily easy, but a methodologically rigorous fashion of carrying out the research will help to ensure the research's reliability. These threats to reliability will be depicted on the following table (Table 5). (Saunders;Lewis;& Thornhill, 2012, s. 192)

Table 5. Threats to reliability.

| Threat | Definition and explanation |
|-------------------|--|
| Participant error | Any factor which adversely alters the way in which a participant performs. |
| Participant bias | Any factor which induces a false response. |
| Researcher error | Any factor which alters the researcher's interpretation. |
| Researcher bias | Any factor which induces bias in the researcher's recording of responses. |

Research reliability alone does not suffice to ensure a research of good quality. Research validity is another key characteristic that is identified to ensure research quality and three main forms of it have been identified. Construct validity is the extent of which a research measures truly measure what they are intended to evaluate. Internal validity is established in researches that demonstrate a causal relationship between two variables. In the case of this thesis, internal validity in surveys is about comparing questionnaire responses with objective measures of the situations or actions which they refer. External validity means the generality of research. In essence it is a question of: can findings of one research setting or group be relevant if it were done in another setting or with another group? (Saunders;Lewis;& Thornhill, 2012, ss. 193-194)

3.5 Sampling

The target population for this thesis was young adults and adults, who are likely to apply to a Finnish higher educational institution. This includes current students as a second degree is not uncommon in Finland.

Direct link to the survey along with a short message was sent to the school e-mail of various students of TUAS that have started their studies either in 2013 or in 2014. This was done to ensure that respondents will have a fresh memory of applying to a higher education school and that respondents will have some

knowledge of the subject matter. In total, the link to the survey was sent to 450 e-mails.

A total of 50 responses were received to the survey inside the research period of 10 days. By dividing the total number of responses by the total number of the sample of population with ineligible respondents unaccounted for the response rate can be calculated. (Saunders;Lewis;& Thornhill, 2012, s. 268)

$$\text{Total response rate} = \frac{\text{Total number of responses}}{\text{Total number in sample} - \text{ineligible}}$$

4 FINDINGS

Chapter 4 explains the results of the primary data collection from the interviews (see section 4.1) and from the online survey (see section 4.2.):

4.1 Students' views on the marketing of TUAS

Two NINBOS14 students were interviewed about the current state of TUAS's marketing and possibilities of improving the marketing efficiency. The following Table 6 depicts a cross-comparison of the interviewees' answers:

Table 6. Cross-comparison of answers of the interview.

| Question | Interviewee #1 | Interviewee #2 |
|--|---|---|
| Do you use the social media? | Yes. | Yes. |
| Which platforms of the social media do you use? | Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Occasionally Twitter and LinkedIn. | Facebook and YouTube. |
| For what purposes do you use the social media? | Reading news, talking to friends and selling things. | Reading news, talking to friends and selling things. |
| Have you noticed advertising on the social media? | Yes. | Yes. |
| Why did you decide to apply to TUAS? | Subject, internationality and location. | Subject, internationality and location. |
| What is the image of TUAS? | International, similar to other UAS's in Finland. | Similar to other universities in Finland. |
| What kind of brand TUAS conveys? | Internationality, innovative and options in studying. | Internationality. |
| Have you noticed any TUAS marketing? | Yes, on Facebook and on the radio. | Yes, on Facebook and on the radio. |
| Have you noticed marketing from other Finnish higher education institutions? | Yes, a lot. Radio, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. | Yes, a lot. Radio, Facebook, blogs and YouTube. |
| What could be done to improve the marketing of TUAS? | Have the students do the social media marketing. Have contests on Facebook. | Support students to blog about studying in TUAS. More activity and interesting content to social media. |

Both interviewees were avid users of Facebook and YouTube. Interviewee #1 also had accounts in Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn but was an occasional user of Twitter and LinkedIn. Both used Facebook to read news, sell things in various groups and to keep in contact with friends around the world. Neither of the interviewees played games on Facebook.

Both interviewees have noticed a lot of marketing on the social media, especially on Facebook. Both interviewees thought some of the marketing was interesting due to its targeting towards their interests but stated they rarely clicked on the those advertisements. They noticed that much of the advertising was based on their own browsing history outside social media platforms.

They decided to apply to TUAS because of the subject, English language and location. Neither of the interviewees wanted to move to a small city even if it had the possibility to study the same subject and get the same degree. TUAS was the first choice for neither of the interviewees but for aforementioned reasons they also applied to TUAS. Both of the interviewees knew what they wanted to study already at high school and they had researched where they could study international business. Interviewee #1 had a visitor in high school from Satakunta University of Applied Sciences talking about studying international business and it encouraged interviewee #1 to find out more about that degree. Interviewee #2 lived in Finland but was not a native Finnish speaker so interviewee #2 applied to English speaking programmes of subjects that were of interest.

Both interviewees saw the image of TUAS to be similar to all Finnish universities of applied sciences, difference being the location and the size of the city where each school is located. Both interviewees stated that the facilities also affect the image of TUAS. Some other universities they have visited have bigger, newer or more recently renovated facilities and it gives a better image of that institution. TUAS in that respect is not very good according to the interviewees as its facilities are older and smaller. Both interviewees saw TUAS's brand to be international and interviewee #1 also saw TUAS's brand to be innovative and to present many options to the students.

TUAS's social media presence is not as visible according to the interviewees as for example that of Haaga-Helia and Arcada, which have a strong social media presence. Interviewee #2 mentioned had noticed blogs updated by students of these two institutions where students write about their life as a student. Also on YouTube they have noticed advertising from Haaga-Helia. Both interviewees have gotten pictures on their live feed on Facebook because they have visited the Facebook page of another UAS. Radio advertising from TUAS and other higher education institutions was heard by both interviewees.

Both interviewees agreed that in social media marketing and presence TUAS has the most to improve. They pointed out that TUAS does not currently have an Instagram account whilst the Facebook and YouTube accounts of TUAS lack interesting English content. Their view on the subject was that social media marketing should be done by the students since the target audience is of the demographic of young adults and late teens, and students know what trends and channels are popular. Interviewee #1 suggested TUAS to host contests to attract more followers to TUAS's social media accounts and interviewee #2 suggested that TUAS should support some students to start blogs about studying at TUAS.

4.2 Online survey

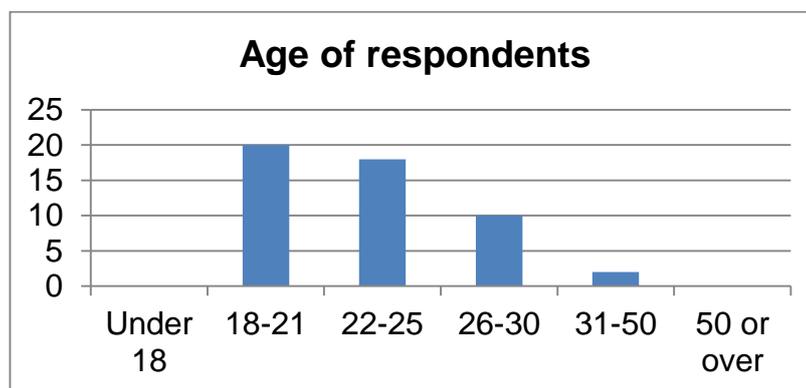


Figure 1. Age of respondents

From the graph we can see that the average age of the respondents is around 22-25 years which correlates to the target audience of the thesis. Although the single biggest age segment is 18-21 (40%) with the second biggest segment being 22-25 (36%), the average age of the respondents is within the age segment of 22-25. The average age of Bachelor level students is 25 in Finland according to Ministry of Education and Culture which supports the findings. Target audience is therefore suitable in order to obtain useful data for the purpose of this thesis. (Ministry Education and Culture, 2014, s. 15)

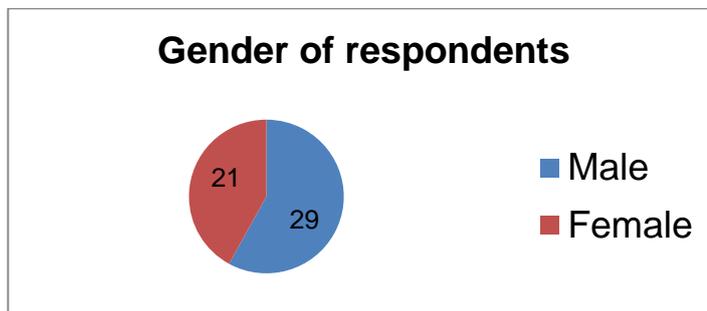


Figure 2. Gender of respondents

Out of the 50 respondents 58% were male and 42% female. It did not correlate with statistics from Ministry of Education and Culture which state that the gender distribution among Bachelor level students is 47% male and 53% female. (Ministry Education and Culture, 2014, s. 15)

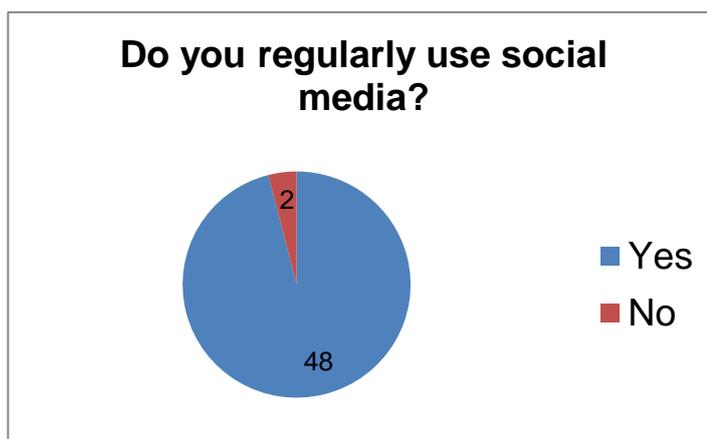


Figure 3. Usage of social media

96% of the respondents are regular users of social media, while only 4% of the 50 respondents were not. These findings are in correlation with the study of Statistics Finland where it was stated that 93% of the age segment of 16-24 were active users of a social network. (Statistics Finland, 2014)

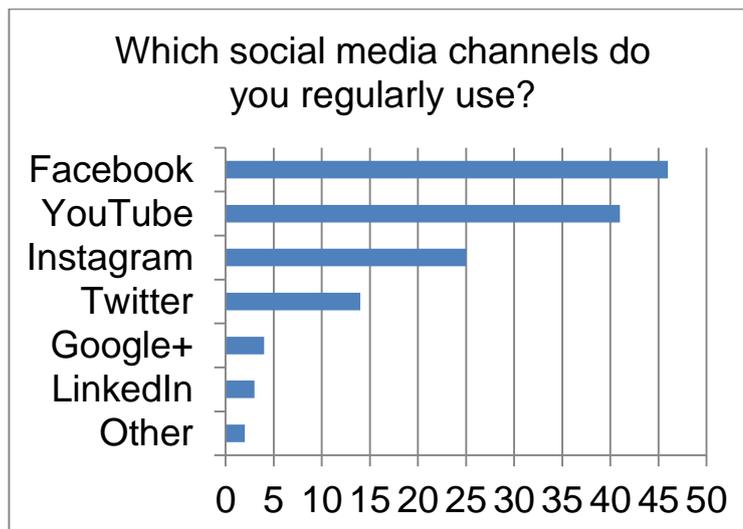


Figure 4. Social media channels

While there are no reliable numbers of how many Facebook users there are in Finland, it is still safe to assume it is among the most popular social networks with YouTube closely behind. Among the respondents, their shares were 92% and 82% respectively. Taking into account the two respondents who were not active users of social media the shares are even higher with 95,8% and 85% respectively. In January Forbes reported a decline in Facebook's popularity but it was more to do with its active usage as opposed to registered users.

Facebook is still the most popular social media site globally and among the respondents, but other services are catching up. (Olson, 2015)

Instagram should also be taken into account as 25, or 50%, respondents were regular users of it. In 2014 alone, Instagram added over 100 million users globally and its popularity seems to be ever-growing. Marketing on Instagram differs from Facebook and YouTube, as in Instagram posting advertisements to users' feeds or pages is not possible as of 2015. This means that marketing on

Instagram can be done for free, but successful marketing requires creativity and activity from the marketer. (Instagram, 2015) (Constine, 2014)

Twitter was regularly used only by 14 respondents and that is not enough to justify it as an effective marketing tool for TUAS. Google+ and LinkedIn yielded less than 5 votes uncombined which are also too minor shares to be considered effective marketing channels for TUAS.

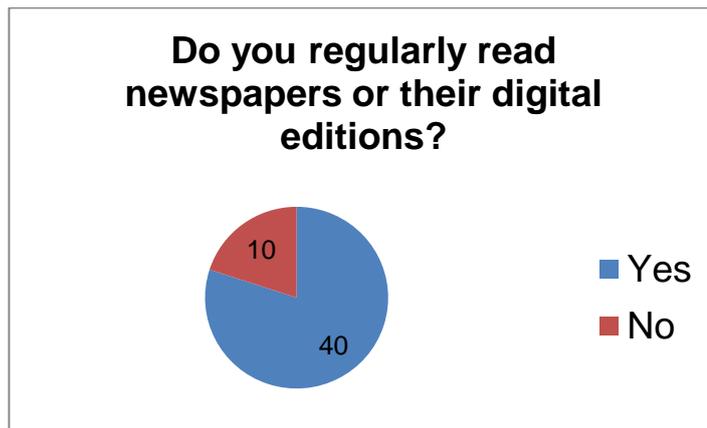


Figure 5. Newspapers or their digital editions

80% of the respondents responded that they were regular readers of newspapers or their digital editions. Newspapers and their digital editions are therefore still a major media in reaching people and for marketing purposes. According to FNA 84% of people in Finland read printed newspapers or their digital editions which number is close to the 80% gathered from this survey. (Finnish Newspapers Association, 2015)

Noteworthy is that included in the 80% are also digital editions of newspapers. Reading newspapers on a tablet is a quickly growing custom as FNA reported a growth from 15% to 33% in 2014, a 120% growth. Reading newspapers on a smartphone also experienced a growth of 20% from 30% to 36% in 2014 according to FNA. (Finnish Newspapers Association, 2015)

In the same research by FNA the best way of marketing products and services was surveyed, and in fact printed newspapers yielded the highest number ahead of direct marketing by mail, Internet, television, e-mail, social media,

outdoors marketing, radio and telemarketing. (Finnish Newspapers Association, 2015)

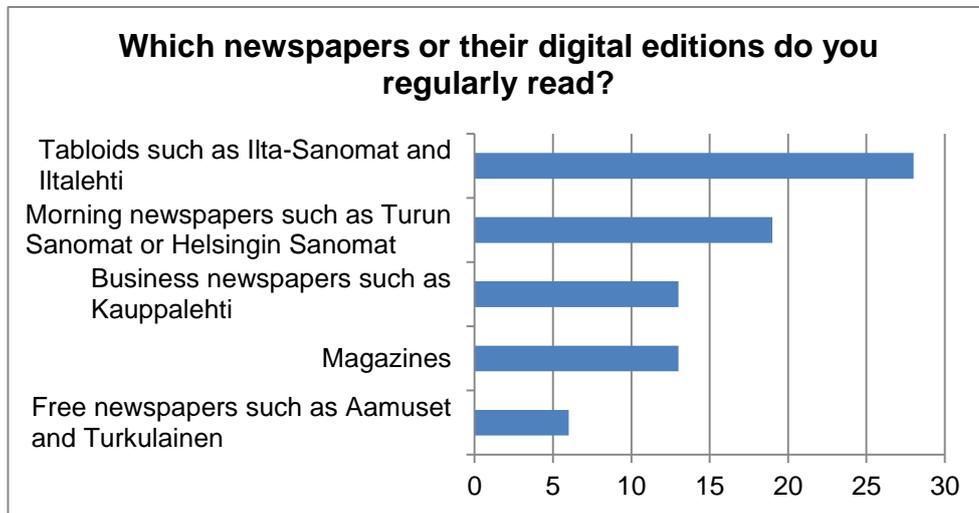


Figure 6. Selection of newspapers

Tabloids were the most popular printed media channel ahead of morning newspapers with 28 and 19 regular readers respectively. Market segmentation in tabloids is however problematic due to their nationwide distribution. Business newspapers and magazines both had 13 regular readers while free newspapers had only 6 regular readers. Free local newspapers are an effective way to segment marketing to the Turku area, but according to these results they do not provide much coverage.

Morning newspapers especially Turun Sanomat seems the most efficient way of marketing for TUAS due to its reader base's location and its high distribution. Turun Sanomat has the third highest amount of readers among printed Finnish morning newspapers after Helsingin Sanomat and Aamulehti with 291 000 weekly readers. Including its digital edition the total number of weekly readers is at 353 000. (Turun Sanomat, 2015)

If TUAS were to market its degrees on newspapers or their digital editions, Turun Sanomat with its digital edition would seem to be the most effective channel ahead of tabloids due to better segmentation and relatively good coverage.

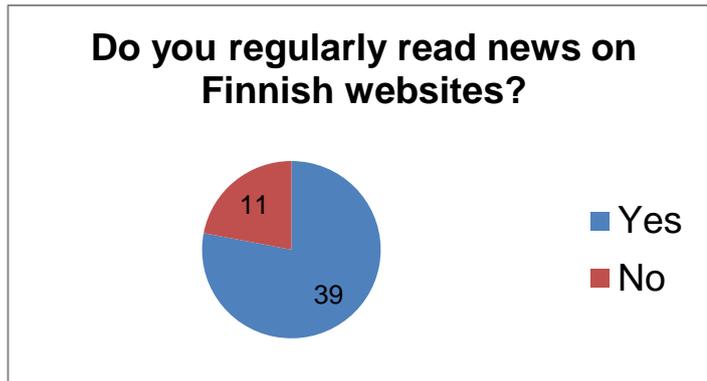


Figure 7. Reading news on Finnish websites

78% of respondents read news on Finnish websites. However, the number is slightly lower than that of regular newspaper readers (80%). According to FNA, 75% of Finnish people read news from the websites of Finnish newspapers on a computer making it a viable marketing channel. Nevertheless that share is on decline as in 2012 FNA reported that 81% of Finnish people read news on websites of Finnish newspapers on a computer. It has to be noted though that those numbers exclude users of smartphones and tablets. (Finnish Newspapers Association, 2015)

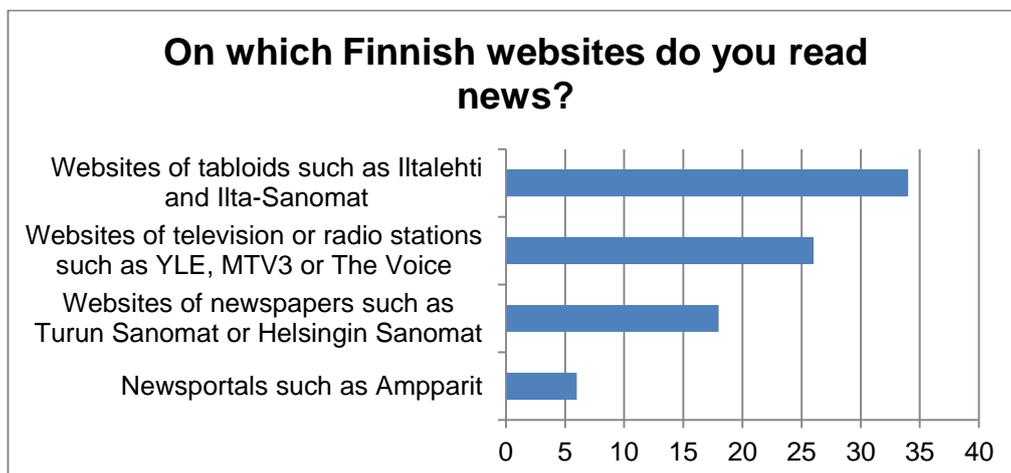


Figure 8. Popularity of Finnish websites

As with newspapers and their digital editions, also on websites tabloids are the most popular among respondents. 87% of the 39 respondents reading news on Finnish websites are readers of the tabloids' websites and 67% read news on websites of television or radio stations. 49% of the respondents read news on

websites of newspapers while news portals such as Ampparit had only 6 readers, a share of 15%.

According to TNS Metrix the tabloids' websites are not only the most popular Finnish news websites, they are the most popular Finnish websites in general. Both Ilta-Sanomat and Iltalehti have a weekly reach of over 2 000 000 people which correlates to their popularity also among the respondents. Websites of television or radio stations are the second most popular Finnish websites also according to TNS Metrix with YLE's weekly reach at 1 954 000 on week 12 and MTV's weekly reach at 1 644 000 on week 12. Turun Sanomat had a weekly reach of 246 000 on week 11 and Helsingin Sanomat a weekly reach of 1 758 000 on week 12. These number correlate with the results from the respondents as websites of tabloids are indeed the most popular Finnish news websites. (TNS, 2015)

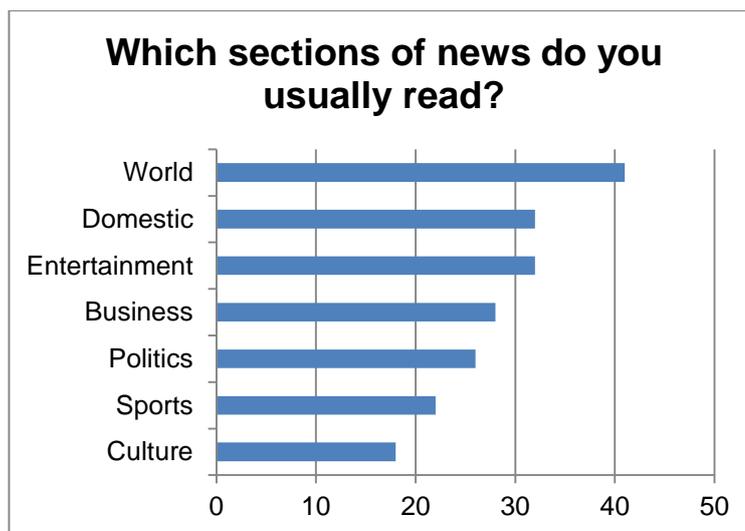


Figure 9. Sections of news

World news is clearly the most popular news section among the respondents with 41 readers, 82% of all respondents. Domestic news and entertainment both have 32 readers (64%) while culture is the least popular news section with 18 readers (36%). The popularity of world news could be explained with the internationality of TUAS and especially English-speaking degrees could be marketed on world news sections.

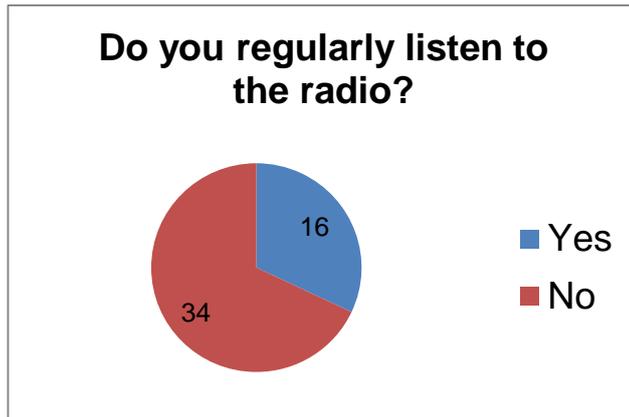


Figure 10. Radio listening

Only 16 of the 50 respondents stated that they were regular radio listeners, a percentage of 32%. According to Finnpanel's National Radio Survey, Finnish radio stations have a weekly reach of 95% and a daily reach of 75% from the demographic group of over 9 year old Finns. In Finnpanel's survey over 15 minutes of listening is the condition to belonging to the reached population. Therefore radio's coverage has to be considered much higher than the result gained from Figure 10, but regular radio listening nevertheless has to be considered quite low among the target audience. (Finnpanel, 2015)

While radio reaches a large audience due to people's sporadic exposure to radio, it has to be taken into account that respondents' radio listening is divided across multiple channels (see Figure 11). If TUAS were to market its degrees on the radio, the right radio channel or channels would have to be carefully selected.

Noteworthy is that only 16 respondents were regular radio listeners, but 17 respondents have heard marketing from Finnish higher education institutions on the radio (see Figure 13). Radio advertising is therefore has to be considered quite effective as it reaches also the sporadic listener.

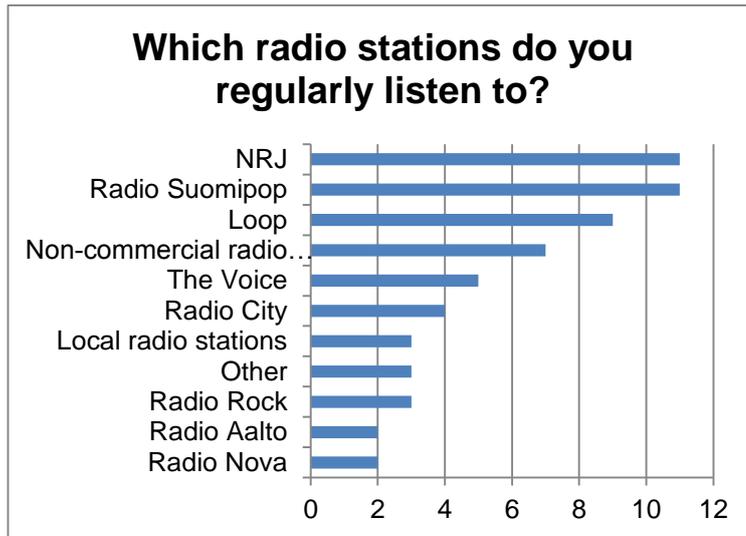


Figure 11. Selection of radio channels

NRJ and Radio Suomipop are the most popular radio channels among the respondents with 11 regular listeners each (69%). Loop was regularly listened by 9 respondents (56%) and The Voice by 5 respondents (31%). YLE stations had 7 regular listeners (44%) but due to their non-commercial status they are ruled out as a marketing option as are other stations with mild popularity. In fact, only NRJ, Radio Suomipop and Loop have even mild popularity which is not enough to justify their use in the marketing of TUAS. Moreover, when taken into consideration that only 32% of the respondents were regular radio listeners, it does not make radio advertising cost-efficient.

If taken into consideration respondents who are not regular radio listeners, the shares of each channel are much lower. Most popular channels NRJ and Radio Suomipop had 11 regular listeners and from all 50 respondents they are listened regularly only by 22% of all respondents.

Radio Suomipop was also according to Finnpanel's National Radio Survey the most popular commercial radio with Radio Nova, both of which had a daily reach of 10% and a weekly reach of 24%. Radio Nova has among the respondents though only little following and it can be concluded that its listener base has to be of older population than TUAS's target audience. (Finnpanel, 2015)

NRJ and Loop had a daily reach of 4% and 3% respectively and a weekly reach of 12% and 10 respectively according to Finnpanel. Their potential of effectively reaching the target audience should not therefore be overlooked. (Finnpanel, 2015)

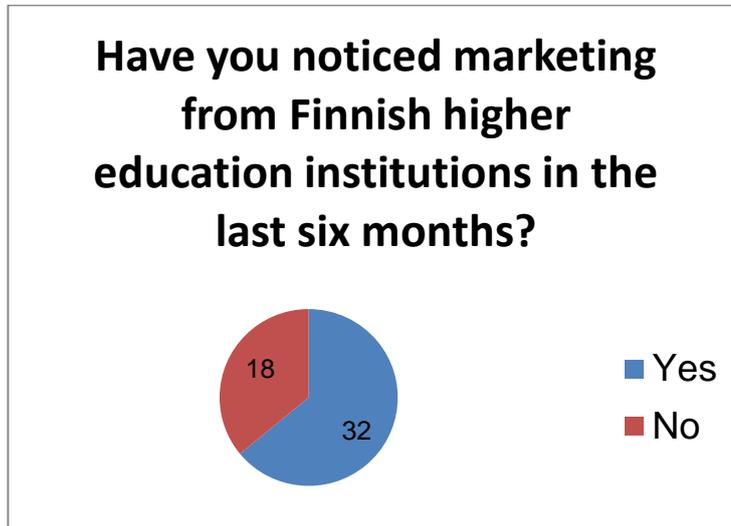


Figure 12. Notices of marketing from all schools

32 of the 50 respondents (64%) have noticed marketing from Finnish higher education institutions in the last six months. While it is a majority, it still means that more than one third of the respondents have not noticed any marketing from Finnish higher education institutions.

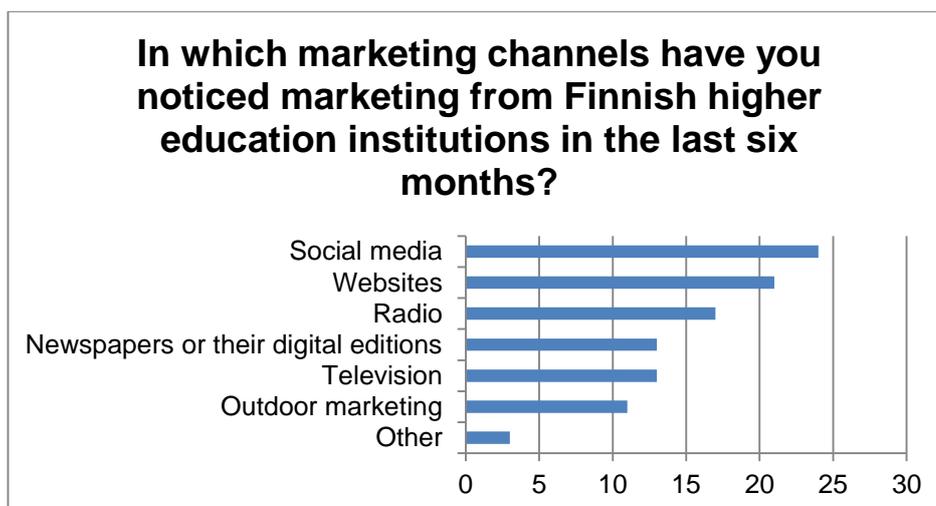


Figure 13. Marketing channels used by all schools

Finnish higher education institutions mostly base their marketing on the Internet with social media gathering 24 notices and websites 21. This is very expected and understandable due to internet marketing's easy targeting to a desired audience. Radio advertisements were heard by 17 respondents while newspapers or their digital editions and television advertisement had 13 notices by the respondents. Outdoor marketing by Finnish higher education institutions was noticed by 11 respondents. The results are quite even with no clear standouts, but it can be concluded that Internet is the most effective marketing channel for Finnish higher education institution marketing.

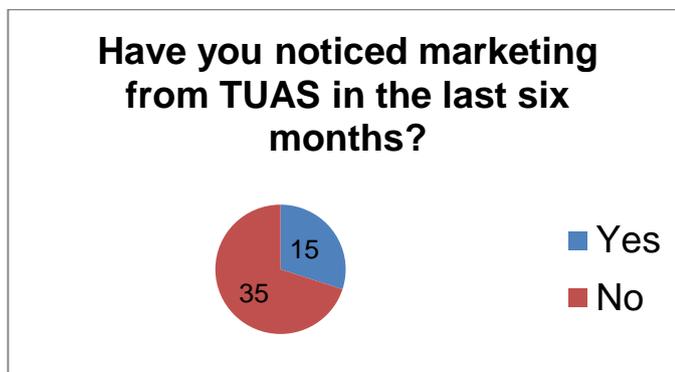


Figure 14. Marketing from TUAS

15 of the 50 respondents (30%) have noticed marketing from TUAS in the last six months. Comparing this information with Figure 12 it can be noted that there are 17 respondents who saw marketing from other Finnish higher education institutions but not from TUAS. It is quite safe to assume that the vast majority of respondents live in the Turku area and therefore be concluded that the visibility of TUAS in the local media is not very significant. In fact, there are more respondents who have not noticed marketing from any Finnish higher education institutions than there are those who have noticed marketing from TUAS.

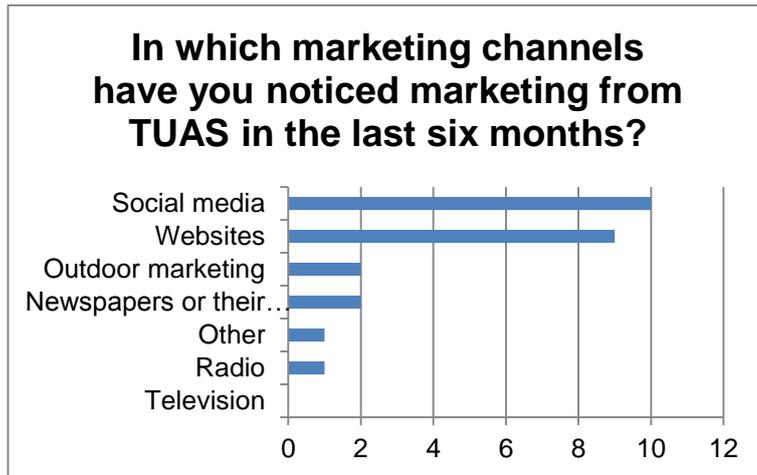


Figure 15. Notices of TUAS's marketing

Results bear some similarity to those of Figure 13 which included the marketing of all Finnish higher education institutions. Social media marketing by TUAS was noticed by 10 respondents while marketing on websites was noticed by 9 respondents. Outdoor marketing, newspapers or their digital editions and radio gained minimal notices. Television marketing by TUAS was noticed by none of the respondents due to the fact that there is no television marketing by TUAS. Also radio advertising was much more effective from other Finnish higher education institutions as according to Figure 13, 17 respondents have heard marketing from other institutions but only 1 respondent has heard radio advertising by TUAS.

As aforementioned, the results are quite similar compared to all Finnish higher education institutions' marketing but in the case of TUAS's marketing, Internet is clearly the most effective marketing channel while radio marketing is more ineffective based on the respondents. However it has to be noted that the time frame for the results was from autumn 2014 to winter 2015, while TUAS's radio advertising is largely timed to spring.

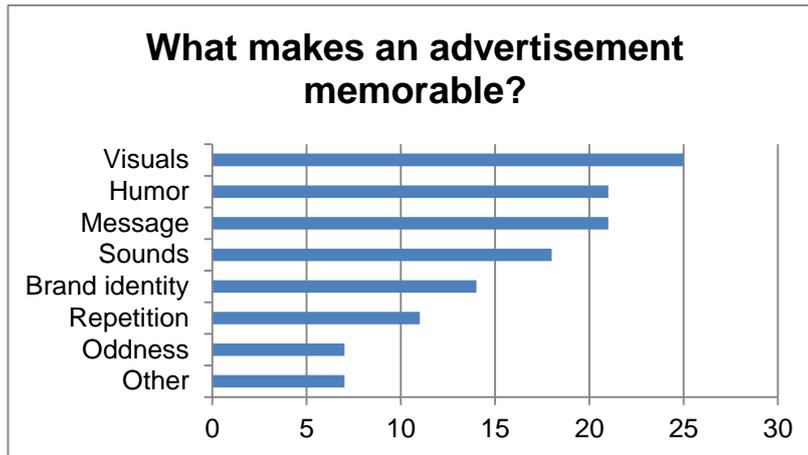


Figure 16. Memorable advertising

Visuals were the most memorable factor according to respondents with 25 responses. Humor and message both had 21 votes. Sounds and brand identity had 18 and 14 votes respectively while repetition gathered 11 votes. Oddness was found memorable only by 7 respondents. There are no clear standouts with the highest factor gathering only half of all the possible votes.

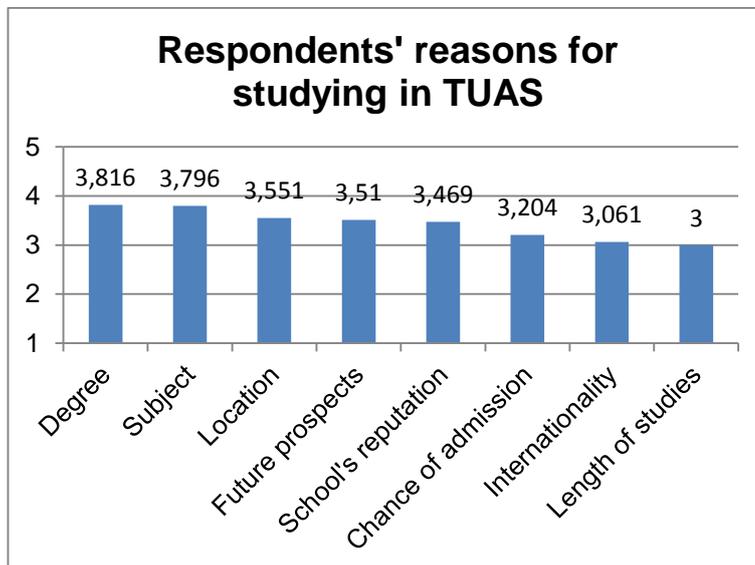


Figure 17. Reasons for studying in TUAS

Respondents then appraised their reasons for studying at TUAS represented by 8 different factors; degree, subject, location, school's reputation, chance of admission, internationality and length of studies. Each factor's importance was to be valued on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being very unimportant and 5 being very

important. The average value of all 8 factors was between 3 (neither important nor unimportant) and 4 (somewhat important).

Degree was appraised the most important with an average value of 3,816 while the length of studies was deemed the least important of the 8 factors with an average value of 3. Subject and location were the second and third most valued factors with average scores of 3,796 and 3,551 respectively. Future prospects had an average value of 3,51, school's reputation 3,469, chance of admission 3,204 and internationality 3,061.

Noteworthy is the fact that on average all of the 8 factors were valued by the respondents to be between neither important nor unimportant and somewhat important. The closeness of all factors shows that TUAS has no huge advantages or huge disadvantages in the student' eyes and the reason for studying in TUAS according to the respondents is largely in part in all of the factors.

5 CONCLUSION

The final section of the thesis will holistically discuss and conclude the findings of the research while answering the two research questions presented in the first chapter of the thesis. The final section will also aim to provide viable suggestions to TUAS in order to improve its marketing and gain further understanding of current marketing trends and marketing channels. Following research questions were used:

1. How does TUAS market its English speaking degree programmes?
2. What could be done to efficiently and effectively market English speaking degree programmes in TUAS?

5.1 How does TUAS market its English speaking degree programmes?

TUAS has used radio as a marketing channel for the English degree programmes with advertising aired on NRJ. It is a viable channel also considering the results of the thesis where NRJ was the most listened radio channel along with Radio Suomipop. Radio is not however the most effective channel of reaching people as researched that only 32% of the respondents were regular radio listeners and that number being divided onto various radio channels. Only one of the respondents has heard advertising from TUAS on the radio as found out in the research.

TUAS has social media presence in Facebook and YouTube and social media is TUAS's most effective marketing channel according to the research. Author of the thesis provided suggestions for the improvement of this marketing aspect in the Chapter 5.1.

5.2 What could be done to efficiently and effectively market English speaking degree programmes in TUAS?

Using social media with an objective of creating intriguing content by the current students is an effective way of creating interest towards TUAS. The use of current students as content creators is the reason of coming of as youthful and trendy while providing insight to the life of a student in TUAS. Financially opting to create content to Facebook, YouTube and Instagram is affordable as activity and creativity can help the content go viral without a big marketing budget. Active and involved students should also be encouraged to visit student counselling lessons in high schools to talk about studying at TUAS and about various programmes that are offered at TUAS.

Search engine optimization is a marketing method currently used by TUAS to market the English speaking degrees and it is a marketing channel that should be used in the future as well. People reached by Google AdWords are people who have searched with specific keywords and are therefore interested in the degrees per se.

The use of newspapers and their digital editions received promising results from the research and should not be left out as effective ways of marketing the English speaking degree programmes and TUAS in general. Visual advertising in the world section of newspapers is a combination of best results. To further emphasize TUAS's progressivity the digital edition of Turun Sanomat for tablets and smart phones is a marketing channel that would receive notices of the target audience while reaching the people of Turku area. Location indeed was the third most important factor in studying at TUAS while degree and subject were the two most important factors.

As concluded in the research, social media is the most effective way of reaching the demographic of the target audience. Social media channels that proved to be the most effective and efficient choices are Facebook, YouTube and Instagram.

80% of the respondents were regular readers of the printed media or digital editions of printed media. Tabloids were the most popular printed media channels and if it was not for the fact that both of the Finnish tabloids are nationwide their use as a marketing channel would be justifiable. However, considering location was the third most important factor for students to study at TUAS marketing on a nationwide media where there is no possibility of effective segmenting does mean tabloids are not the most effective marketing of English speaking degree programmes. Turun Sanomat would reach better potential local students.

78% of the respondents were regular readers of news on Finnish websites. Tabloids have the biggest popularity of all the websites and placing the advertising to the world section of news of tabloids would be the most effective way of marketing TUAS on websites.

For TUAS there are several efficient and effective ways of marketing but a single most effective choice is social media and its channels of Facebook, YouTube and Instagram.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

Marketing and communicating on social media is a big topic to research as it is not only not divided onto various platforms but as a relatively new phenomenon the trends and uses of it are constantly evolving. While this thesis only partly concentrated on marketing on the social media, it is worth dedicating a full research on what are the factors that lead to origins of a following on a social media platform such as YouTube and Instagram.

The balance between information and humor as well as the combination of visuals and sounds are some of the components that help some content creators distinguish their channel from the competition and in turn get a desired message across.

The author suggests an approach of gathering data of features that depict those channels and pages people are likely to follow and enjoy. A direct interview with an admin and a content creator for a business or an interview with a so-called social media personality would gain insight to the research of the direction one needs to go in order to achieve success in building a following.

Granted some of the qualities in a research of this type have more to do with social concepts than business theories, but author has already noted various examples of businesses gaining PR via social media personalities by collaborations or sponsorships. Therefore, it does not seem too farfetched to dedicate an entire thesis to the topic of creating social media content with the aim of gaining customers or as a CSR strategy.

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Appendix 1. Questionnaire form

Survey of the marketing of TUAS

Dear Respondent,

This survey has been created to gather data for my bachelor's thesis conducted at Turku University of Applied Sciences. The thesis researches marketing effectiveness of TUAS.

Completing the survey will take 5-10 minutes. Thank you very much for taking the time to give your answers.

Thank you.

Best Regards,

Alex Stenvall

Turku University of Applied Sciences

* Required

How old are you? *

- Under 18
- 18-21
- 22-25
- 26-30
- 31-50
- 50 or over

What is your gender? *

- Male
- Female

Do you regularly* use the social media? *

*At least 5 times a week

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes to the previous question, which social media channels do you regularly use?

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- Google+
- Other:

Do you regularly* read newspapers/magazines or their digital editions? *

*At least 5 times a week

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes to the previous question, which newspapers/magazines or their digital editions do you regularly read?

- Morning newspapers such as Turun Sanomat or Helsingin Sanomat
- Free newspapers such as Aamuset and Turkulainen
- Business newspapers such as Kauppalehti
- Tabloids such as Ilta-Sanomat and Iltalehti
- Magazines

Do you regularly* read news on Finnish websites? *

*At least 5 times a week

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes to the previous question, on which Finnish websites do you read news?

- Websites of newspapers such as Turun Sanomat or Helsingin Sanomat
- Websites of tabloids such as Iltalehti and Ilta-Sanomat
- Websites of television or radio stations such as YLE, MTV3 or The Voice
- Newsportals such as Ampparit

Which sections of news do you usually read?

- Domestic
- World
- Business
- Politics
- Sports
- Culture
- Entertainment

Do you regularly* listen to the radio? *

*At least 5 times a week

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes to the previous question, which radio stations do you regularly listen to?

- NRJ
- Radio Rock
- Radio Suomipop
- Radio Nova
- Loop
- Radio Aalto
- Radio City
- The Voice
- Non-commercial radio stations (YLE)
- Local radio stations such as Auran Aallot, Zoom FM etc
- Other:

Have you noticed marketing from Finnish higher education institutions* in the last six months? *

*Polytechnics or universities

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes to the previous question, in which marketing channels have you noticed marketing from Finnish higher education institutions in the last six months?

- Social media
- Newspapers or their digital editions
- Websites
- Radio
- Television
- Outdoor marketing (billboards, bus stops etc)
- Other:

Have you noticed marketing from TUAS* in the last six months? *

*Turku University of Applied Sciences

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes to the previous question, in which marketing channels have you noticed marketing from TUAS in the last six months?

- Social media
- Newspapers or their digital editions
- Websites
- Radio
- Television
- Outdoor marketing (billboards, bus stops etc)
- Other:

Which advertisements do you remember best? *

Please provide a few examples

What made those advertisements memorable? *

- Visuals
- Sounds
- Message
- Humor
- Repetition
- Oddness
- Brand identity
- Other:

Please select the most suitable answer for your decision to study at TUAS *

| | Very unimportant | Somewhat unimportant | Neither important or unimportant | Somewhat important | Very important |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| School's reputation | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Location | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Degree | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Subject | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Chance of admission | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Future prospects | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Length of studies | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Internationality | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Lastly, which marketing channel and its platform would be the most effective way to reach you? *

e.g. radio and NRJ