

High-school students and higher education: to study abroad or not

Case: Finnish High-school leavers

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>The objective of the thesis was to find out if high-school students in Finland plan to go abroad for higher education or not and what factors and information sources they value in the decision-taking process. Another reason for choosing the topic was the lack of researches dedicated to this subject. Most studies focus on students' mobility in general.</p> <p>The theoretical part describes student mobility with types, trends, drivers and risks. Moreover, factors affecting the choice of a study place are presented. Decision-taking is a complicated process influenced by a number of variables, such as internal factors connected with personal interests, preferences and expectations, as well as external ones like economic, social, historical, political, geographical motivators etc. The theoretical part also discusses high-school students as representatives of Generation Z with their typical characteristics and attitude to technologies, information and education.</p> <p>The practical research of the thesis includes a quantitative questionnaire sent to high-school students of about 400 high-schools in Finland via their student counsellors. The results of the study indicate that only about 25% of Finnish high-school students plan to go abroad to study. The rest will not study abroad or are not sure about it yet.</p> <p>For high-school students searching for a study place in higher education place, a number of factors are relevant. Mostly the students are concerned about which study programs are available, if a study destination is attractive in their opinion or not, if they master the language of instruction, if there are any future career possibilities and what is the situation with tuition fees.</p>			
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Note -			

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1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is elaborated in partnership with the company Study Advisory where the author completed her practical training. Study Advisory offering services the field of higher education is especially interested in high-school students as a target market group. Today, student mobility is spreading around the world and high-school students are searching for a higher education study place on the global level. However, new threats and opportunities appear in the background environment influencing the decision process. To react rapidly to the customers' needs it is important to understand what is driving them today.

The main objective of the thesis is to find out if current Finnish high-school students think to go to study abroad or stay in their home country for higher education and which factors and values influence their decision-taking process. The results of the thesis would help the company to adjust its strategies towards high-school students, elaborate helpful and useful services etc. In addition, results might be useful for schools and universities in Finland as they will provide information on up-to-day situation with high-school students and their opinion about choice of higher education institution in general.

Thesis in its theoretical part will present recent researches on student mobility with trends, drivers and opportunities. Then, factors important for the choice of a study place will be discussed. Next, high-school students as a group of customers with their typical characteristics, marketing behaviour and attitude to higher education will be introduced. Finally, information about the company Study Advisory will be presented.

In its practical part quantitative research will be carried out: a questionnaire will be sent to high-school students in Finland, the results will be gathered and analysed. Conclusions regarding practical application for the company will be discussed.

2 STUDENT MOBILITY

2.1 Definition, types and trends

Student mobility is a movement of students from one country to another with a goal to study. Student mobility term is closely connected with such terms as “cross border education” and “internationalization of higher education”. Knight classifies student mobility as the first generation of cross border higher education. Cross border education is not the same as internationalization, rather only a component of it. (Knight, 2014, 44-45.) Student mobility can be *degree mobility (diploma mobility) or credit mobility (temporary, vertical)*. In first case students go to study for a diploma outside their country of origin and receive full degree. In second case students go abroad only for a short period of time (one or two semesters). Such type of mobility is often called horizontal mobility. According to Wächter (2014, 88-89), there are different drivers for both types of student mobility. Reasons for *degree mobility* are in most cases lack of quality in higher education or a low number of higher education institutions in a home country. Reasons for *credit mobility* are mostly interest in other country's culture, language etc.

Furthermore, student mobility can be divided into *inbound* and *outbound* mobility. Inbound mobility – mobility bringing students to study destination country. Outbound mobility - mobility sending students out the country. For inbound mobility, Europe remains popular destination. Leading European countries receiving students are the UK, Germany, France. Europe demonstrates its strength while it is attracting students both from the region and outside of Europe. Degree students choose Europe because of its good higher-educational systems. For outside of Europe, the most popular host countries remain the USA and Australia. Many researches underline an insignificant number of students going outside of the European region, especially to Asia. There is no doubt that young experts with knowledge of Asian culture and markets would be needed in near future (Wächter, 2014, 89-94).

However, China is starting to play a significant role on the higher education market in the inbound mobility. One of the reason might be the efforts of the Chinese Government over last ten years on bringing foreign students to the country. As a result, the number of international students to China has grown rapidly from 77,715 in 2003 to 328,330 in 2012. (Heize, 2014, 190.)

As for outbound mobility China, Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Turkey, Greece lead over other countries in 2006-2007. The number of students from India has grown significantly as well. Most of them enrolled in the UK. (Wächter, 2014, 92.) Further clear trend is that many classically countries of origin of students become attractive student destinations as e.g. Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Czech Republic, South Africa, Qatar as well as China and Japan (Gürüz, 2008, 239).

To conclude, international mobility of students is a part of modern internationalization in the higher education world. According to OECD statistics, from 2005 to 2012 the number of foreign higher education students grew up by 50%. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) was established in 1961 to encourage market economy, democracy and progress. There are thirty-five-member countries worldwide, including those in North and South America, Europe and Asia-Pacific region. The member countries are mostly the world's most advanced countries but also emerging countries like Mexico, Chile and Turkey. (OECD, 2016.)

Student mobility will certainly continue to increase in coming years especially with the growth of population and middle class in Third-world countries. According to Altbach and Knight (2007, 303), by the year 2025 five million students will study outside their home country. Moreover, as Gürüz points out (2008, 241) student mobility will increase even despite growing possibilities for education in home countries.

2.2 Drivers of student mobility

In previous chapter some drivers of inbound and outbound mobility have been mentioned. However, there could be defined general driving forces for student mobility worldwide. Among them OECD (2015, 329) points out following factors:

- The need for global higher education
- Low transportation and communication costs
- Increase in hiring professionals worldwide (opening of labor markets worldwide)

Moreover, many countries on the governmental level support intercultural connections on educational level. The most evident example of such politics is the EU which strives by 2020 to have 20% of all higher education graduates with experience of education abroad (Council of the European Union, 2011,1).

Besides, student mobility could be driven by demographical and economic factors. One of the demographic factors is quickly aging society. Many researches assume that quite soon many Western countries will lack specialists in their own country, therefore they must be substituted through qualified migrants. On the other hand, growing population of Asian cultures will result in a need of talented workers to support their rising economies (Choudana & De Vit, 2014, 23).

Students move to another country in hope to get better education and life possibilities. International student mobility is therefore closely connected with international migration. It is obvious that the main directions of student mobility worldwide are from Asia to North America and Europe. Some researches call it the flow from “knowledge-user” areas to “knowledge-producer” areas (Gürüz, 2008, 234).

2.3 Knight’s theory of rationales driving internalization of higher education

Knight (2008, 25) describes in detail the rationales of internalization in the higher education. The researcher divides all rationales in existing rationales and rationales of emerging importance (see Table 1). Under existing rationales there are four large groups as social/cultural, political, economic and academic. Social/cultural include e.g. national identity. Under political there are foreign policy, national security, mutual understanding and peace etc. Economic factors comprise growth and competitiveness, possibilities on job market, financial incentives. Academic involve enhancement of quality, profile and status. Besides, the author defines factors of growing importance such as human resources development, income generation, strategical alliances; international branding and profile; nation-building and institutions building.

Table 1. Rationales driving internalization of higher education

<i>Rationales</i>	<i>Existing rationales</i>	<i>Of emerging importance</i>
Social/cultural	National cultural identity Intercultural understanding Citizenship development Social and community development	National level Human resources development Strategic alliances Income generation/commercial trade Nation building/Institution building Social/cultural development and mutual understanding
Political	Foreign policy National security Technical assistance Peace and mutual understanding National identity Regional id entity	Institutional level International branding and profile Quality enhancement/international standards Income generation Student and staff development Strategic alliances Knowledge production
Economic	Economic growth and competitiveness Labor market Financial incentives	
Academic	Extension of academic horizon Institution building Profile and status Enhancement of quality International academic standards International dimensions to research and teaching	

2.4 Threats of student mobility

Increasing student mobility as a part of cross border education is a generator of the higher education today. Although there is stability in long-term trends, student mobility might be influenced by some unpredictable events.

First of all, researches point out political environment and insecurity. Fear of terrorist attacks and danger of possible wars will influence in negative way the internationalization of higher education. Next, government actions might cause rise of higher education expenses, complicate visa procedures etc. Moreover, quality assurance policies and measures should be controlled, as today there are no clear common standards worldwide. (Altbach&Knight, 2007, 303.) Therefore, certain risks could include expansion of study programs of low quality, as well as unprofessional providers focusing on commercial profits rather than quality. Furthermore, Knight mentions as a possible risk exaggerate use of English while ignoring national higher education policies etc (Knight, 2014, 56).

Next risk could be possible decrease in public funding of the higher education institutions that automatically results in introducing tuition fees etc. Qualifications acquired abroad might be not recognized by domestic employers or educational institutions. Besides, cross-border higher education could become a “first-class” privilege – affordable only for a limited part of population. Growing internationalization of higher education might cause problems with accomplishment of national higher education objectives. (Cross-border tertiary education, 2007, 43.)

Overall, despite many positive trends in the global internationalization of higher education, there are certain risks and dangers to observe and to be prepared for.

3 FACTORS IMPORTANT FOR THE CHOICE OF A STUDY PLACE

On the whole, there is a limited number of articles and researches dedicated to factors affecting high-school students in choosing their future study place. In discussing student mobility most articles and studies focus on exchange students, or students starting their education abroad after a certain period of studies at home university. Nevertheless, reasons for choosing of a study place for exchange students to some extent are similar to those of high school students aiming to go abroad to study.

In general, not only one determining factor rather a combination of factors affect the choice of a study place. These might be external factors like cultural background, economic and political situation, trends and stereotypes existing in the society. However, there are more personal, or internal factors - connected with own abilities and knowledge of high-school students. These might be language knowledge, open mindedness, ability to adjust to foreign culture and mentality, personal preferences etc.

3.1 OECD classification of factors

According to OECD (2016, 333-336) there is a certain number of factors impacting decision of students.

First, language of teaching is an important determinant for the graduates. The countries where such world languages as Spanish, French, English, Russian are spoken attract more foreign students. Five top countries with a highest ratio of number of international students per national student are English speaking countries (the UK, the USA, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia). Familiar language of instruction helps to avoid problems in studying, easily integrate in the society and adjust to environment.

Secondly, OECD points out the quality of programs. While taking decision where to study, students follow their perception of the quality of a certain university. Among multiple study possibilities certain milestones as e.g. rankings can provide student some orientation help. (OECD, 2016, 334.) Many other authors agree with this this point of view, as e.g. Marconi states that university rankings are not unimportant for students going abroad. Students favor universities with good quality of education. (Marconi, 2013, 15.)

In addition to ranking, young people applying to universities might consider the reputation and image of the university. Moreover, Choudana&Vit (2014, 23) claim that

both reputation of the higher education institution indicated in international rankings together with the image of the educational system of the country will remain a decisive factor for a choice of a study place.

Hence, recent studies slightly confront with mentioned points of view, e.g. Demel in her thesis comes to conclusion that university rankings are not so essential for students as many believe. Demel states that only 23% of respondents considered traditional academic rankings as an important factor in the decision-making process of where to study. (Demel, 2016, 42.)

However, the image of a higher institution and their courses are gaining more and more importance. As a result, higher education institutions now are focusing on marketing and brand building. This way they hope to gain visibility of their institution and attract more applicants. Some kind of accreditation facilitates this process and helps to ensure the applicants that the offered programs represent high standards of education. It is obvious, however, that such efforts to get an accreditation might result in a pure commercialization of quality standards and accreditation process of the universities. As a result, high school graduates might have problems in distinguishing between high quality and low-quality institutions. (Knight, 2007, 39.)

Furthermore, tuition fees are certainly to be considered while choosing a study place. More and more countries introduce tuition fees in their higher education institutions. Managed in a clever way and supported by quality education tuition fees could even benefit the universities. However, states that after introducing of tuition fees do not offer any other cost-recovering possibility and who are not able maintain high quality of education might lose future applicants. (OECD, 2016, 334.) This point is supported in other studies e.g. by Soo and Elliott (2010, 563) state that relationship between tuition fees and application decisions is not linear and correlates with the quality of the university.

Moreover, immigration policies might play an important role for a choice of a study place. Countries with uncomplicated residence permit procedures or job-search permits after gaining a degree, are usually favored by prospective students (OECD, 2016, 336).

In addition, the choice of a study place might be influenced by applicants' cultural perceptions of a country of study, migration trends, historical factors, commerce trends, geographical factors as climate, vicinity to home place etc. For instance, major part of foreign students in Czech Republic (57%) originate of the Slovak Republic due to the

fact that in the past both countries belonged to one state. (OECD, 2016, 333, 336.) It is evident that students follow commonly used patterns in their decision on a study place.

Furthermore, labor market trends: high demand/supply of certain qualifications in home country - might impact the applicants. Students might consider future perspectives of work and possibilities to stay in the country of study. As discussed earlier, many mobile students follow common trends and patterns in migration. Mobility of students is closely related to labor mobility. Hence, some researches demonstrate that the number of international students who remain in the country of higher education is not that high: only 25% for OECD countries (Choudana & De Vit, 2014, 25).

Next factor is the recognitions of the studies. In time of development of cross-border higher education recognition of the degree by employers and by higher education institutions in home country and abroad can be very critical for the decision where to go to study.

In addition to mentioned factors one could be still discussed: security and safety. In times of unstable situation in the world, common terror attacks happening in large cities - cultural and educational centers, future students might be concerned about security issues. According to Knight's research (2007,37), 9 from 11 students were concerned about safety or security.

To generalize, decision making process related to a choice of a study place in higher education is not simple. It includes not one factor rather a range of various factors that together affect the decision.

4 HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS AS GENERATION Z REPRESENTATIVES

4.1 General characteristics

In order to understand better high-school students today and factors affecting their decisions, it is useful to learn more about their personal profile with their demographics, values and consumption behavior. High-school students today depending on the country are 16-19 years old. According to the theory of generations, high-school students might be classified under Generation Z, or Generation net, or iGen. These are young people born in the end of 90-s - beginning of 2000-s. The theory of generations divides all the people in groups according to their birth year. It is considered that people born around the same year have much in common concerning their preferences and behavior as they had gone through same life experiences. These experiences form their way of thinking and seeing world around. (Miller, 2007,10.) There is still a limited amount of the researches describing Generation Z. However, it is usually opposed to the earlier Generation Y (Millennials).

Generation Z is usually called entrepreneurial generation as its representatives are self-aware, self-reliable, innovative, persistent, goal-oriented. On the other hand, they are realistic and standing on the ground. They love spending their free time in a creative and productive way. They are not afraid to fail and know that success will not come easily. Generation Z's motto would be 'good things come to those who act'. (Hampton & Keys, 2016, 112.)

Furthermore, modern youngsters are expected to behave as adults and therefore they experience much pressure from their parents concerning their future career. This point demonstrates the difference to Millennials who were protected by their helicopter parents in all their actions. On contrary, generation Z has a close, friendship like, open-minded and two-ways relationship with their parents. For them it is common to exchange opinions and ideas with their family. Children usually support parents in taking decisions e.g. concerning spending money. (Gen Z: Digital in their DNA, 2012, 28.)

Open-mindedness is another feature of this generation. Generation Z has a global-oriented mindset. It might be so because in contrast to all earlier generations, generation Z is much more mixed itself and open about all kind of diversities be it social, racial, demographic, ethnic or any other. (Hampton & Keys, 2016,112.)

Despite having much in common with former generation of Millennials, Generation Z' young people possess their own unique characteristics.

4.2 Generation Z and modern technologies

No one is familiar with modern technologies better than Generation Z. Since these children were born, they have developed a close connection to the high-tech world. They are used to be connected online with peers, stars, companies, services, shops etc. Answers to all their questions and problems they search and find online. Moreover, they prefer to socialize in virtual world rather than in real life. In their opinion, communicating online is much more comfortable. (Gen Z: Digital in their DNA, 2012,13.)

Hampton and Keys (2016, 113) argue with the last point. Based on recent researches (e.g. Schawbel) they mention that despite the overwhelming dependency on social media, Generation Z students prefer to communicate face to face and are open for team work etc. About 53% of them preferred the personal way of the communication instead of online messaging and meetings.

Despite being constantly online, generation Z young people seem not to trust global technological companies as Google, Apple and Facebook because in their opinion these companies aim to control each side of people's everyday life, collect private data and avoid paying taxes. According to the research of Noreena Hertz, 94% of young people in Great Britain have doubts about positive impact of global Internet companies. In protest and to protect itself, young people might use fake identity in the internet. Being 7 or 8 hours online per day and following negative economic and political news, young people might come in depression or get panic feelings. (Jungclaussen, 2017, 21.)

4.3 Generation Z and information

Generation Z representatives seem to be multitasking in handling of the information. They access and process masses of the information simultaneously, react to the messages immediately and answer quickly. They communicate by short text messages and do not favor long emails. Moreover, visuals as pictures and videos are important part of their world. Having used to obtain information from the internet, they ignore old sources as books and journals. They might capture general picture immediately without caring so much about the details. They trust information without checking if it is true. In addition, generation Z representatives assume to receive an immediate feedback and

refuse uncertain answers. Exposed to an enormous amount of the information, young people prefer practical way of learning to theoretical one. (Hampton & Keys, 2016,112.) Google is the first and mostly unique source of information for generation Z youngsters. Finding required information in seconds allows young people to feel self-confident and powerful. Those persons or companies which could not be found on Google, appear not important or significant in eyes of young people. (Geck, 2007, 236-237.)

To conclude, generation Z has developed their own way to handle information. They process it mostly in a quick and an uncomplicated way. Knowledge found on the Internet is supposed to be sufficient and trustworthy.

4.4 Marketing behavior of Generation Z

Marketing behavior of Generation Z representatives is described in several researches. Living in a consumption world, since childhood generation Z representatives are used to choose among products (Schor, 2007, 132). In their preferences for entertainment and marketing they prefer reality rather than commercial content and real people rather than celebrities. They value nontraditional beauty and imperfection. Their world is connected to YouTube channel where they can stay in touch with normal people having ordinary life.

In addition, some researches stress the indifference of the Generation Z young people to famous brands. It might be explained by the fact that Generation Z representatives strive for freedom and wish to stress their individuality and uniqueness. Thus, they might be less interested in popular brands. On contrary, they will to become brands by themselves. (Shevchenko, 2013.)

As they have high expectations, they are mostly informed about everything in the modern world. It is really challenging to gain their loyalty via traditional ways as promotion, loyalty programs, special events etc. They are impatient, expect easy problem solutions and services that fulfill their needs in a quick, functional and entertaining way. They might want the online product to be delivered directly to the house. Moreover, due to their natural creativity, they want to participate in creating company's product or offer, to be a part of it. (EY rise of gen Z new challenge for retailers, 2015.)

4.5 Generation Z and higher education

Most of studies emphasize a positive attitude of the modern young people to the education. High-school students view education both from practical and idealistic side. On the one hand, in their opinion higher education could assist in having successful career and provide security in the future. On the other hand, education contributes to the wealth of the whole society.

Many researches prove that most of high-school students tend to continue with their education, or to apply for university. The recent research of OECD shows that around 59% of young people across OECD countries aim to apply for a bachelor's degree program. According to OECD, 83% of new admitted students of bachelor's programs are not older than 25, as a rule, on average they are 22 years old. Women seem to study for bachelor's program more often than men. (OECD, 2016, 320-321.)

Miller (2007, 10) speaking about US students' market points out that usually students' age is 18-22, however the number students of other ages is increasing. In some countries, students shift from high schools to university education later because of the army service or working. For instance, Israel and Switzerland have compulsory army service, therefore usually bachelor's programs' fresh students are 25-year-old (OECD, 2016, 321).

Being open for new ideas and expertise young students are especially interested in entrepreneurship, starting its own business or becoming self-employed. However, they seem to sympathize traditional professions that might secure their future as well. From educational institutions they expect more freedom and space for development their own ideas, e.g. possibility to build up their own study plan. In addition, Hampton and Keys (2016, 112, 113) emphasize the pragmatism of the modern students. Being raised in time of economic crises and surrounded by changing environment in general they seem to be more pragmatic concerning their finances and think twice before investing in an educational institution. From educational institution they expect much practical expertise.

Hence, some researchers as e.g. British researcher Hertz emphasizes pessimistic views over higher education among young people. According to her study most (86%) of British high-school students already during their high-school time are seriously concerned with their future job and career perspectives. Remarkable is that 77% of teenagers think that debts and financial insecurity will be the part of their future life. (Jungclaussen, 2017, 21.) This opinion is supported in other researches. More than half

(62%) of Americans and English 13-17 years old are concerned about acceptance to higher education institutions. About 80% are anxious about finding good jobs after graduation. (Gen Z: Digital in their DNA, 2012, 18.)

To conclude, many studies prove that fact that youngsters today aim to get a higher education and regard it optimistically, as a basis for their own future and future of the whole society. However, some researches come to conclusions that contradict with this point of view.

5 INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPANY

5.1 General facts

Study Advisory is a young Finnish international start-up based at Tampere founded in 2015. The company works in the field of higher-education. On the one hand, company offers services to students who search for a place to study worldwide; on the other hand, it works with universities to whom it offers the possibility to create own profile and promote themselves on company's website.

Study Advisory strives to renew and facilitate the process of searching for a study place worldwide. Vision of the company is to connect students and universities through a user-friendly and flexible service: to offer each student a chance to find the best place to study and to universities recruit the most suitable and talented students. (What is Study Advisory, 2017.)

5.2 University profiles

Study Advisory offers to every university in the world the possibility to have a free basic profile on company's website. It usually contains general facts as year of establishment, tuition fees information, information on number of students and academic personnel, degree levels available and funding type of the higher education institution (private or public). Besides, latest article from Wikipedia dedicated to the university could be found on the website. Next, on the basic profile one can also see Study Advisory Popularity rating and some international university rankings as e.g. CWTS Leiden Ranking etc. Moreover, the reviews from former and current students might be found as well as each university's profile is open for feedback from students. Finally, the link to the website of the higher education institution and contact information is included in the basic profile.

If the university is a customer of the company (there are 3 different subscription packages), the university's profile is becoming more informative. There is a possibility to add more content depending on the marketing needs of the higher education institution. Study Advisory offers customers freedom in creating and customizing of its own profile. Videos, pictures, texts, social media buttons leading to social media channels can be added as well as the direct link to application section of the university. The university's study programs are presented in such a way that it is easy to navigate among them and get access to required information.

Besides, becoming a customer provides a university more visibility as its profile gets featured on the front page of Study Advisory website together with seven profiles of other randomly selected universities-customers. (Study Advisory, 2017.)

5.3 Services for students

For the students, Study Advisory offers a database with 12000 universities. Using company's search engine, the students can compare different universities and degree programs on the global level. Together with information on the university's profile the students have possibility to read feedback from current and former students. These reviews help future students to value benefits and drawbacks of a study place and help in decision process. Search engine is very user-friendly and located on the front page. Visitors can use different key words or combinations of words according to what exactly they are searching for. It can be a study field, a name of the program, name of a city or a country, degree level or a name of the university.

To customize and improve the search, the various filters can be used. The first filter is a Degree level (Master, Bachelor or Doctorate). Next filter is Field of study (all together 10 fields of study). In addition, the visitor can set the filter on private/public studies the higher education institutions offer. Furthermore, universities can be filtered by tuition fees. Here one can choose between tuition fees for local and for international students and among no tuition fees, low, lower medium, higher medium and high. Next filters can be set by the number of students and by the number of the teaching personnel. Last filter takes in account the location (city or the country) the students wish to study in. (Study Advisory, 2017.)

5.4 Study Advisory Ranking

Study Advisory created a unique Study Advisory Rating opposed to traditional rankings. It includes three elements: the number of visitors during one month, the number of shares of a university profile and an average number of ratings written by the students. All these elements in sum create Study Advisory Popularity Rating. However, the last element of the rating is an essential one: the more reviews the university profile collects and the higher the score of the university is in the reviews, the better its Study Advisory Popularity Score will be. (Study Advisory Popularity, 2017.)

Study Advisory Rating consists of six key categories. First one is „Teaching“ category that describes the quality of teaching, content of courses as well as diversity of the

personnel. Second one, „Campus“ category covers the atmosphere at the university: what kind of activities the university can offer to students and how good its facilities are. Third category „Students Services“ focuses on quality and helpfulness of student services. Fourth category „Internationality“ is related to the quality of the general international spirit at the university, e.g. number of international courses and amount of enrolled international students. Fifth category „Value for Money“ analyses the relation between quality of the higher education institution in general and overall costs, as tuition fees and other students' costs. Finally, the fifth category „Security“ describes the security on the university's campus and in the city. (Study Advisory, 2017.)

6 RESEARCH: FINNISH HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

In this chapter the author will focus on the actual research of the thesis. The complete process will be described. First, the research goal and research questions will be stated; second, the research method will be outlined; next, planning and carrying out of the research will be described and; finally, the results will be presented and analysed.

6.1 Research objective and research questions

The objective of the thesis is to find out the attitude of current Finnish high-school leavers to higher education abroad. In other words, the research aims to clarify if high-school students plan to study abroad or stay in their home country for higher education; which factors and information sources they value in decision making process in general for higher education and while choosing a certain higher-education study place e.g. university/university of applied sciences.

6.2 Research methods

6.2.1 Quantitative questionnaire

Survey method (online questionnaire) was selected as the most appropriate method for the research work. Usually this method is used when there is a need to get information about some phenomena from as many as possible people, as well as to gain a general picture about the problem. Survey is relatively easy to conduct, it is not expensive and delivers results in faster way. Online questionnaire was developed with a help of Webropol. Webropol is an easy tool for creating online surveys and analysing data. It provides a sufficient overview of the respondents and data, allows to create charts, filter questions and compare different groups.

English was selected the language of the questionnaire as the author was confident about the high level of English knowledge of the students of Finnish high-schools.

The questionnaire included nine multiple choice questions and two background questions referred to the gender and the city/location of the respondents. The questions were elaborated by the author with a help of the company representatives according to company's priorities. The survey was also based on the theoretical knowledge gained before starting the research, especially it refers to questions about factors affecting the

choice to go abroad or not and choice of the university. See the whole questionnaire in the appendix.

6.2.2 Analysing sample

Non-probability sampling seems to be the most appropriate technique to use in this research as no full register with data of population (target group) is available. Non-probability sampling means that samples are collected during process and therefore individuals do not have equal chances to be selected. The choice of samples is based on their accessibility and determined by personal.

6.3 Respondents' features and implementation process

As the targeted group of the respondents, or population (young people about 18-19 years old, in the last high-school year) could not be reached directly, the survey was sent to student counsellors of Finnish high-schools (lukiot). Therefore, the preliminary work included creation of the database (in Excel) with the data of student counsellors of Finland. All together 423 email addresses were collected. The questionnaire was open for the respondents from 27.03.2017 to 15.04.2017. As a result, all together 914 respondents answered the questionnaire. It is difficult to calculate the response rate as the author has no exact information on how many high-school students all together got the message with a link to the research survey. For the most part, from the side of student counsellors the author received positive response and interest in the research.

The email sent to the student counsellors including a message to high-school students could be found in the appendix.

6.4 Results

6.4.1 General

First, the author will present the general characteristics of the respondents as gender and geographical location (Figure 1). The major part of the respondents was female 64,2%. The percentage of male respondents was almost twice less (34, 9%). Around 1 % of the respondents preferred not to answer to the question on what their gender was.

Geographical origin of the respondents demonstrates clear dominance of the respondents coming from the Finland's capital area. Most of the answers arrived from Helsinki and suburbs (39,3%). Next biggest group (in percentage rate slightly less than the first group) originates from "Other" place than those ones mentioned on the list – 34,8%. Seven percent of the respondents are located in Tampere, and on the forth place is Turku with 5,3%. Slightly less respondents come from Kuopio - 4,2 %. For Joensuu percentage is 3,2%. All other large Finnish cities have less than 3% respondents. In "Other" group the respondents were supposed to add by themselves where they come from. Among "Other" group the leader is Rauma with 4,4%; followed by Hämeenlinna (3%). Vantaa and Espoo each got 1% of respondents. If to add these ones to the first group "Helsinki and suburbs" the exact number of answers from this group would be 41,3% and not 39,3%.

Geographical location of respondents

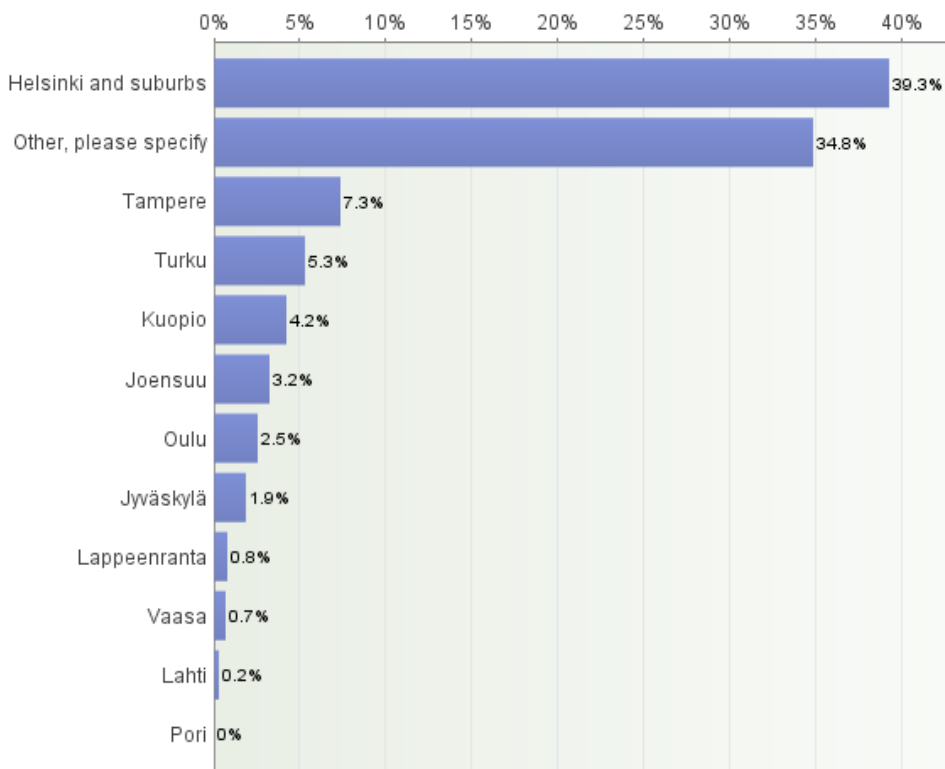


Figure.1. Geographical origin of respondents

6.4.2 Going to study abroad: opinion of high-school students

On the key question of the survey if high-school students want to go abroad or not for higher education the following answers were obtained (see figure 2). From high-school students about half (46,8%) do not know yet if they will study abroad or not. However, about one fifth part (23,5%) of respondents plan to go to study abroad and slightly more (29,5%) do not.

Respondents' opinion on going abroad to study or not

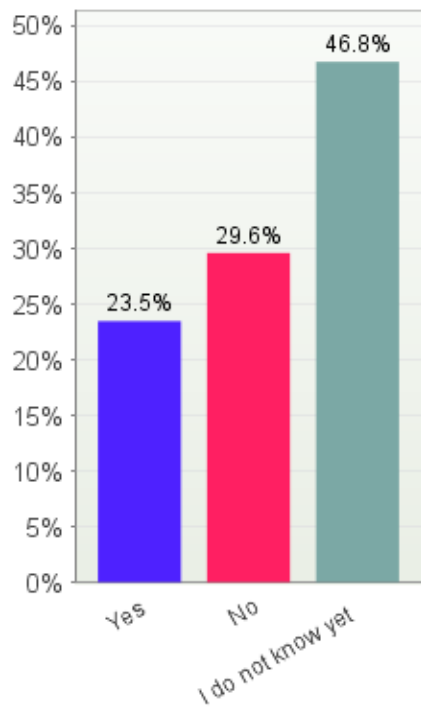


Figure 2. Respondents' opinion on going abroad to study

Analysing this question, in addition, the author made a comparison of respondents using demographic variables: geographical location and gender.

Comparison of the respondents by location demonstrates that there are quite similar results among different locations of Finland. The major part of respondents does not plan to go abroad or is not sure about it yet. Results are demonstrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Comparison of respondents' answers whether they want to go abroad or not by geographical location

Number of respondents: 914

	Planning to go abroad to study		
	Yes	No	I do not know yet
Helsinki and suburbs (n=359)	25,1%	27%	47,9%
Tampere (n=67)	28,4%	26,9%	44,8%
Turku (n=67)	22,9%	37,5%	39,6%
Oulu (n=23)	17,4%	39,1%	43,5%
Jyväskylä (n=17)	11,8%	29,4%	58,8%
Lahti (n=2)	0%	0%	100%
Pori (n=0)	0%	0%	0%
Kuopio (n=38)	15,8%	42,1%	42,1%
Vaasa (n=6)	0%	83,3%	16,7%
Joensuu (n=29)	24,1%	24,1%	51,7%
Lappeenranta (n=7)	14,3%	28,6%	57,1%
Other (n=318)	23,6%	29,6%	46,9%
Total	100%	100%	100%

In contrast, comparison by gender reveals slightly different results. Among female respondents about one forth, or 26% plan to study abroad and the same amount 26% do not plan to study abroad. Concerning male respondents, definitively more - 36% do not plan to study abroad and only 20% plan to go abroad (see Table 3).

Table 3. Comparison of respondents' answers whether they want to go abroad or not by gender

Respondents: 914

	Female (n=587)	Male (n=319)
Yes	25,9%	19,7%
No	25,7%	36,4%
I do not know yet	48,4%	43,9%
Total	100%	100%

6.4.3 Key factors affecting the choice to study abroad

In the question “Why do you choose to study abroad” the participants were supposed to choose five most crucial factors. Hence, among these factors one can notice four leading answers (see Figure 3). Each of them were chosen by major part of the respondents (around 80% of respondents). On the first place is “Attractiveness of the study destination (culture, nature, climate etc)”. It received 87% of voices. On the second place, slightly less in percentage rate (84,7%) is “Interesting study programs available”. Third key factor according to high-school students is ability to speak the language of the study destination country (78,1%). On the fourth place is “More working possibilities after graduating than in home country” with 71,5%. “Many free time activities” were chosen by almost half of the students (47,9%). “Security of the study destination” got 33%. Under 30% of voices received further factors such as “Low/no tuition fees or expenses”, “Higher quality of education compared to my home country”, “Study destination is close to my homeland” and “Other factors”. In this last group such reasons were mentioned as “no entrance exams”, “improving English language/learn new language”, “no similar programs/subjects in Finland”, “experiencing new things”, “live independently”, “easy to get to university than in Finland”.

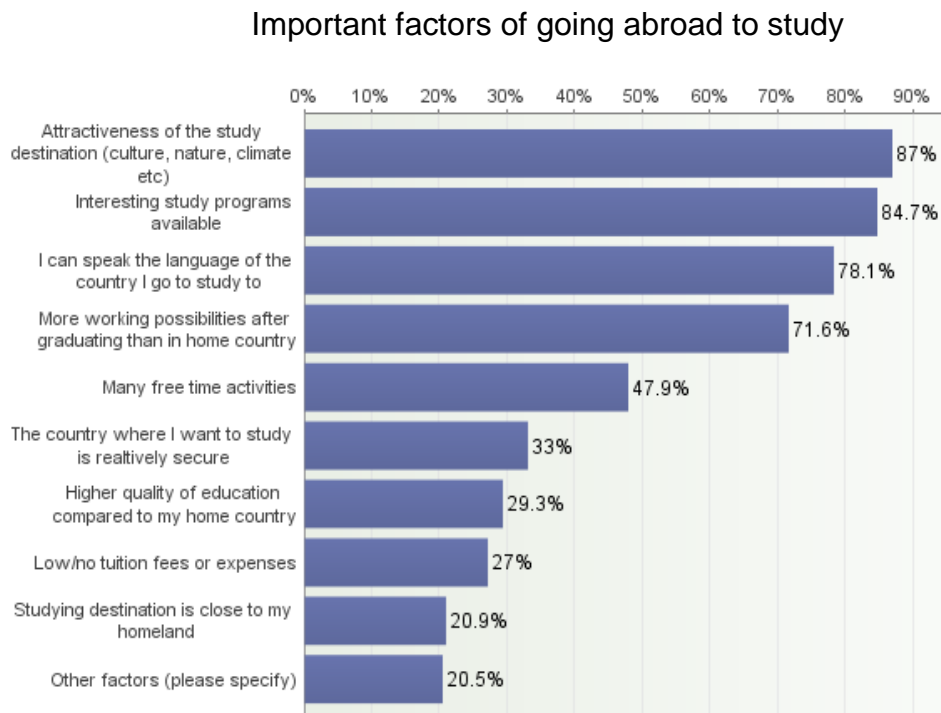


Figure 3. Reasons of going abroad for higher education

6.4.4 Degree program, exchange or short courses

Most of those high-school students willing go abroad will like/plan to do a degree program 53,5%; less of them 42,8% think about going abroad for an exchange. Very few of respondents (3,7%) consider going abroad only for short courses.

6.4.5 Popular study destinations

In this question the respondents were requested to choose top 3 study destinations. The results revealed that among study destinations the obvious leader is United Kingdom (see the table 3). Clearly more than half of high-school students selected this country as one of three top study destinations - 59,1% of all respondents' voices. Next most popular study destinations are Sweden (34,9%) and the USA (32,1%). After them Australia and Germany have almost similar number of voices 22% and 21% accordingly. All other options have obtained less than 20% of respondents' voices. From "Others" (all together 12,6 %) South Korea has most of the voices - around 4,7%.

Table 3. The most attractive study destinations

Study destinations	Percentage
United Kingdom	59.1%
Sweden	34.9%
USA	32.1%
Australia	21.9%
Germany	20.9%
Canada	16.3%
Other	12.6%
Spain	12.6%
Ireland	12.6%
Netherlands	11.6%
Norway	11.6%
France	9.3%
New Zealand	8.8%
Denmark	7.9%
Japan	5.6%
Estonia	5.6%
Switzerland	4.7%
Italy	4.2%

Austria	1.9%
Russian Federation	1.9%
Iceland	1.9%
China	0.9%
Romania	0.5%
Hungary	0.5%
Latvia	0.5%
Greece	0%
Belgium	0%
Poland	0%
Lithuania	0%

6.4.6 Key reasons for not going to study abroad

As mentioned earlier, almost one third part of all high-school students participating in the survey, 271 or 29,6% of all respondents, do not plan to go abroad for studies. In this question the respondents were asked to choose five top reasons for not going abroad.

However, the survey disclosed top six reasons for staying in home country instead of going abroad. The results are illustrated in Figure 4 below. Almost all (95,9%) chose “We have excellent universities in Finland”. About 87,5% consider “Too far away from my family, home and friends” as an obstacle for going abroad. Third most popular option was “Too high tuition fees and expenses” (79,3%). The fourth most selected factor was “Low security and other risks” (57,6%), followed by “I do not speak the language well enough to study” (43,9%). “No study program I am interested in” selected 42,8% of respondents.

Other factors were selected as an option by about one third part of the participants. Among them one can find a broad palette of answers. To summarize, many consider it easier and less expensive to stay in Finland; it does not require extra efforts and stress to adjust in an unfamiliar environment. Moreover, many write about their love to Finland and intention to live, to work and progress with their career in home country.

Factors affecting the choice of high-school students not to go abroad to study

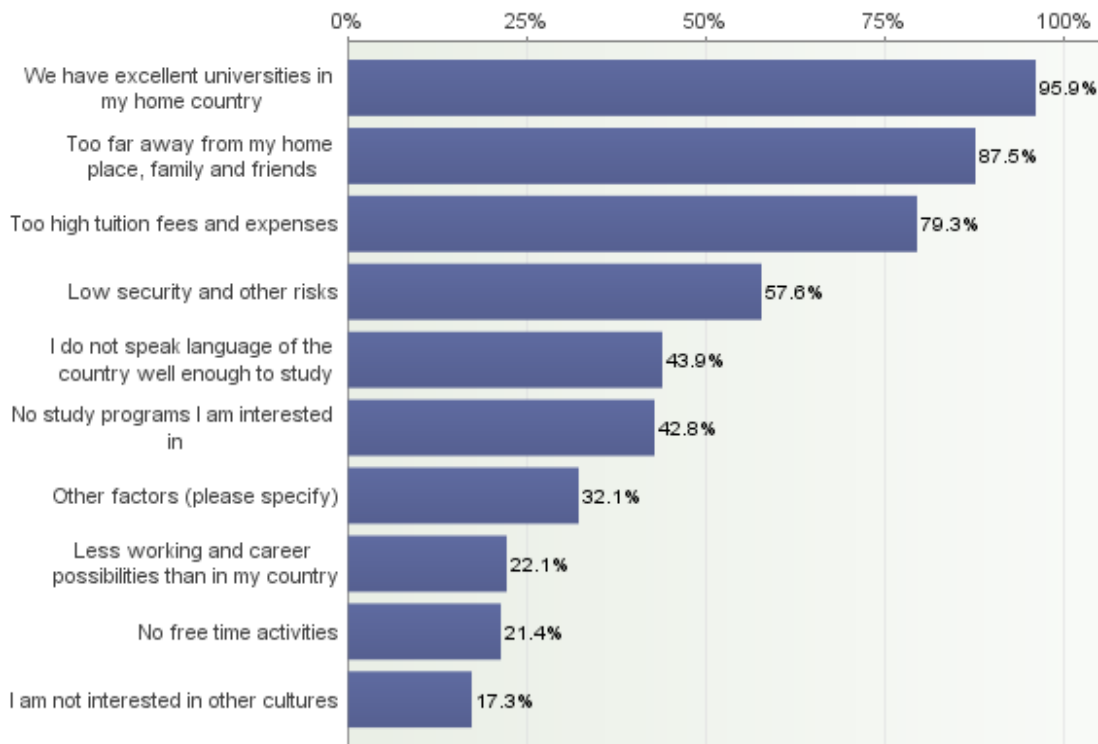


Figure 4. Reasons for not going abroad to study

6.4.7 Applying to university/university of applied sciences

The major part of the high school students at the point of requesting applied for/chosen the university (58%); 42% did not do it. The numbers vary across Finland. In most Finnish cities high-school students at the point of requesting already selected the university. Exceptions are Tampere, Joensuu and Oulu.

6.4.8 Factors affecting the choice of a certain university

The respondents were asked to select among factors influencing the choice of certain university from 1- less important to 5 - very important.

The answers revealed interesting results (see below table 4). "Attractive study programs" is the leading option among all. It is very important for 54% of respondents. Summed with "Important" (30%) it makes 84% of all voices. Only 3% of respondents consider it not important at all.

Quality of teaching is important and very important for altogether 63% of respondents. More than half of respondents (56%) consider “Low or no tuition fees” important or very important. For half of the students (around 53%) positive feedback from other students is important or very important. Close links of the university with employers and future career possibilities are important and very important for 53% of the respondents. In addition, one can notice that “Language of instruction” seems to have certain meaning for most of the respondents. For more than one fifth of participants this factor is of very high importance

It is remarkable that only 5% find teachers/counselors recommendations very important. Likewise, parents' advice seems to be of minor significance: only 7% regard this option as very important. “High rankings of the university” are very important only for 16 % of the high-school students, as well as “Image/brand/reputation” (18%). Free time activities seem to be not so essential while choosing the university. Only 8 % find it very important and 25% not important at all.

Under “Other” factors 41% of participants find very important close location of the university to home. However, price level of location seems to be not so crucial. Only 21% of respondents find it important.

Table 4. Factors affecting the choice of a university

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Attractive study programs	2.8%	3.4%	10.1%	30.1%	53.6%	534
Quality of teaching	5.8%	7.6%	23%	37.4%	26.2%	538
Low or no tuition fees	13.4%	8.8%	22%	20%	35.8%	536
Close links of the university with employers and future career possibilities	11.8%	12%	23%	24.9%	28.3%	534
Positive feedback/reviews of the university's students	10.3%	8.6%	28.9%	32.6%	19.6%	536
Image/brand/reputation of the university	12.9%	13.1%	22.7%	33.3%	18%	534
Language of instruction	12.1%	12.9%	29.5%	23.7%	21.7%	535
Other, please specify	31%	6.9%	6.9%	13.8%	41.4%	29
Affordable location (prices)	15%	15.1%	19.3%	29.9%	20.7%	535
International atmosphere at the university	14.4%	17.9%	26.3%	24.8%	16.6%	536
High rankings of the university	16.8%	18.7%	23.9%	24.5%	16.1%	535
Available accommodation	20.4%	14.6%	33%	19.9%	12.2%	534
Friends' recommendations	23.4%	19.1%	23.8%	22.8%	10.9%	534
Free time activities	24.7%	20.4%	27.7%	19.1%	8.1%	534
Teachers'/counselors' recommendations	31%	19.1%	27.5%	17.2%	5.2%	535
Parents' advice	30%	27.2%	20.8%	15.2%	6.8%	533
Total	16.4%	14.5%	24%	25%	20.1%	8052

Distribution of averages is presented in Figure 5. One can see that “Attractive study programmes” clearly dominate over other options who have more or less similar average.

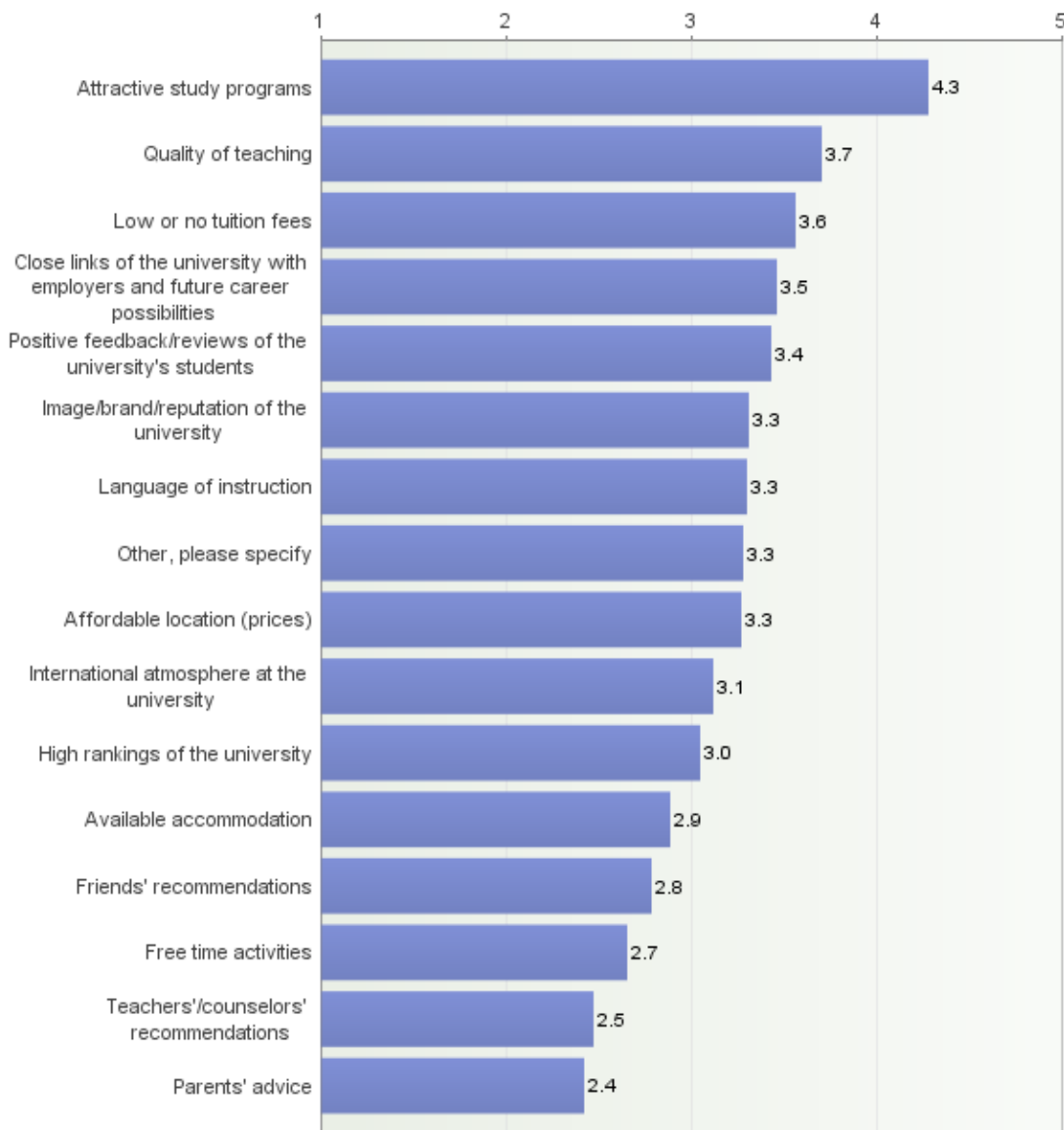


Figure 5. Averages of factors affecting choice of the university

6.4.9 Obtaining information about possible higher education study places

In this question the respondents were asked to rate how various sources of information are important from 1 - less important to 5 - very important. The results are displayed in the table 5.

Among these sources for around 77% of the respondents “Websites of the universities” are important or very important. Average for these factor is 4,1. Other options seem to be meaningful, however not that much, as e.g. “Other Internet platforms” are important for 34,3% of respondents and only for 17,7% they are very important. “School/teachers” received 55% for altogether important and very important. It seems that high-school students use help of teachers/student counsellors while searching for the information. This result contradicts with the results of the previous question where teachers’ advice was not deciding factor in a choice of a study place. “Friends/peers” are important for 33%, however they are very important only for 13,8%.

Surprisingly only 6% of high-school students consider “Social Media” very important in the process of searching information about higher education places (average 2,7). Similarly, “Education fairs” and “Education agencies/organizations” received quite small percentage, 7% and 5% accordingly. Among other sources “opintopolku” was mentioned quite often, as well as “job center” and newspapers.

Table 5. Sources of information in the process of obtaining information about study places.

Number of respondents: 914

	1	2	3	4	5
Websites of the universities	2,8%	5,4%	15,1%	31,9%	44,7%
School/teachers	6%	13,1%	25,6%	33,1%	22,2%
Other internet platforms	5,8%	14,5%	27,7%	34,3%	17,7%
Friends/peers	5,4%	14,4%	29,6%	36,7%	13,8%
Education fairs	17,2%	23,2%	33,8%	18,8%	7%
Social Media	21%	23,3%	31,2%	18,7%	5,9%
Education agencies/organisations	18,9%	27,6%	29,9%	18,7%	5%
Other sources	58,7%	9,9%	14,9%	5,8%	10,7%
Total	11,9%	17,2%	27,3%	27%	16,5%

Distribution of averages is presented in Figure 6. One could clearly distinguish four leading options with Websites of the universities on the top.

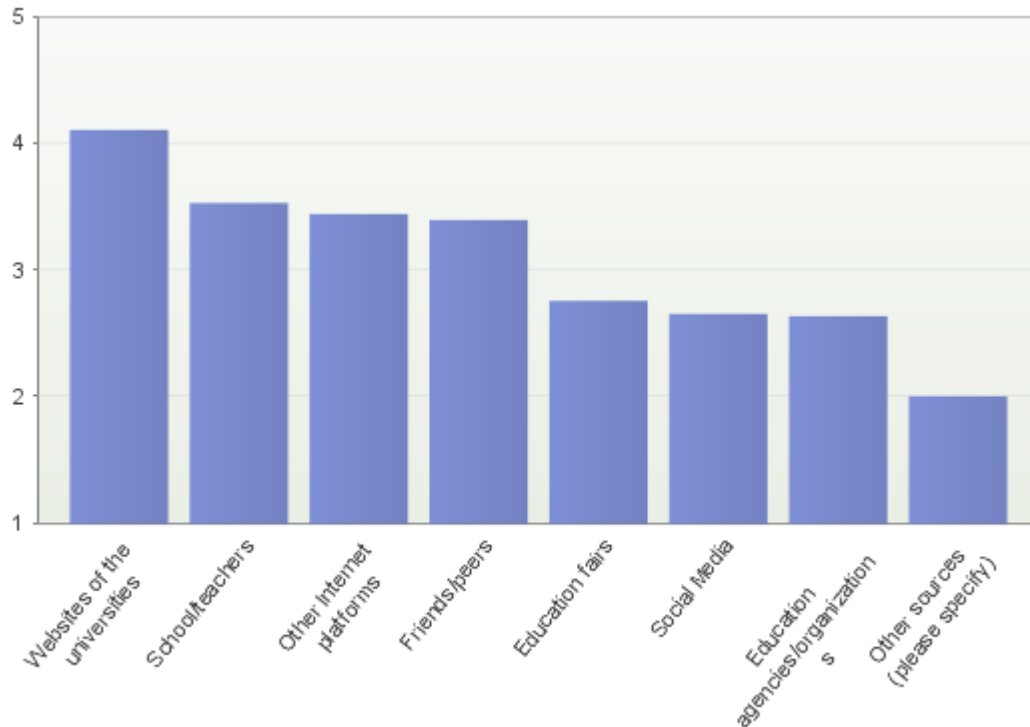


Figure 6. Averages of sources of information using for the choice of a study place

6.4.10 Use of social media in the process of searching information about study places and higher education in general

In this question the participants of the survey were asked to rate different Social Media on how important they are in the process of obtaining information on study places and higher education in general. Rating system included four categories „I do not use it at all“, „ I use it from time to time“, „I use it most of the time“, „ I do not use it for getting information about studies“. The answers revealed surprising results. The distribution of answers is presented in the figure 7. One can observe clear dominance of Facebook and Youtube over other Social Media channels. Most of the respondents use them from „time to time“ or” most of the time “: 54% and 50% accordingly. On the third place is Instagram: about one third of the high-school students might use it in the search for the information. However, they use it more from time to time than most of the time. Very small percentage of respondents use such Social Media Channels as Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, Tumblr, Pinterest and Snapchat in order to find information about study places.

In general, total numbers demonstrate that major part of the high school students does not use listed Social Media at all (51%) or do not use them for getting information about

the studies (30%). Only 13% use it from time to time, 7% - most of the time. Overall, the answers to this question confirm results obtained from previous question about quite low use of Social Media in the process of obtaining information on future study places.

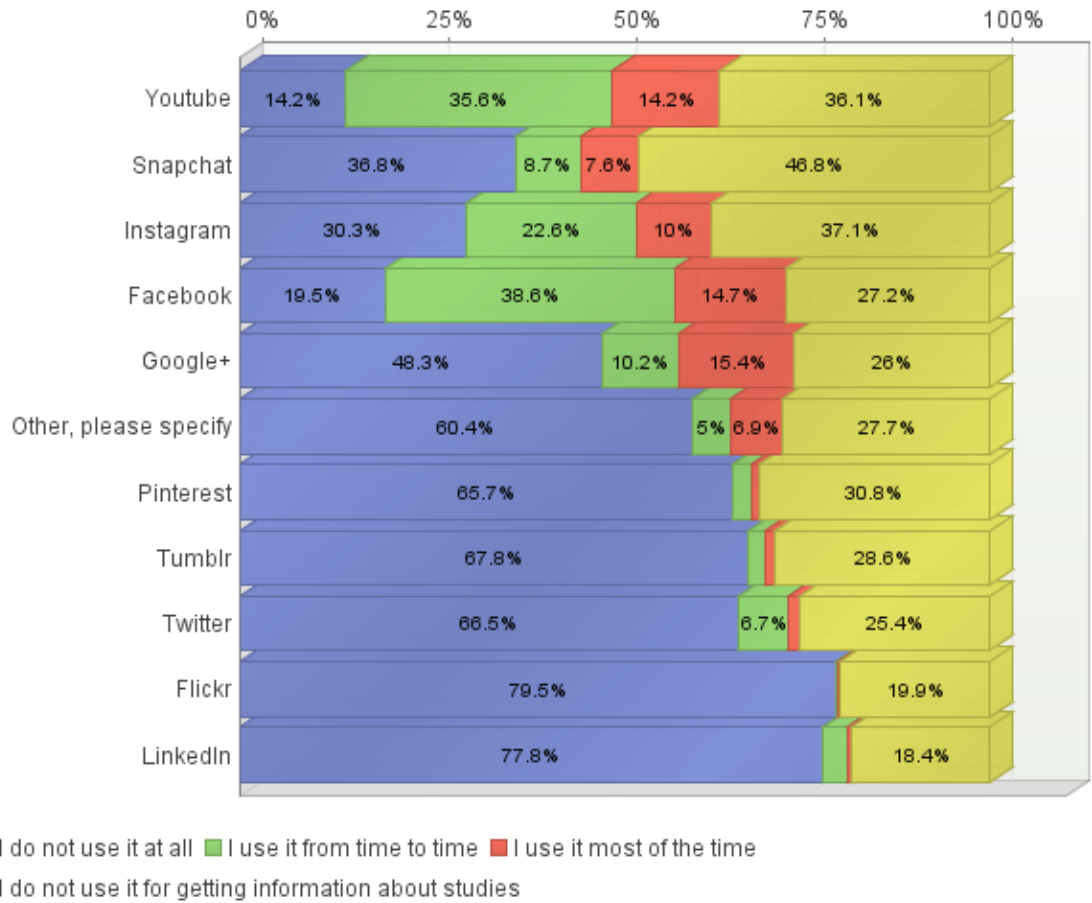


Figure 7. Use of Social Media for obtaining information about study places

7 Conclusions

7.1 Interpreting of results

To conclude, the research results demonstrate that Finnish high-school students in the last year of their studies will preferably stay in Finland for higher education rather than go abroad even if difference in percent among these groups is relatively small. Surprisingly, about half of the respondents are uncertain about this question. However, such results were to expect as usually at this point and age young people might be not so sure about their future, studies and career.

Reasons of why to go abroad and why not correlate with each other. Those who will stay in home country mostly do so because they trust Finnish universities more, have some fears about staying far away from their family and friends or have concerns about high tuition fees and expenses. Less important, however, still relevant for high-school students are security, interesting study programs and language of instruction. On the contrary, those who aim to study abroad will do so because of interesting study programs, attractiveness of the study destination and because they are able to speak the language of instruction. Security, quality of education, closeness to home country and tuition fees play surprisingly less role for those who are willing to study abroad. It might prove that those who aim to go abroad are determined with this idea and have certain country in mind.

The choice of study destinations reveals high-school students' clear preferences. Young people in Finland would go to study to the countries with official language they are able to speak: UK, the USA, Sweden, Australia. Surprisingly, very few Finnish high-school aim to go to Asian countries. Despite Brexit's consequences, the UK seems to interest high-school students most.

Although there is certain scepticism of high-school students about going abroad or not, most of young people are certain about the future university. More than half of respondents has selected or applied for the university or universities at the point of filling out the survey. Among important reasons one could observe similar ones as in the previous questions about to study abroad or not. The most crucial factors affecting the choice of the university include „*Interesting study programs*“, „*Low or no tuition fees*“, *as well as* „*Quality of teaching*“, „*Feedback from other students*“, „*Close links of the university with employers and future career possibilities*“. This proves mentioned in previous researches description of modern generation's young people as highly

concerned about financing of their studies, quality of education and future job opportunities.

Remarkably, very small number of students relies on the advice of student counsellors and parents while choosing certain university. This contradicts with general assumption that Generation Z young people usually follow parents' advice. In addition, concerning rankings and image of the university the author comes to comparable results as others who researched similar problem e.g Demel. For relatively minor part of high-school students these factors play determining role while choosing future university. Feedback from their colleagues seem to have much more importance.

Information about higher education places Finnish high-school students obtain preferably from websites of the universities. Help and advice of teachers/school is of high importance as well. This contradicts with previous results concerning low influence of teachers on decision while choosing certain university. Probably, high-school students need their help in searching process, however they take decisions themselves. Further sources of information for high-school students are other internet platforms. Surprisingly, much more rarely in the searching process they use Social Media, educational fairs and educational agencies.

7.2 Evaluation

The method of online survey allowed to approach the target audience in relatively easy and quick way. Research survey replied the main research question, as well as delivered answers on other research problems.

Although, preparation of survey required much time and efforts, still, it could have been done in a better way. More questionnaire options could have been added in some questions as e.g. in „Why will you not study abroad “etc. Sometimes the respondents could not find the suitable one among proposed ones. However, there has been always provided a possibility of „Other” answer in the end. Many respondents used this „Other” field to express their own opinion or idea. These answers, surely, enriched the research, however, it was often difficult to systemize them.

In addition, the number of options could be three and not five as in e.g. question "Why will you go to study abroad? Name five important reasons ". It could allow to obtain more exact or focused picture of the situation.

Finally, some questions could be formulated in clearer way, and maybe in Finnish language to ensure that the respondents understand them better.

7.3 Validity and reliability of results

The results of the research could be considered reliable. The target group was defined clearly and strictly, according to the research's goals – Finnish high-school students in the last year. In the email to school teachers the author pointed out that the link with a survey should be provided only to this specific group of students. Target group was reached successfully due to the personal addressing to student counsellors. In addition, time point of filling out of the survey - end of March-beginning of April seemed to be the right point when most of the students had already had some idea about their future studies and were interested in the topic of the survey.

The size of the analysing sample (914 respondents) is considered to be a sufficient analysing sample. Moreover, a wide range of respondents by geographical origin and gender helped to provide the deeper understanding of the situation as well as contributed to the reliability and validity of the whole research.

The questions were designed in a simple and understandable way to avoid misunderstandings. The „Other“ option allowed the respondents to express their own ideas, as well as to obtain additional information.

However, some limitations of the research could be caused by non-probability sampling method which was chosen for the research. The survey was sent to those Finnish high-schools which data was found or was available. However, as Kananen (2011,95) mentions, although non-probability sampling does provide a guarantee for correct results in a statistical way, this does not mean that the conclusions are incorrect.

In addition, regarding reliability as consistency over time, the generalization of obtained results could be questioned as the research was pointed out at the high-schools graduates in 2017. The situation could change in next and following years.

7.4 How results of the research and thesis could benefit company

Study Advisory could benefit from the results of the thesis in many ways.

First, company will gain an overview of the situation with modern high-school students in general as representatives of Generation Z with their specific characteristic, their attitude to higher education, technologies and marketing behaviour.

Second, practical research focusing on Finland provides information about Finnish high-school students and their general attitude to higher education, especially abroad. The research describes factors and information sources important for this group while choosing the higher education place. For example, from the results one could see that modern Finnish high-school students do not value education agencies and education fairs so much, as well as Social Media, they prefer to go to websites of the universities in order to find the useful information. In addition, they mostly ignore traditional rankings and value peers' feedback instead. This fact supports the Study Advisory Ranking where students select their future university based on the reviews from their colleagues.

Moreover, the outcome of the thesis will help to develop more attractive strategies towards high-school students and contact them via channels they use most. Results of the research could be used as supportive information source during sales and different marketing campaigns aiming at high-school students as universities as well. Moreover, research could be a starting point for future similar researches related to high-school students in other countries.

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APPENDIX ONE: QUESTIONNAIRE

Survey on factors important for the choice of a study place for high-school graduates

1. What is your gender *

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to answer

2. What is your current city/location? *

- Helsinki and suburbs
- Tampere
- Turku
- Oulu
- Jyväskylä
- Lahti
- Pori
- Kuopio
- Vaasa
- Joensuu
- Lappeenranta
- Other, please specify

3. Where do you get information about possible study places? *

Please rate how different sources of the information are important for you from: 1- less important to 5- very important

	1	2	3	4	5
Websites of the universities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Internet platforms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

School/teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friends/peers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education fairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education agencies/organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other sources (please specify)	<input type="text"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Which social media do you use for getting information about study places?

*

	I do not use it at all	I use it from time to time	I use it most of the time	I do not use it for getting information about studies
Twitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instagram	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Google+	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youtube	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vkontakte	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pinterest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tumblr	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flickr	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Snapchat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We heart it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Do you plan to study abroad? *

- Yes
- No
- I do not know yet

6. Why do you choose to study abroad?

Choose the 5 most important factors in your opinion

- Low/no tuition fees or expenses

- I can speak the language
- Higher quality of education compared to home country
- Studying destination is close to my homeland
- More working possibilities after graduating
- Interesting study programs available
- The country is secure
- Attractiveness of the study destination (culture, nature, climate etc)
- Free time activities
- Other factors (please specify)

7. What kind of studies you would like/ plan to do abroad? *

- Exchange studies (only 1/2 semesters)
- Degree programme
- Short courses

8. Please, choose 3 top study destinations abroad for you *

- Sweden
- Norway
- Denmark
- Iceland
- Estonia
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Russian Federation
- United Kingdom
- Ireland
- Germany
- France
- Poland
- Belgium
- Netherlands
- Austria
- Switzerland
- Hungary
- Romania
- Spain
- Italy

- Greece
- USA
- Canada
- Australia
- New Zealand
- China
- Japan
- Other (please, specify)

9. Why do you choose NOT to go to study abroad? *

Please select 5 the most important factors

- Too high tuition fees and expenses
- I do not speak language well enough to study
- We have excellent universities in my home country
- Too far away from my home place, family and friends
- Less working possibilities
- No study programs I am interested in
- Low security and other risks
- I am not interested in other cultures
- No free time activities
- Other factors (please specify)

10. Have you already selected your future university? *

- Yes
- No

11. What made you to choose the future university?

Please select from: 1- not very important factor at all to 5- very important factor

	1	2	3	4	5
Image/brand/reputation of the university	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rankings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Study programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language of instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Close links of the university with employers and future career					

possibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
International atmosphere	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Low or no tuition fees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attractiveness of a study destination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Free time activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affordable location	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Available accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friends' recommendations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teachers'/counselors' recommendations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Positive feedback/reviews of the students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX TWO: EMAIL TO STUDENT COUNSELLORS OF HIGH SCHOOLS

Hello!

I am a 4th year International Business student of Savonia UAS (Kuopio). Now, I am working on my bachelor thesis. The objectives of the thesis are to find out if Finnish high-school students plan to go abroad or to stay in Finland for higher education, which factors influence their choice of a future study place and what information they value in the decision-making process. To make a valuable research I need to get as many as possible answers from high-school students from different parts of Finland.

I can understand you are very busy but the only way for me to reach high-school students is via contacting you. Therefore, I kindly ask you to forward the email below with a link with the questionnaire to your students in the last year (graduating this year). Even if they do not attend school anymore, they might still read their emails.

I hope, the results of my thesis would be useful for my university and other people working in the field of

education. I could share the results with you as well. Please write me if you have any questions.

Thank you for your help and time!

Best regards,

Anna Korobova

Hello,

I am writing my thesis on which factors are important when you are choosing the future university/university of applied sciences. That is why your help is crucially important for me!

Please take part in this short survey. The survey takes about 3 minutes to complete!

Link: <https://www.webpolsurveys.com/S/AD9D6788E9DFFD14.par>

By completing this survey, you will have a chance to win an Amazon gift card valued at 100 Euros.

The results of this survey will be published in my research-based thesis.

The deadline for taking part in the survey is the 15th April.

Thank you for your time, and have a nice week!

- Anna Korobova

