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SOCIAL SCIENCES, BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION

SAVONIA UAS YTIIMI AS A DEVELOPER OF ENTREPRE- NEURIAL ATTITUDES

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>The purpose of this thesis was to introduce the reader to the activities of Savonia UAS yTiimi, and to conduct a research on how the former participants of yTiimi felt about their time spent with it. The background of yTiimi is revealed, as well as current information is given regarding entrepreneurship in Finland. The choice of the research method and the interview questions as well as the reasons behind them are explained in the thesis.</p> <p>The interviews were conducted in the fall of 2017. Since all the participants were Finnish, the interviews were conducted in Finnish and the author translated the responses into English.</p> <p>The results of these interviews indicated that the participants of yTiimi were generally happy with the projects they had, and with the experiences they shared. Many of them gained a positive perspective on entrepreneurship and felt that taking part helped with their professional lives even if they did not become entrepreneurs themselves.</p> <p>The negative feedback was mostly about facilities such as uncomfortable seats and not having enough cooperation with local businesses.</p>			
<p>Keywords Entrepreneurship, education, qualitative research, interview</p>			

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1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a project for the yTiimi of Savonia UAS. They have been educating the students of Savonia in entrepreneurship, and it was now time to get some feedback on whether the lessons and projects have been successful and what the participants think of their time with yTiimi after graduation.

1.1 The objectives and restrictions of the research

The main objective of this research was to get relevant information from the former students of Savonia who took part in the projects of yTiimi, in order to use this information as means to improve the activities within the yTiimi in the future.

The restrictions of the research were a limited number of participants to interview, and difficulties in trying to reach them after they had graduated and left Savonia UAS. These restrictions played an important role in making the decision regarding the proper research method.

1.2 The structure of the thesis

The thesis begins with an introduction to the yTiimi and its activities. Some previous projects will be introduced, to give the reader an idea of what yTiimi is all about. Entrepreneurship in present-day Finland will also be discussed, and then the report will focus on different research method and picking the best one for this particular case. It is also important to reveal the process behind preparing the interviews and figuring out relevant interview questions that will yield the best possible information for this research. The thesis will end with the results of these interviews, as well as a conclusion and discussion of those results.

2 BACKGROUND OF YTIIMI

2.1 General information

According to Jari-Pekka Jääskeläinen (2009), the yTiimi of Savonia UAS started in 2007, when it was first introduced as a possible study programme in business studies of the Kuopio campus of Savonia. First year students are required to apply for this programme if they are interested in entering yTiimi in their second year of studies. The application period is in January – February every year. yTiimi is a multidisciplinary program that brings together entrepreneurial students from the faculties of business, IT, hospitality, healthcare, technology, and culture. The core goal of yTiimi is to strengthen and support the business abilities of students in a practical way, as well as to develop entrepreneurialism. yTiimi also has another goal apart from the strengthening of entrepreneurial abilities, developing the competences of SMEs around the Savo region.

The studies in yTiimi are consisting of three distinct areas; first one is entrepreneurship and business models, second one is customer management and sales development, and the third one is knowledge management and information work. The team coaches and other teachers from different study fields are responsible for these areas. The yTiimi studies span over three study years, starting usually during the fall of second year. When the students get to enter deeper into the idea of entrepreneurship and various business activities, they are given a chance to grow from professional workers to entrepreneurs, experts, seekers of opportunities or heads of certain fields of business.

In the yTiimi, development of entrepreneurial expertise is based on the following work methods: community and team work, close-knit cooperation with the businesses and entrepreneurs of the area, networking, independence, responsibility, creativity, practical projects, and assessment of the work and activities as a team and as an individual. The participants of each yTiimi get together once every week when they go through subjects that are connected to the study programs they are working on at that time. On top of that, they will go through the ongoing and planned projects. Each of the study programs include these weekly get-togethers as well as various learning activities.

For the companies, yTiimi offers opportunities for cooperation through various projects. These projects can include, for example, event planning and organizing, sales and sales promotion, customer satisfaction research, or market studies. The length of these projects

can vary from short one-time activities to larger programs that continue for the whole semester, it depends on what the cooperating company needs. The team coaches that look after the project and its influence, are also acting as links between the team and its core cooperators. The company benefits from this cooperation through the results of business promoting projects and through the opportunity to get to know the active professionals of the future.

2.2 Previous projects of yTiimi

2.2.1 The student hockey games of Kalpa

In the winter of 2011-2012, yTiimi was organizing two hockey games for students. The goal of the team was to help Kalpa with ticket sales and organizing the auxiliary program for students in the Monttu Pub of Kuopio ice rink. The mission was to sell to students as many tickets to hockey games as possible. The tickets were sold at the campuses of Kuopio region universities and universities of applied sciences, as well as high schools and vocational schools, during the week before the games were played. Another mission was to come up with interesting auxiliary programs for the students during breaks in the game and before the game. The team reached its goal; tickets were sold more than expected and many students in their overalls were seen at the events. The team credited flexibility as their biggest strength, everyone was working together ready to put off their personal activities in favor of organizing the games. The multidisciplinary team consisted of eight students from three different study programmes; business, technical and hospitality. The cooperation between yTiimi and Kalpa had been going on for a few years, and again the team was happy with how things went. The yTiimi that started their studies in fall of 2012, got the organizing of that season's student hockey games as their first project. (Savonia UAS, 2017.)

2.2.2 Charity to Congo

For this project, the members of yTiimi organized a charity event, in which they collected money from companies in Kuopio for a school in Bunia, Congo. That money was meant for building an extra classroom, and the project was a success. The students collected 7785€, and the money was transferred to the city of Bunia through the help Kirkon Ulkomaanapu (Foreign help of the church). The sponsored school had six classrooms, and with the help of yTiimi they were able to build a seventh classroom. This project was also beneficial for the members of the yTiimi. When the companies of Kuopio region were persuaded to take part in this campaign, the students got a chance to visit many companies and receive a lot of useful information on those companies and their activities in the region. Many of the

students thought that it was important to collaborate with the companies as much as possible before their graduation, since it can be helping them with getting their first jobs after they have finished their studies. There were many cooperators in this campaign, for example the Savo region local newspaper Savon Sanomat and Kirkon Ulkomaanapu. Students from the study programmes of business, hospitality and healthcare took part in this multidisciplinary project. (Savonia UAS, 2017.)

2.2.3 Company Village -project

In September 2012, a three-year program by the name of Yrityskylä was launched in cooperation with cities of Kuopio, Joensuu and Mikkeli. This Yrityskylä (Company village) is a learning environment directed at sixth graders, where they will learn about society, entrepreneurship and working life in general. Over 15 000 students visited Yrityskylä during the program. The idea of this program was that a student will "work" in the village, get paid in faux money and then act as a consumer and a citizen of the village. The company village was able to accommodate up to 65 students at a time. The multidisciplinary nature of the yTiimi was very helpful in working on such a big project. The students from degree programmes in business, design, wood technology, well-being and hospitality took part in this program.

The main responsibilities of yTiimi regarding this program were reception of the students arriving to Yrityskylä, assigning tasks, assisting and tutoring the students. The yTiimi group was working on the project from September to mid-December, and the project required approximately nine students to work for three to four days a week on top of their normal studies. The group of yTiimi learned pedagogical, instructional, managerial and problem-solving skills while working on this project. (Savonia UAS, 2017.)

3 ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN PRESENT DAY FINLAND

Self-employment is becoming more and more alluring nowadays since the unemployment rates are high and number of open vacancies is significantly lower. According to Statistics Finland (2017), in August 2017, unemployment rate in Finland was 7,5% of the workforce. This number has increased by 0,2% from the previous year. In August 2017, 202 000 people were actively looking for work, and 140 000 people more were outside of the workforce but not listed as job searchers. According to Statistics Finland (2017), in the second quarter of 2017 there were 36 800 open vacancies in Finland. Looking at these figures shows clearly that there are not enough jobs for all those who wish to be employed. This situation underlines the importance of entrepreneurial studies, giving the students the means and necessary skills to start their own businesses instead of waiting for someone else to make the wanted job available for them.

But starting a company is not necessarily the effortless way to a profitable business and steady income. The world has become smaller through globalization, and instead of competing against other companies in the region, in some fields of business it is possible that your competitor is on the other side of the planet where the costs of doing business might be significantly lower. In this situation it is extremely important to know your field and understand all the variables of conducting business in a streamlined and cost-efficient manner. This can be achieved through high-quality entrepreneurial education in the Finnish schools.

According to the founder and CEO of AudienceBloom Jayson DeMers (2014), there are five skills that are especially important for every entrepreneur. These skills are communication, branding, sales, strategy, and finance. Communication is a crucial factor even if the company does not have any employees other than the entrepreneur; a clear line of communication towards customers and other stakeholders will be crucial when a company wants to be understood correctly. Branding is important when a company is trying to differentiate itself from its competitors. Sales are most likely the largest factor in the success of any business, since it is the key activity when it comes to bringing in the money needed for financing operations, salaries etc. Being able to come up with a strategy for a company is necessary, it helps readying the business for future challenges through anticipation and preparedness. Finance issues are probably the most important part of entrepreneurship, since the success of a company can basically be simplified as one figure; profit. Having a clear understanding of where the money comes from, and where it is going to, will provide the necessary outlines for a plan to make business operations as profitable as possible.

While these aforementioned skills are of great importance to Finnish entrepreneurs, many are still having difficulties with various subjects related to these skills. According to Päivi Kuusivaara (2019), there are six common problems that Finnish entrepreneurs are struggling with. These problems include lack of customers, not taking cash flow into consideration, not taking care of taxes, not understanding the cost of supplies, not asking the customers for their opinions, and not wanting to sell. In the article it is mentioned that the lack of customers can be occur due to inactive communication, this problem could be avoided if the entrepreneur had sufficient training in communication skills. The cash flow, tax, and cost of supplies related problems are strongly connected to understanding of finance, which is also one of the five necessary skills mentioned by Jayson DeMers in his article.

It can be stated that while entrepreneurship can be a tempting career choice, it is not wise to go down that road without a deep understanding of what one is getting into. That is why yTiimi, and other entrepreneurial studies play an important role in creating thriving new businesses in Finland. It is possible that many bankruptcies could have been avoided if these types of entrepreneurial training programmes were introduced to vocational studies and university studies earlier in the past.

4 SELECTING THE RESEARCH METHOD AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The chosen method of research in this thesis is one of the qualitative research methods, more specifically the in-depth interview with a pre-determined list of questions. This decision was a result of a conversation between the thesis author and thesis supervisor Jari-Pekka Jääskeläinen who is working closely with the yTiimi of Savonia. During that meeting it was decided what the interview questions will be, and why those are the questions to be asked. The interview questions are the following:

1. Tell something about yourself and your current situation.
2. Do you feel like participating in yTiimi has been useful to you in working life?
3. Have the networks created during yTiimi been useful in working life or when applying for a job?
4. After your participation in yTiimi, have you done any cooperation with your previous yTiimi -team members or students participating in the yTiimi at the moment?
5. Have the teamwork skills learned in yTiimi been useful?
6. How did participating in yTiimi affect your attitude towards entrepreneurship?
7. What kind of projects did you take part in during your time in yTiimi and what did you learn from them?
8. Is project work part of your current working life? If yes, have you been able to use skills learned in yTiimi?
9. What do you think was especially good in the activities of yTiimi?
10. What do you think could be done better in yTiimi?
11. What was the most memorable lesson/event/situation you experienced during yTiimi?

These questions were carefully chosen to acquire the necessary information from this research. The yTiimi focuses on three important activities; project work, team work and networking. For this reason, it was important to include these activities in the interview questions so that the yTiimi could receive relevant data in order to measure the effectiveness of their program. The people interviewed for this thesis all took part in the yTiimi program and are currently finished their degrees or are at the end of their studies. The interviews were conducted in Finnish, and answers translated to English for this thesis by the author.

4.1 Qualitative research method

A qualitative research method is used in this thesis, in the form of interviewing a number of people who have taken part in yTiimi program in the past. This research method was chosen because it was required to receive some deep well-thought answers for the interview questions, regarding the interviewee's thoughts and ideas about the activities of yTiimi.

According to Ashley Crossman (2019), qualitative research is in many ways different from quantitative research; the data that is collected in qualitative research is non-numerical as opposed to the numerical data that quantitative research is focusing on. According to Ashley Crossman, there are eight different methods of qualitative research: direct observation, open-ended surveys, focus group, in-depth interviews, oral history, participant observation, ethnographic observation, and content analysis.

Direct observation is a type of research where the researcher observes the daily lives or activities of people without interference. Sometimes the people who are researched, do not even know that they are part of a research. When the research is conducted in such manner, it is important to refrain from violating any laws concerning privacy. For example, it is allowed to observe people in public as they go about their normal activities, but it is not allowed to spy on them while they are in a private area.

Open-ended surveys are often used in collaboration with quantitative research, as a way to receive some deeper knowledge about why the participants of the research answered the way they did.

Focus group is a method that is used when the researcher is simultaneously interviewing a number of people, normally between 5 and 15 people at a time. The idea of focus group is to receive relevant data for the question. The focus group method is often used in market research, or when examining a specific trend or event.

In an in-depth interview, the researcher sits down with the interviewees to interview them in a one-on-one setting. There are a couple of different ways on how to conduct this type of interview; first method is to interview the participant according to a ready list of questions, the second method only has a variety of interesting topics but not a certain guideline to the interview, giving the interviewee a possibility to decide where the conversation goes.

Oral history method is used when the researcher wants to accomplish an accurate historical account of a community, a group or an event. This method usually includes a number of thorough interviews with one or many interviewees over a long time period.

Participant observation is somewhat similar to direct observation, except in this method the researcher can also take part in the activities they are recording.

Ethnographic observation is a very thorough and intense method of observation. This method has its roots in anthropology, the researcher's goal is to achieve full immersion through living with the participants for a long time, from months to even years. The idea behind this is to see events from the same viewpoint as the group that is being researched.

Content analysis is used for research and analyze social life through interpretation of word and images of various media channels, such as documents, films, art, television, or music. In this method, the researchers take a look at how certain words or images are used in media, in order to receive a better understanding of how the words or images are defined in a culture.

5 THE INTERVIEWS

5.1 Interview 1

Question 1: Tell something about yourself and the current situation.

My name is Krista Kosunen, age 22, yTiimi group of 2015. Going to graduate soon as a BBA. After yTiimi I went to Austria for a six-month exchange period, and after that I have been doing my in-depth internship and finishing my thesis.

Question 2: Do you feel like participating in yTiimi has been useful to you in working life?

In many ways, yTiimi proved useful in working life. Working in teams gave me a heads-up on what working life might be, since teamwork is also present there. I think that the improvement of my teamwork skills has been useful in my working life.

Question 3: Have the networks created during yTiimi been useful in working life or when applying for a job?

I got my internship because of yTiimi, and after the internship period I will continue working there. During yTiimi studies we cooperated with this organization, so it was a good recommendation.

Question 4: After your participation in yTiimi, have you done any cooperation with your previous yTiimi -team members or students participating in the yTiimi at the moment?

I haven't been cooperating with them since yTiimi. I answered a couple of questions regarding projects we started working on and the new yTiimi members continued with. Those projects were Matkus Christmas lights and Parasta palvelua -mystery shopping.

Question 5: Have the teamwork skills learned in yTiimi been useful?

I think teamwork skills are always useful. It makes life easier if you are able to think of what is best for the team, instead of what is best for the individual.

Question 6: How did participating in yTiimi affect your attitude towards entrepreneurship?

Participating in yTiimi did not really affect my attitudes towards entrepreneurship, but of course it did teach me certain things that you need to consider when working as an entrepreneur, things that I had not yet come to think of.

Question 7: What kind of projects did you take part in during your time in yTiimi and what did you learn from them?

I took part in many different types of projects during my time in yTiimi. We organized the Up to You -event and also took part and helped with many other events, such as the live stream of Nordic Business Forum and "Innovate or die!", marketing of Nenäpäivä and others, we held NY24H camps for vocational school students, assembled and took apart the Christmas lights at Matkus and took part in Parasta palvelua -mystery shopping. There were also other projects that I did not participate in actively. These projects taught me the importance of planning and scheduling. When we were working as a project group, we had to take into consideration every member of the team, but without making any single member of the team more important than the team as a whole. The projects taught me patience, because not everything went according to plans and occasionally, we had some disagreements among the team participants. We had to learn some problem-solving skills and also learn how to compromise, otherwise the teamwork would not have succeeded.

Question 8: Is project work part of your current working life? If yes, have you been able to use skills learned in yTiimi?

In my work I am part of a team, and occasionally we have some projects. In those projects I have managed to utilize the skills that I have learned in yTiimi, especially those I mentioned in the previous question.

Question 9: What do you think was especially good in the activities of yTiimi?

The cooperation with other study programmes. The business students have a unique point-of-view on certain aspects, when comparing to, for example, hospitality students or engineers. These various different perspectives brought a lot of added value to the team and we were able to learn from each other.

Question 10: What do you think could be done better in yTiimi?

Occasionally the theory part of the teaching felt detached, due to the fact that the projects took a lot of our time. At some times the theory part seemed to be unnecessary since the topics did not feel very useful.

Question 11: What was the most memorable lesson/event/situation you experienced during yTiimi?

The most memorable part of yTiimi were all the other team members, despite our differences we ended up growing to a tightly knit team and we are still staying in contact. The most educating project was definitely the Christmas lights of Matkus; during that project we had to work at nights, which led to learning a lot of new things about our team members when we all got tired. Another memorable part was organizing the Up to You -event, that project was the most stressful and pressures were high. It is difficult to choose only

one moment, since the year and a half I spent with yTiimi contained so many memorable events.

5.2 Interview 2

Question 1: Tell something about yourself and the current situation.

Male, entrepreneur, age 31, yTiimi group of 2008. I was already an entrepreneur when I took part in the program.

Question 2: Do you feel like participating in yTiimi has been useful to you in working life?

The project works were helpful.

Question 3: Have the networks created during yTiimi been useful in working life or when applying for a job?

Yes and no, I haven't had the need to search for jobs.

Question 4: After your participation in yTiimi, have you done any cooperation with your previous yTiimi -team members or students participating in the yTiimi at the moment?

We have organized some events with other yTiimi members.

Question 5: Have the teamwork skills learned in yTiimi been useful?

Yes, the group work skills were useful.

Question 6: How did participating in yTiimi affect your attitude towards entrepreneurship?

My attitude towards entrepreneurship grew even stronger after yTiimi.

Question 7: What kind of projects did you take part in during your time in yTiimi and what did you learn from them?

We were helping with developing a hotel/restaurant, that project taught me that many things can be wrong.

Question 8: Is project work part of your current working life? If yes, have you been able to use skills learned in yTiimi?

Yes, I have, it is part of my everyday working life.

Question 9: What do you think was especially good in the activities of yTiimi?

The teaching style was very substantial, and entrepreneurship orientated. The visits to other companies were interesting.

Question 10: What do you think could be done better in yTiimi?

Could have more visits to different types of companies.

Question 11: What was the most memorable lesson/event/situation you experienced during yTiimi?

I don't really remember any more, it was so long ago.

5.3 Interview 3

Question 1: Tell something about yourself and the current situation.

Female, age 38, member of yTiimi in 2012-2013, I graduated as a Bachelor of Business Administration in November 2014 and continued my studies in UEF in fall of 2015, in a Master's program of innovation management. After my studies I returned to my old job and resigned after being there for 10 years. I got another management level job, but I quit after two weeks, then spent three weeks unemployed until I started to build my own company. Currently I am a franchise-entrepreneur and have been doing that for 2,5 years now. As a boss, I am really team-oriented and will delegate responsibility with ease. I create around me a culture of open conversation and conscious development of efficient business practices. We treat our co-operators from other companies as our own work colleagues, since we have multiple encounters with them each day, in logistics for example.

Question 2: Do you feel like participating in yTiimi has been useful to you in working life?

It gave me courage to create new networks.

Question 3: Have the networks created during yTiimi been useful in working life or when applying for a job?

I have got some employees through the networks found in yTiimi.

Question 4: After your participation in yTiimi, have you done any cooperation with your previous yTiimi -team members or students participating in the yTiimi at the moment?

I organized a couple of small projects for later yTiimi groups where my company was the client.

Question 5: Have the teamwork skills learned in yTiimi been useful?

Yes, I feel that the experience in teamwork and working with multiple projects at the same time was very unique, and it is difficult to find such experiences in working life. In working

life, contracts and responsibilities are tying people up and keeping them from moving fast from one project to another.

Question 6: How did participating in yTiimi affect your attitude towards entrepreneurship?
Before yTiimi, I had a feeling that entrepreneurship is all right, as long as you remember that it does not have to be the only major thing in life. This still hasn't changed for me.

Question 7: What kind of projects did you take part in during your time in yTiimi and what did you learn from them?

There were so many of them that I only remember a couple. I was the project manager in Singahtaan maailmalle -event. The client was Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment and our goal was to produce a brochure for the event, with all the company stories and live interviews during the event. The host of the event was Tuomas Enbuske, audience consisted of people from the state department, managers of international companies in Savo region etc. I learned that when everyone wants the same thing, you can forget about titles and bureaucracy, and the results will be immense. My job as the leader of my team was mostly handing out assignments and responsibilities, as well as guiding and assisting in those tasks. The greatest challenge in this was to find time for interviews with the busy CEOs of large companies, so that we would have all the required material ready for the event. This project was very rewarding, because all of the CEOs were very positive and encouraging towards us students. I believe some of us got really good contacts to be used later in working life.

Question 8: Is project work part of your current working life? If yes, have you been able to use skills learned in yTiimi?

Currently, not really. After I finish my studies, I am planning to apply for some projects. I am taking part in one school project, but the funding is still pending, future will tell how it goes.

Question 9: What do you think was especially good in the activities of yTiimi?

The atmosphere, sharing of prior knowledge to avoid problems with our teamwork, open conversations while still staying within the subject, great visiting speakers.

Question 10: What do you think could be done better in yTiimi?

Can't think of much, occasionally it was difficult to sit on the uncomfortable chairs.

Question 11: What was the most memorable lesson/event/situation you experienced during yTiimi?

The potlucks at the ends of semesters and the last meeting with all the hugs, thanks and conclusions.

5.4 Interview 4

Question 1: Tell something about yourself and the current situation.

Male, sales manager, age 26. Took part in yTiimi of 2011. I graduated in 2013 and have been working with the same company after that. I worked here part-time during my studies as a sales and marketing coordinator, it was a good foundation for growth to my time after the studies. As an employee, I am very sales oriented and also competitive, but on the other hand, teamwork is also important. I am interested in project work.

Question 2: Do you feel like participating in yTiimi has been useful to you in working life?

I feel that certain projects did help us see how companies work. One of the projects in yTiimi was about networking events of companies. Organizing those and seeing them closely taught me the importance of networking. I took part in the event organizing and I learned that the versatile skills in our group are irreplaceable when it comes to organizing a high-level event for the customers.

Question 3: Have the networks created during yTiimi been useful in working life or when applying for a job?

Yes, with the help of yTiimi I got into the company I work for now. They were a client of yTiimi when I took part in the program. I believe that the contacts acquired during yTiimi will be even more important in the future when people are getting ahead in their careers.

Question 4: After your participation in yTiimi, have you done any cooperation with your previous yTiimi -team members or students participating in the yTiimi at the moment?

Yes, members of yTiimi are working in other companies and we have been cooperating with them in some customer projects.

Question 5: Have the teamwork skills learned in yTiimi been useful?

Yes, I believe that working in a team with those projects taught me a lot at that point. Not so many students have the experience in project-like, commercial teamwork. On top of that, the cooperation with the companies motivates to give a little more out of yourself, compared to normal class-studies.

Question 6: How did participating in yTiimi affect your attitude towards entrepreneurship?

The entrepreneurship lectures were very interesting and those taught me a lot about the level of commitment entrepreneurs give their own companies.

Question 7: What kind of projects did you take part in during your time in yTiimi and what did you learn from them?

Organizing events, I learned that the versatile skills of our group was truly needed, the event was for a well-known company in this area, so the expectations were high. I also took part in organizing some networking events, where the meaning of networking became clear. The company village showed me how early the professionals of the future can learn the basic principles of business.

Question 8: Is project work part of your current working life? If yes, have you been able to use skills learned in yTiimi?

Yes, but in my field, it is required to have some knowledge that you can only get through work. I did get some project-oriented attitude from yTiimi.

Question 9: What do you think was especially good in the activities of yTiimi?

The students did not have to worry about getting those projects, that cannot be taken for granted. The level of our projects was extremely high, as well as the level of our interesting lecturers and company visits. The commitment of our teachers, especially J-P, was extremely valuable.

Question 10: What do you think could be done better in yTiimi?

Some projects were purely for raising money, without educational value. But I guess these are also needed.

Question 11: What was the most memorable lesson/event/situation you experienced during yTiimi?

Our trip was something I will always remember, there were some good events in companies and schools. Also, all the company lectures, and the media day event we organized for Savon Sanomat was of a high quality, even in today's standards.

5.5 Interview 5

Question 1: Tell something about yourself and the current situation.

My name is Emmi Virsunen, age 23, and I'm a BBA student in Savonia UAS. I started the study programme in 2014, and took part in yTiimi in 2015, still working towards graduation. My goal is to finish my own thesis in 2018. I got my internship in Ikea Centres Kuopio

Oy through yTiimi, and after my internship I continued to work there, been there for over a year now. In the yTiimi group, I was definitely one of the most active and taking part in everything I could. At least with my opinion if nothing more. I am very pedantic, and I expected the same from the other members of my team. They were very aware of this. I am good in leading a group, and therefore I was the acting project manager in our projects.

Question 2: Do you feel like participating in yTiimi has been useful to you in working life?
Yes, since I did get my internship and subsequently my current job through the project of yTiimi. The project-oriented studying and integration of working life to our studies has helped me a lot in my working life, that is constantly evolving towards being more project-oriented. Also, studying with other courageous and energetic people with same mindsets definitely gave me strength and certainty. When we were all working with the same kind of drive, it was a pleasure to see different types of people and their methods, as well as learn from them.

Question 3: Have the networks created during yTiimi been useful in working life or when applying for a job?
I have met other members of yTiimi in my work, and it was easy to find a common ground. To my delight, whenever I mention the yTiimi in this area, many people know what I am talking about. My networks have grown with the help of yTiimi and I am sure they will be beneficial in the future.

Question 4: After your participation in yTiimi, have you done any cooperation with your previous yTiimi -team members or students participating in the yTiimi at the moment?
Not really.

Question 5: Have the teamwork skills learned in yTiimi been useful?
Different people and different methods were strongly present in yTiimi, but that is when a team is at its strongest. This is something that I took with me to my professional life, in each project you need to find everyone's own strength and use them accordingly. The attention to detail and total commitment to a job were a couple of things learned in yTiimi, and that has carried me in my working life as well. It is not easy to reach a certain level when you work but trying to achieve it is definitely worth the effort. I was happy to see that our team was always trying their best and when our goal was achieved, it was a pleasure to share that feeling with everyone in our team.

Question 6: How did participating in yTiimi affect your attitude towards entrepreneurship?

Before I thought that entrepreneurship is really just about starting your own company. Through my studies and especially through yTiimi, I learned that is really all about attitude. In my own work environment, everyone works like an entrepreneur. They take care of their responsibilities like they had invested their own money in the business. To me, entrepreneurship is about a certain mindset and commitment.

Question 7: What kind of projects did you take part in during your time in yTiimi and what did you learn from them?

As I mentioned earlier, I took part in almost all our projects. The most rewarding and teaching projects were definitely those where I was the project manager. For the Kuopio Chamber of Commerce, I produced the Mystery Shopping -part of their Best Service -competition. I was overseeing the process, reported the results in a format of my own design, and then presented the process as well as the results to the Chamber of Commerce. The largest project of our team was setting up the Christmas lights to Matkus Shopping Center. I was the project manager in this for two consecutive years, my responsibilities included planning, scheduling, communication, managing the work, as well as training the new people. We were the first team to take this immense project with lots of moving parts and quick-changing situations. Both of these projects were massive, and important to me and our clients. It was great to see how I managed to get them done and then receive good feedback after the jobs were done. With the help of these projects, my own ability to handle pressure and control the big picture was truly developed.

Question 8: Is project work part of your current working life? If yes, have you been able to use skills learned in yTiimi?

Not really.

Question 9: What do you think was especially good in the activities of yTiimi?

Team members with similar mindsets, same goals and high morale. We were able to build a tight-knit group, with everyone having an important role. This is why our team was functional and we made everything happen at the level we all wanted.

Question 10: What do you think could be done better in yTiimi?

I think the distribution of responsibilities could be developed. Everyone should be able to take more responsibility and handle larger parts of the project, so that they will have a chance to try and develop their own skills. Since I was actively taking part and willing to work hard, I got the challenging projects that gave me opportunities to learn.

Question 11: What was the most memorable lesson/event/situation you experienced during yTiimi?

I have so many wonderful, joyful, dear, fun, sweaty, challenging, difficult, and heavy moments behind me with yTiimi group of 2015. So many situations come to mind, and I cannot just choose one of them. All of those shared feelings and experiences from all the different situations and moments that were equally as important during my time with yTiimi. It was a journey worth travelling! The best part in all of Savonia, I guarantee that.

5.6 Interview 6

Question 1: Tell something about yourself and the current situation.

Male, age 23 (at the time of graduation in 2009). I took part in yTiimi group of 2007-2009, I started my studies in 2006. After yTiimi, when I was waiting for my thesis to be checked, I was wondering what I want to do for a living. At the time, I really needed to get some job and fast, I had just finished my unpaid internship and the bank account of this student started to look very empty. I contemplated between what would be the best decision regarding my own development as a professional, and what would be the fastest way to start earning money. I decided to begin telemarketing for DNA. I did that for about four months, while becoming one of the best salesmen in my department. I resigned on the last day of my trial period, when I got a job in the centralized telephone customer service of OP Group. I have worked for OP ever since, for the past 8 years now. Currently I am the Account Manager in Pohjois-Savon Osuuspankki. My title has changed approximately every 1-2 years. I have been a Sales Negotiator, Sales Coach, Transaction Advisor, Head of department, Sales Manager, Service Manager, and now an Account Manager. I am now in charge of a larger ensemble of consumer customers and a supervisor to a team of 15 employees. I have been a supervisor since 2011, at the age of 25 I was one of the youngest managers in the whole OP group and easily the youngest manager in our bank. In 2016, I started to study the higher UAS degree in Savonia, I am planning to graduate by the end of this year. During my studies I was not very ambitious or hard-working, but after graduation something changed and in my working life I have always tried to serve my customers as well as I can. Maybe that is the reason for my career development.

Question 2: Do you feel like participating in yTiimi has been useful to you in working life?

Yes I do, my parents are entrepreneurs so it was not new to me. I felt like yTiimi helped me find my inner entrepreneurial mindset.

Question 3: Have the networks created during yTiimi been useful in working life or when applying for a job?

Yes, I have hired some people who took part in yTiimi, and our bank has also been a client in some yTiimi projects.

Question 4: After your participation in yTiimi, have you done any cooperation with your previous yTiimi -team members or students participating in the yTiimi at the moment?

Yes, I was in the presentation video of yTiimi, I also took part in one of the events organized by yTiimi a couple of years ago, but I can't remember the name of that.

Question 5: Have the teamwork skills learned in yTiimi been useful?

Of course, studying is always useful. I would emphasize cooperation with local entrepreneurs more than the teamwork, this has been useful when applying for jobs. It is a good opportunity to be able to discuss with those who are in charge of hiring people in your area.

Question 6: How did participating in yTiimi affect your attitude towards entrepreneurship?

Nothing changed really, I have been closely involved with my father's company for over 10 years now.

Question 7: What kind of projects did you take part in during your time in yTiimi and what did you learn from them?

We had all kinds of projects, there was the "AirPyy", we made a marketing plan for the villages of Airaksela and Lempyy, some sales project with Lainalaite (currently Avek). The most memorable one was the project where we dismantled an old cabin at J-P's summer home.

Question 8: Is project work part of your current working life? If yes, have you been able to use skills learned in yTiimi?

Yes, every day. The yTiimi created a basis for methods of project working that I still try to develop in my working life.

Question 9: What do you think was especially good in the activities of yTiimi?

Cooperation with real entrepreneurs. I only realized afterwards how beneficial it was to work with the entrepreneurs and managers. I've noticed that many students are nervous when they come talk to me about a job, for example. I did not have this problem myself, since I was talking to managers and entrepreneurs during my time in yTiimi.

Question 10: What do you think could be done better in yTiimi?

Difficult to say, I'm sure some progress has been made in the last 10 years. Just a lot of cooperation with local businesses and entrepreneurs and it will be all good. You don't even have to do projects all the time, lectures are useful too. Very often companies will send their representatives to talk about their experiences and viewpoints, for the sake of corporate social responsibility.

Question 11: What was the most memorable lesson/event/situation you experienced during yTiimi?

J-P's way of using Kela's child allowance, Antti's sailing stories. Awesome teachers, after all these years I still think they were great people.

5.7 Interview 7

Question 1: Tell something about yourself and the current situation.

My name is Riku Sorsa, I am a 29yo man living in Kuopio. I was a part of yTiimi in the group of 2010, I graduated in 2013. I am thinking of continuing with some pedagogical studies. Currently I work in TE-office of Northern Savonia as an expert in employer and company services. In my work, I meet employers and entrepreneurs every week, and try to solve their problems regarding recruiting employees, for example. I also take part in a few projects and pilots, and I co-host the MessiLive -recruitment events. Even though I work in a job agency, my roots in working life are strongly in sales and marketing. Before I came to TE-office, I was working for 4 to 6 years in various companies doing B2B customer acquisition, customer development, as well as managing one office. I have had many responsible tasks over the years, but in all of those my work has been versatile and requiring constant learning and adapting to new situations. The sales and marketing orientation has become more and more important during my whole career. As an employee, I am conscientious, demanding, and curious. I expect a lot from my work and my results, and that has made many fine things possible. One of my greatest strengths is to see things from many viewpoints and being able to put everything in right proportions, as well as my ability to focus on what is relevant. I ask a lot, because I am interested in why things are done the way they are done.

Question 2: Do you feel like participating in yTiimi has been useful to you in working life?

The yTiimi was the most helpful part at the time of my graduation and even after that. Usually the problem with students who have just graduated, is the lack of work experience. When I started actively looking for work, I felt that through yTiimi I gained some skills and experience that is required in working life, this was an advantage that many other graduated BBA's did not have. In yTiimi, we went through many things in various viewpoints.

Very often our viewpoint was more working life oriented or practical than the other courses we had. In our studies, theory met practice. The importance of yTiimi is emphasized in learning the experiences and preparedness needed for working life, other students who did not take part, did not have the same privilege as we did.

Question 3: Have the networks created during yTiimi been useful in working life or when applying for a job?

By the time of my graduation, because of yTiimi I already had a network of connections that were helping me later in working life as well as in applying for work. I did not really get any jobs or interviews directly from this network, they mostly just guided me in the right direction and helped me understand the requirements of working life.

Question 4: After your participation in yTiimi, have you done any cooperation with your previous yTiimi -team members or students participating in the yTiimi at the moment?

I haven't had any direct cooperation, but I have passed on some silent knowledge of the job market and leads on available jobs.

Question 5: Have the teamwork skills learned in yTiimi been useful?

The teamwork skills learned in yTiimi are mostly realized in my current job. I work in a large organization where I take part in a lot of projects and pilots simultaneously. I see new challenges every week. In these projects, there is a variable group of members from different starting points with different job descriptions, this requires the ability to adapt. In yTiimi, the projects that we saw through were very often quite similar. The versatility of yTiimi projects and changing teams has prepared me for the hectic and ever-changing environment that is working life these days.

Question 6: How did participating in yTiimi affect your attitude towards entrepreneurship?

When I started with yTiimi in 2010, it was not so strongly formed around entrepreneurship then. It was more like a study environment that focused on internal entrepreneurship and creating an environment of entrepreneurial attitude. When the yTiimi started, I had a deep respect for entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs. During the yTiimi studies, that respect grew even deeper and I am glad to be able to serve entrepreneurs and employers in my current career. There is still a possibility that I might start my own company someday, now I have a better understanding of the risks and opportunities of entrepreneurship.

Question 7: What kind of projects did you take part in during your time in yTiimi and what did you learn from them?

I took part in almost all of the projects during my years in yTiimi. I tried to be involved in as much as possible. From these projects, I could mention the Company Village that was organized for the first time in Kuopio that year, the "School in Kongo" -project, as well as developing a marketing plan for the folk music festival Siilifolk. I took part in all of these; they were some great projects that helped create a better future for the whole yTiimi. I enjoyed all of these projects, since they were very practical and had a direct contact with working life. Especially during Company Village -project, many students had to stretch themselves thin and find a balance between their personal lives and the project, since it demanded a lot of attendance compared to many other projects.

Question 8: Is project work part of your current working life? If yes, have you been able to use skills learned in yTiimi?

Currently I am working with many projects/pilots at the same time. Taking part in these projects and pilots is always a privilege, just like during the time of yTiimi. The skills learned in yTiimi about scheduling, keeping focus on the right place, and being able to work with all sorts of colleagues and customers has been very helpful over the years.

Question 9: What do you think was especially good in the activities of yTiimi?

What made the yTiimi functional, was the entire dynamic of the group. The classroom was filled with students with similar attitudes, those who wanted to do a little more during their studies. It motivated me to take everything I could out of my studies. The projects were mostly practical and reasonable. My special thanks, for making the yTiimi so functional and meaningful, go to J-P Jääskeläinen and Antti Iire. They had created a platform of growth for the students, and this platform nurtured the curiosity and the will to get a little more out of life for everyone who took part in yTiimi.

Question 10: What do you think could be done better in yTiimi?

From the viewpoint of working life, I would have hoped for more sales and marketing studies for the students. And I don't mean the traditional marketing channels, I mean that the students should prepare themselves for the fact that they need to be able to sell and market their own skills better. In my opinion, this is the most essential part of their studies. All the courses, studies and projects prepare the students for working life, but if they don't know how to accurately describe their skills, and the added value they will bring to the company, it will be much more difficult for them to get a job after graduation. This is something that the yTiimi should take into consideration in the future.

Question 11: What was the most memorable lesson/event/situation you experienced during yTiimi?

The field trip was one indescribably rewarding experience. All the finished projects and long hours paid off during that trip. It was definitely one of the finest experiences during my studies. We waited for the trip, and it was valued even more due to the fact that all of us in yTiimi earned that trip with our own efforts. But still, the most memorable part of yTiimi was our last lesson, when we said goodbye to each other. It was a realization of everything that yTiimi meant to me. I thanked the group, and especially Jari-Pekka Jämskeläinen and Antti Iire with similar, but noticeably shorter words back then during our last meeting;

"For me, the role of yTiimi in finding my way in life was greater than I could have imagined. After my first year of business studies, I was frustrated and lost. The first year did not meet my expectations, and I even thought of quitting my studies or changing to another field. After I started yTiimi, it felt like so many things found their place. I quickly found myself in a group of students who have a similar mindset, I got to be a part of some fantastic projects, and I got to listen to two teachers who encouraged me and nurtured my curiosity. I began to understand who I was, and what I want to do. For me, yTiimi has saved a lot."

I am truly grateful for being able to take part in yTiimi.

6 RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

In this chapter, the answers of each question will be reviewed, and relevant points will be highlighted.

The first question was mostly about the participants themselves, seven people were interviewed, ranging from age 22 to 38, four of them female, three of them male. Each one of them with their own backgrounds, some entrepreneurs and some employees, different fields of business so the focus group in this interview was very diverse. Some of the interviewees were willing to have their names published and some wished to remain anonymous.

The second question was, "Do you feel like participating in yTiimi has been useful to you in working life?". All the interviewees said that the yTiimi had helped them in one way or another. It can be seen from the answers that the networking and learning about project working were considered the most helpful part of the yTiimi program. The students were able to get a deeper insight to the working life, compared to their fellow classmates who did not take part in yTiimi.

The third question was, "Have the networks created during yTiimi been useful in working life or when applying for a job?". Two of the interviewees got a job through participating in yTiimi, another two have hired people from yTiimi, and one of the interviewees got their current employer to take part in yTiimi as a client. All in all, the networks were found to be useful.

The fourth question was, "After your participation in yTiimi, have you done any cooperation with your previous yTiimi -team members or students participating in the yTiimi at the moment?". Four out of seven interviewees had cooperation with yTiimi members after their participation, organizing events with the members of earlier group or taking part in later yTiimi events. One of the interviewees even came back to the yTiimi program, bringing in their own company as a client.

The fifth question was, "Have the teamwork skills learned in yTiimi been useful?". All of the participants agreed that the skills learned in yTiimi have been useful. For some, yTiimi was the first touch in a project where there are a lot of people with different skills and different viewpoints, this was regarded as a good chance to get used to such situations before entering the working life.

The sixth question was, "How did participating in yTiimi affect your attitude towards entrepreneurship?". Four out of seven participants said that their attitudes were changed with the help of yTiimi, when three of them said that nothing really changed, since they had the entrepreneurial attitude in them even before starting the yTiimi program. Nevertheless, participants did learn more about entrepreneurship, and no one was discouraged after getting a better view on what it is like to be an entrepreneur.

The seventh question was, "What kind of projects did you take part in during your time in yTiimi and what did you learn from them?". From the answers of this question, it was easy to see how many different projects the yTiimi had over the years. It is also clear that the participants were fully involved in their projects, the way they described their work and different aspects of the projects really shows that the yTiimi program has had a lasting effect.

The eighth question was, "Is project work part of your current working life? If yes, have you been able to use skills learned in yTiimi?". Five out of seven interviewees said that their everyday working life includes project work in one way or another, and all of them agreed that taking part in yTiimi has helped them with the projects in their career.

The ninth question was, "What do you think was especially good in the activities of yTiimi?". The cooperation with companies and commitment of the teachers gained significant praise, some participants also mentioned the good team spirit when everyone in yTiimi had the same goals and attitudes. The visiting lecturers were considered interesting and particularly useful when teaching students about the realities of entrepreneurship.

The tenth question was, "What do you think could be done better in yTiimi?". This could be considered the most valuable question in this whole interview, since it offers a chance to see what should be done differently. From the answers it is clearly seen that almost every participant had their own issues, there was nothing so obviously wrong that more than one of the participants would have mentioned it. That should be a good sign, but still there are some things that could be changed.

Two participants hoped for more cooperation between the companies and yTiimi members, such as visits to the companies or lectures by entrepreneurs/managers. These are of course more difficult to organize due to the size of the groups and the fact that those companies need to be operating normally even if there will be visitors or lectures, this would take valuable resources from them.

One of the interviewees thought that the theory parts were not entirely connected with the projects that they were working on. Perhaps the content of the theory lessons and scheduling of those lessons could be improved in order to achieve a stronger connection with theory and practice.

One mentioned that the chairs were occasionally uncomfortable, this might seem like a minor issue but it is understandable that if one is listening to an important lecture while feeling uncomfortable, or possibly even feeling pain because of the quality of their chair, there is a possibility that this person cannot concentrate properly on the task at hand. This could eventually lead to decline in results and quality of work; therefore, ergonomics should be taken into consideration when furnishing a classroom or a workspace.

One of the interviewees was happily taking on responsibilities but said that the teachers should be able to distribute the responsibilities evenly, so that every member of the team would have the same chance to challenge themselves and develop as a professional.

One participant focused their attention in the fact that while there is a variety of courses and lectures about sales and marketing, the most important part of the process is missing; the ability to sell your own skills and added value to a potential employer. Since yTiimi is partially about entrepreneurship as a mindset, it might be a productive idea to encourage the members of yTiimi to focus on their inner strengths, and within the group, finding the best ways to express these strengths when necessary.

The eleventh question was, "What was the most memorable lesson/event/situation you experienced during yTiimi?". Like the previous question, this one also brought out the individual aspects of the interviewees. Two of the participants mentioned the trip with other yTiimi members as one of the most memorable moments, some remembered stories or certain lectures, or how their time with yTiimi ended, memorizing the last meeting with the group. Almost everyone seemed to have good memories from their time with yTiimi, even if they thought something could have been done better.

7 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this thesis was to get to know about the various activities and education methods of the Savonia UAS yTiimi, do some research on the general aspects of entrepreneurship in Finland, and then come up with a proper way to get first-hand feedback from the former Savonia UAS students who took part in the activities of yTiimi. This included figuring out the structure of the interview questions and choosing the best possible way to get enough information for the report.

It was rather easy to find information regarding the activities of yTiimi, and their projects in the past. I had one of the key people behind yTiimi, Jari-Pekka Jääskeläinen guiding me through this project, and giving me important pointers on what they expect to find out by interviewing former participants of yTiimi. Trying to decide what should be asked from the interviewees, and how to form the questions to yield best possible data, was one of the most intriguing parts of working on this thesis. Structure of the interview would determine the success or failure of this whole process, and in my honest opinion, I think the questions were chosen successfully and a sufficient amount of data was received.

It was very clear from the beginning, that it would be next to impossible to get enough interviewees to be able to conduct a quantitative research. The number of possible participants was limited, and many of the former yTiimi students were out of reach. Luckily, we found seven people who were willing to give up their time to help me with this project and help the yTiimi to improve their performance.

In conclusion, based on the results of this interview, the yTiimi of Savonia has succeeded in its goal to encourage their students towards entrepreneurship, even if they would not go on to start their own companies. The idea of entrepreneurship as a mindset, as an attitude towards working hard, has clearly been passed on through the efforts of yTiimi teachers, no matter where the participants will end up later in life.

Going forward, the data discovered through this thesis process suggests that the work of yTiimi is relevant and helpful as a part of Savonia UAS studies, no dramatic changes are required. But this does not mean that nothing should be done, some fairly surprising points were brought out by the interview questions. For example, the uncomfortable seats. It would seem like a minor thing, but when staying on a seat for a couple of hours and trying to focus on studies, an uncomfortable seat most likely will have a negative effect on performing in class.

If this process would be viewed from another point of view, for example an entrepreneur who has gone through their studies years ago and now owns a successful company, I wonder if that person would see taking part in yTiimi as a possible benefit when recruiting new, young employees straight from the school? I want to say yes, and I believe that it would be a great help to have employees who understand the realities of entrepreneurship and share the same values and mindset as the owner of the company.

For the author, this process of doing the research and finishing the report took a surprisingly long time. The work was started in 2017 and finished in the end of 2019. This was mostly due to working full time during the writing of thesis, as well as personal problems with time management. Now that this project is finally finished, I can finally look back at the time spent in Savonia UAS and reminisce about the good times with my fellow students and our inspiring teachers.

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