

LAB University of Applied Sciences
Faculty of Business Administration, Lappeenranta
Degree Programme in International Business
Specialisation in International Marketing

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How can Georgia become the next potential market for LAB University of Applied Sciences?

Thesis 2020

Abstract

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Instructor: Principal Lecturer Tuuli Mirola, LAB University of Applied Sciences.

The objective of the study was to find out how Georgia can become the next potential market for LAB University of Applied Sciences, what marketing channels work most effectively for it and how LAB UAS could promote itself to the Georgian students. Finnish education is very desired in Georgia, however, little to nothing is known about it there, especially about tertiary level.

Secondary data was collected from different sources such as national statistics office of Georgia, OECD statistics and statistics Finland. The theoretical part of the thesis was written using several books, science articles, websites and other credible sources. Data for primary research was collected through the questionnaire where responses were analysed quantitatively. The research participants were chosen based on their progression of studies at Georgian public schools. Each participant was in either 11th or 12th grade at the moment of the research.

The results of the study show that for Georgia to become the next market for Finnish higher education, especially LAB UAS, it is necessary to get information out where students can find it easily. Also, education should be more accessible through scholarship schemes, as covering tuition fees strikes as the most problematic issue for the Georgian students. Best promotional channels for the students are websites and online reviews, however, personal opinions are valued highest.

Keywords: International Education, Education Export, Education Marketing Mix, Promotional Channels, LAB University of Applied Sciences

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In recent years, completing a bachelor's degree abroad has become a popular trend in Georgia. Many students choose to continue their higher education in the European countries immediately after graduating from high school. Usually, the most popular destination for this is central Europe. According to the National Statistics Office of Georgia (2020b), the three leading countries for Georgian students studying abroad are Germany, Poland and Italy.

Finland is not the top choice for the Georgian students even though as a country, its education, particularly on the elementary and middle school level, are highly regarded amongst the Georgian public. It is often praised as the exemplary education, so much so that a Finnish International school has opened in Georgia recently (Finnish International School Georgia n.d).

Not many Georgian students go to Finland to complete their bachelors' degrees. The reality is that, according to different data, it is significantly less attractive than others as a study destination. This fact can be explained by the lack of available information on hand about how to apply and enter Finnish Universities and/or Universities of Applied Sciences.

Little to no information is available to the general public about how students can enter universities and/or universities of applied sciences in Finland from Georgia. Oftentimes, people are surprised to hear about the application process and its requirements for further steps. To put things into perspective, googling the phrase "Study in Germany" ("Stsavla Germaniashi") in the Georgian language gives useful search results (around 102,000) and the landing pages come from trustworthy sources. The same search on Finland ("Stsavla Pinetshi") delivers 17,000 results with little to no useful material, only outdated webpages where information about Finland is a part of a generalized article or a news story.

This research focuses on surveying the Georgian high school students who study in grades 11-12 (ages 16-18) on their general interest in the Finnish education system and their willingness to potentially apply to continue their studies in

Finland, their favourite methods for studying, researching information about schools and more.

Degree students going from non-EU/EEA countries to Finland are subjected to paying tuition fees which in turn gives Finland an excellent opportunity to stimulate its economy from it, which can only positively impact the Finnish education system quality in the future. However, tuition fees can be risk factors for the students as additional financial charges might result in a lack of motivation for the applicants.

1.2 The objective of the study

The objective of the study is to find out if there are any interest and readiness among the Georgian high school students to study and complete their international bachelor's degrees in Finland, specifically at LAB University of Applied Sciences Lappeenranta campus and what potential the country could have to become a pool of talent for the school.

The study is particularly relevant to LAB University of Applied Sciences, the new higher education institution, which started operating from January 1st, 2020. The school can explore the opportunities to further expand its internationality by attracting an almost unknown Georgian market. By doing so, it can become the pioneer institution from Finland who does so and can gain an early competitive advantage.

The main research question of the thesis is: **How can Georgia become the next potential market for LAB University of Applied Sciences?**

The sub-questions are the following:

- What should LAB University of Applied Sciences do to familiarize Georgian students better with itself?
- How can LAB University of Applied Sciences promote itself to attract potential students from Georgia?

1.3 Research method

The main thesis question is primarily answered through the marketing research conducted by the author. Secondary data is retrieved from Statistics Finland and from the National Statistics Office of Georgia websites, as well as other online sources, where facts and figures about the characteristics of international students and other information about studies in both countries are presented. Secondary data also includes excerpts from different interviews by studinfo.ge, with Georgian students who study or have studied abroad.

Primary data is represented by a quantitative research method in which an online survey with structured interview questions is distributed to the students of different high schools in different cities of Georgia.

Due to a large number of the students, the sample size is defined by the members of the four Facebook groups, which are specifically created to connect the graduating students of classes of 2019 and 2020 and earlier. Defining the sampling method for the survey supports answering the research questions. The most suitable sampling method for this study is convenience sampling, as it is highly unlikely to access the research sample with other methods, also the author cannot control who fills in the questionnaire.

1.4 Delimitations of the study

The study only focuses on surveying Georgian public-school students about the potential of completing their bachelor's degrees at the newly established LAB University of Applied Sciences Lappeenranta campus.

According to the National Statistics Office of Georgia (2020a), there are currently 69,432 students in Georgian public schools studying in grades 11 and 12. Table 1 on the next page illustrates the distribution of high school students in the last five academic years.

To further delimit the research sample size, the author distributes the online survey to groups of students who are members of the Facebook groups for the graduating classes of 2019 and 2020.

Distribution of Public General School Pupils by Grades (At the beginning of school year, persons)					
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
of which in:					
grade 11	35 891	36 587	36 638	34 910	34 688
grade 12	37 872	35 176	35 763	35 494	34 744
Total:	73 763	71 763	72 401	70 404	69 432

Table 1. Distribution of Public General School Pupils by Grades (National Statistics Office of Georgia 2020a).

The online questionnaire form is sent to the student groups. The cover letter explains the study purpose and how the results are used and interpreted.

1.5 Theoretical framework

The theoretical section of the thesis report starts by discussing what a service is and how and why education can be defined as such.

The theory part reviews the literature about education export, its advantages, and disadvantages. It extensively studies the 7Ps of marketing that is adapted to education, called the educational marketing mix. Furthermore, it discusses education export in Finland and some of the internationalization practices by Finnish HEIs (higher education institutions).

The theoretical part also features extensive information about different stages of education in both Georgia and Finland and SWOT analysis on these countries from the educational perspective.

2 Education and service

2.1 What is a service?

The term *service* is a broad subject and no one definition fully explains the phenomenon. Many definitions of the word have been suggested throughout the years, but the following definition by Gummerson is one of the most straightforward answers to the question. *A service is something which can be bought and sold but which you cannot drop on your feet.* (Grönroos 2007.)

According to Grönroos (2007), a service is formed by a package of different services. That package of services can be both tangible and intangible. It, however, can be divided into two main categories: the *core service* and *auxiliary services*.

2.2 Education

The term **education**, like service, does not have one universally agreed definition. According to Business Dictionary (2020), it is *the wealth of knowledge acquired by an individual after studying particular subject matters or experiencing life lessons that provide an understanding of something. It requires instruction of some sort from an individual or composed literature.*

Scanlon and Lauwerys (2019) define education as a *discipline that is concerned with methods of teaching and learning in schools or school-like environments. It is the transmission of values and accumulated knowledge of a society.*

2.3 Education as a service

Education is a pure service, characterized by several typical features of a service, such as intangibility, heterogeneity, and perishability (Zeithaml 1985). This type of service is characterized by its ownership or the lack of it. Education in essence, as a service, fulfils the need for learning and acquiring knowledge, thus provides an intangible benefit that is produced with the help of a set of tangible and intangible components where the buyer of the service has no ownership of it. The buyer has tangible physical evidence to confirm the exchange for the service, but the real benefit is purely intangible. (Kalenskaya et al. 2013 pp. 368-376.)

Education can also be identified as a service, as the 7Ps of the marketing mix that contribute to services can be applied to it. Ng and Forbes (2008) propose that in the educational context, the extra 3Ps of the 7Ps are each applicable to produce the core and auxiliary services. **People** include academics, administration, staff and of course, students. The **physical pieces of evidences** are materials, teaching facilities, accommodation and such. The **processes** facilitate application, registration, learning and social activities. (Ng & Forbes 2008.)

The core service at an educational institution is incorporated into the learning experience of students. The value of learning is co-created with the student in which the student plays two key roles in creating the service outcome. Students, as the productive resources, bring in intellect, language and communication skills with them. As the contributors to quality, satisfaction, and value, they can choose what level of effort they want to put into their work. (Ng & Forbes 2008.)

The auxiliary (supplementary) services, such as application procedures, fee payments, campus facilities, staff assistance, all play roles to facilitate the core service experience. Core services cannot effectively function without the auxiliary services and although not categorized separately, they both often interact dynamically in the construction of the experience at universities. (Ng & Forbes 2008.)

3 Educational marketing mix

The 7Ps of the educational marketing mix are furtherly discussed by Tahir & Rizvi & Khan & Ahmad (2017) in their article about Keys of Educational marketing. The authors define the following terms described in table 2.

7 Keys of Educational Marketing	
1	Program
2	Price
3	Promotion
4	People
5	Process
6	Place
7	Physical Facilities

Table 2. 7 Ps of educational marketing (Tahir et al. 2017).

The first element of the marketing mix, **program**, is initially identified by educational institutions as services offered and made available to their market and customers, whether they are students, companies or grant providers. An institution must identify if the offered programs match customer needs. There is

a strong relationship between what programs HEIs offer and the HEIs themselves; as public when facing similar programs on the same market, will differentiate among them based on the offered programs and their quality. The strong relationship between the programs and the institutions establishes their identity and positions the institutions in the minds of customers. (Tahir et al. 2017.)

Price, the cost of a degree, including the prices students are charged for different services provided by educational institutions, contains more than just the value someone is paying for (Tahir et al. 2017). Price can be viewed as an economic and psychological factor as well. From the economic point of view, price is what determines the income and profit of the HEI. Psychologically, it outlines values that the service, in this instance, education has. In HEIs, determining a price for education means not only calculating costs for the user but benefits such as career prospects, ongoing experiences during education and program uniqueness. (Gajic 2012.)

Place – the location of the school and the accessibility of the service has great importance. The availability of programs to targeted customers in the right places at the right time in the right quantity is crucial for making placement decisions. (Tahir et al. 2017.)

Promotion is the means of how communication passes on between institutions and communities. It includes advertising, PR and publicity. How awareness is given on marketplaces about universities is promotion, where advertising, publicity, and sales are aspects of promotion. Institutions use many methods of promotion, some of which are already implemented by most HEIs, for example:

1. Free publicity by the PR department through press releases.
2. An open house and recruitment days to facilitate better communication with prospective students and employees.
3. Paid advertising in newspapers or websites and social media. (Tahir et al. 2017.)

Marketing strategies on place and promotion are at best, designed to position institutions and programs with the desired image to make them realistic, attractive and distinctive in positive ways to the customer segments and public. (Tahir et al. 2017.)

People are the key instruments in the educational process, representing staff, students, and other partners that do business with institutions. Curricular and extracurricular staff participate in service delivery and influence the perception of service users. (Gajic 2012.) Tahir et al. (2017) add that people also refer to current and old students of the institution as prospective students tend to ask and research former students when they are collecting information about their potential school.

In the educational **process**, a student needs to be mentally present or at a different location connected over networks of communication where the service is created, be it at the classroom or a lecture hall. Gajic (2012) suggests that considering the service process characteristics, managers must have a clear insight into the benefits of educational services. They should understand students and after formulating distribution channel strategies, shape the service-providing system to their needs. As educational services are personal, they require intensive, intellectual, emotional and physical participation from students in the service process. Students evaluate service quality by using the educational service simultaneously to shaping it. This chain of events helps form the service process and improve its quality.

Physical facilities are as important as the rest of the elements of the 7Ps. Physical facilities are both teaching and other components of student life. They refer to every tangible item the institution has, including course books, environment, furniture. Kotler (1995) goes on to say that the most immediate clue the prospective students notice about a school's identity is the physical evidence of furniture and buildings because they are the first thing they spot upon arrival.

The abovementioned view might seem outdated in modern times, as students nowadays tend to gain the first impression of schools from their websites. That is

why marketers work together with architects and graphic designers to present attractive and effectively functioning facilities. (Tahir et al. 2017.)

3.1 What is educational marketing?

Educational marketing is a new field and the terms “educational” and “marketing” together generate a specialized domain by applying methods and marketing strategies in the area of education. The term “educational marketing” was narrowly studied before 1990 and was not formally introduced until late 1980 in the United States and Great Britain, when some publications were launched on promoting schools, which were based on marketing models that previously were developed for the lucrative sector. (Manea & Purcaru 2017.)

In 2011, Stachowski, according to Manea and Purcaru (2017) suggested arguments in favour of adopting educational marketing by offering its benefits:

1. better accomplishment of the missions of institutions
2. increased employee and student satisfaction
3. ability to attract more financial and non-financial resources
4. in general, increased efficiency of the marketing actions.

Education can be bought and sold and for it to grow, institutions need to spend a significant amount of their budgets to promote their product in order to recruit more students. According to Tahir et al. (2017), the need for marketing is rather important to achieve organizational efficiency. It plays an important role in the educational context, although some people have ignored it. Rather than avoiding educating stakeholders, institutions should try to expand their understanding of the topic.

3.2 International activities at Finnish University of Applied Sciences

In the next few paragraphs, the author reviews the international activities employed by the two Finnish universities of applied sciences that have the highest number of students as well as Saimaa University of Applied Sciences and Lahti University of Applied Sciences and LAB University of Applied Sciences.

<i>Ranking</i>	<i>UAS</i>	<i>number of students</i>
1	Metropolia UAS	12.649
2	Turku UAS	7.792
12	Lahti UAS	3.872
19	Saimaa UAS	2.491

Table 3. Finnish universities of applied sciences with the highest number of students in 2018 compared to Lahti University of Applied Sciences and Saimaa University of Applied science (LAB University of Applied science from 1.1.2020)

1. Metropolia University of Applied sciences

Metropolia University of Applied Sciences is one of the largest schools in Finland and a member of several international networks (Metropolia 2020c). Its international activities include international degree programs, student and teacher mobility programs, work placement opportunities abroad and other various projects. For over 1,300 international degree students representing more than 90 countries, it offers 15 international degree programs instructed in English. (Metropolia 2020b). Besides studying internationally at the school, students at Metropolia are offered shorter excursions abroad as part of their studies. For example, intensive programs or projects at partner institutions or trips to professional fairs and seminars as well as summer schools and international competitions. (Metropolia 2020a.)

2. Turku University of Applied Sciences

Turku University of Applied Sciences integrates international perspective into its activities in teaching, RDI (research, development and innovation), and working life cooperation. The school guarantees that its students and staff have the intercultural skills required in today's multicultural working life. The school has strategic partners in different counties and as a part of the group, is intensifying student and staff mobility and develops partner projects and cooperation in European research programs among the partner schools. (Turku University of Applied Sciences 2019a.)

Turku University of Applied Sciences provides an interactive online bachelor's degree in International Business, allowing students to study from wherever they are, from the comfort of their location. The degree combines pedagogy, technology and content balance. (Turku University of Applied Sciences 2019b.)

3. LAB University of Applied Sciences

Until the turn of 2020, the new LAB University of Applied Sciences did not exist. Instead, two schools—Saimaa and Lahti Universities of Applied Sciences—operated independently before their ultimate merging. LAB University of Applied Sciences offers versatile opportunities to gain international experience to increase its students' and staff's intercultural competence. According to its website, LAB UAS is the most international higher education institution in Finland. (LAB University of Applied Sciences 2020e.)

The school offers numerous opportunities for exchange studies and additionally, international double degrees with its partner institutions (LAB University of Applied Sciences 2020c). Students completing their double degree studies graduate from both LAB and another one of its partner institutions abroad. (LAB University of Applied Sciences 2020d).

To be able to gain both degrees, students must have completed part of their studies in the partner institution abroad. (LAB University of Applied Sciences 2020d.) LAB denotes that double degree programmes *can develop a deeper understanding of the required competencies than [it] would be possible during a normal exchange period* (LAB University of Applied Sciences 2020d).

3.3 Internationalization of higher education in Germany

Germany represents a great example of a benchmark destination against Finland in terms of its international degrees and practices related to attracting students from around the world. It is the most popular studying destination for Georgian students, which is shown in Table 7 on page 19 of this report. It is interesting to find out how the country has achieved this thought-provoking status. (Trines 2019.)

From 2013 to 2018, the number of international students in Germany has risen from 282,2 thousand to 374,6 thousand, which is an overall 33% increase. To better understand who is included in the data, it is essential to know how an international student is defined in Germany. (Trines 2019.)

Depending on various approaches, e.g. by UNESCO, government agencies and such, international students are characterized by different methods. Germany defines international students as “foreign students” as both e.g. “Bildungsinländer” and “Bildungsausländer.” The former are non-German nationals *who have obtained their higher education entrance qualification in Germany* and have lived in the country for a long time before going to university, while the latter are students of other nationalities whose higher education entrance qualification came from outside Germany and their main reason to go to Germany is to study. (Trines 2019.)

Germany has a decentralized structure of the education system, so the country’s internationalization and marketing strategies and education policies are set and shaped within the jurisdiction of various stakeholders such as universities. The federal and local governments. HEIs and states in Germany are concerned about their institutions and regions. National bodies, like DAAD, the German Council of Science and Humanities coordinate and steer large-scale marketing programs. Since the 1990s, Germany has been focusing on internationalization efforts not only on academic and cultural benefits but to a more utilitarian approach. (Trines 2019.)

4 Education in Finland and Georgia

4.1 Education in Georgia

Education in Georgia is regulated by the laws “On General Education” and “On Education Quality Enhancement”, also operated by National Curriculum and other sub-legal acts (National Center for Education Quality Enhancement 2014).

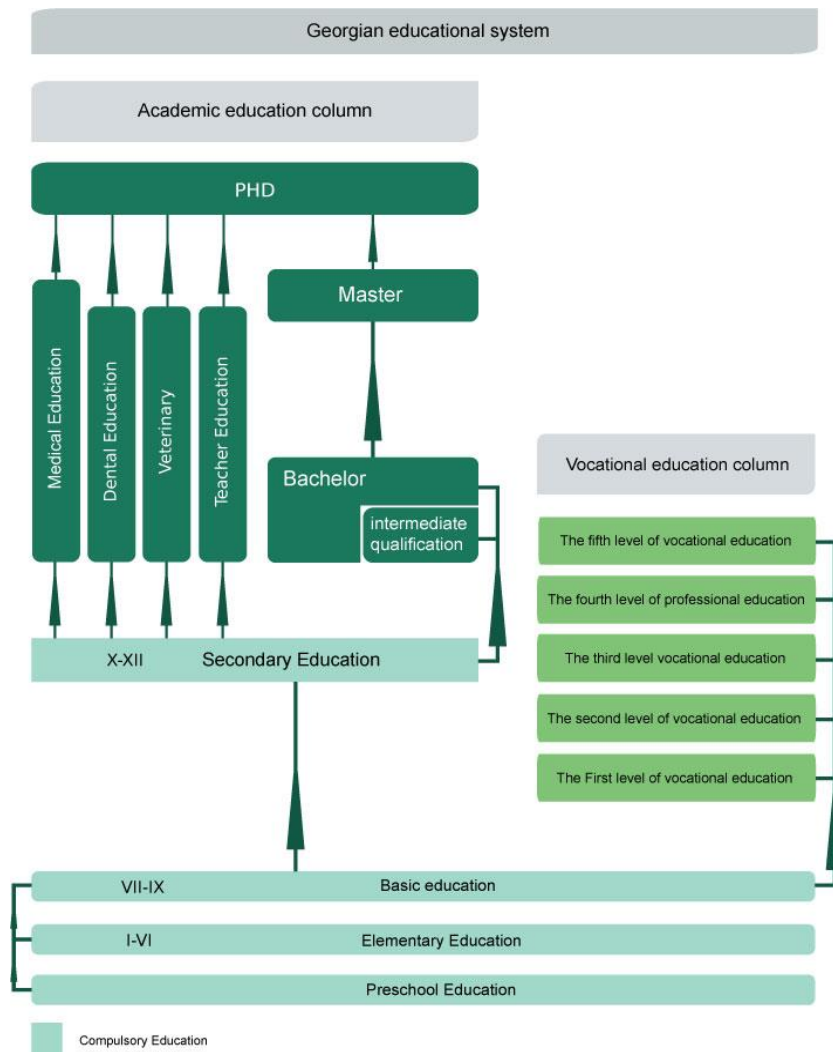


Figure 1. Georgian Education system (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia 2016)

Compulsory education in Georgia

The full general education in Georgia includes 12 years of studies at three levels: primary, basic and secondary. Primary education lasts for six years, basic – for three and secondary education is carried out for the remaining three years of studies in the grades X-XII. Only primary and basic education are mandatory. (National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement 2014.)

An individual who has completed the Full General Education and receives the certificate has the right to continue their education in the higher education institution. (National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement 2014.)

Higher education in Georgia

Higher education in Georgia is separated into three stages: bachelor's programs, master's programs, and doctorate programs. In order to have a right to study at a bachelor's program, a person needs to have a state certificate confirming the completion of full general education, or a certificate that holds a similar value. On average, each educational program in higher education institutions amounts to 60 ECTS credits per year. To be awarded a bachelor's degree, a person needs to have completed at least 240 ECTS of studies in their institution. (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia 2016.)

Programs leading to master's degrees require a bachelor's degree from the individual applying to it. The full program lasts for around two years, consisting of a minimum of 120 ECTS credits. (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia 2016.)

Persons who have completed master's degrees or hold equal academic degrees have the right to continue studying at doctoral programmes. (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia 2016.)

After each degree is completed, an individual is issued with a diploma by their institution confirming their qualifications. (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia 2016.)

In Georgia there are three types of higher education institutions:

- **Universities** – higher education institutions that carry out all three stages of programs (bachelor's, master's and PhD degrees) and scientific research.
- **Teaching universities** – higher education institutions that award all degrees, excluding PhD degrees.
- **Colleges** – higher education institutions that only award bachelor's degrees. (Ministry of Education, Science Culture and Sport of Georgia 2016.)

In order to be accepted in higher education institutions, candidates need to complete respective Unified National Exams according to the rules defined by the ministry of education and science of Georgia. National Examinations Centre is a legal entity of public law ensuring holding Unified National and Joint Master Exams. They are authorized to carry out national estimations and international researches, carrying out other authorities defined by Georgian legislation. (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia 2016.)

- **Tuition fees in public HEIs**

Tuition fees account for 90% of the total income of the public HEIs in Georgia, the rest comes from state subsidiaries which are paid indirectly through state-funded grants to students and as a direct lump sum to the HEIs. The majority of public HEIs are funded through tuition fees. At bachelor's and master's levels, most programs charge a minimum of 1,500 Lari (~470€) and the maximum of 2,250ლ (~705 €) per year. The state grant is equal to the maximum amount of the tuition fee 2,250ლ (~705€). (Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency 2017.)

Tuition fees for the second cycle of education are higher than of the first cycle. The minimum amount is 2,250ლ (~705€) and the maximum could go as high as 16,800ლ (~5266€). The third cycle of HEI education is charging tuition fees starting from 250ლ (~78€) up to 2,250ლ (~705€). In some instances, education can be free of charge. (Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency 2017.)

The tuition fees are paid directly to the higher education institutions. If a student is receiving a grant from the state, it is also directly paid to the HEI by the state. The most expensive tuition fees are usually charged for the most popular study fields such as Law, Business Administration and Medical education. (Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency 2017.)

The Lari to Euro exchange rate calculated in the three previous paragraphs are accurate as of 31.01.2020 according to the official Exchange rate of the National Bank of Georgia (1€=3,19ლ)

Georgian students' decision-making

Table 4 below illustrates that the most popular study destination for Georgian students abroad has been Germany in the last three years. Then come Poland and Italy. Finland holds 15th place and according to the table, each year, fewer students go there to study. To observe where the problem lies for Finland, it should be benchmarked against Germany to find out why so many students choose this country and how they find information and what motivates them to study in the European country.

Georgian citizens studying abroad at the beginning of the academic year (At the beginning of the academic year, persons)	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Germany	161	122	138
Poland	94	66	73
Italy	12	41	71
France	25	23	52
Spain	19	30	44
Lithuania	32	23	39
China	16	32	28
Turkey	30	12	25
Portugal	7	19	20
Czech Republic	14	22	20
Austria	14	18	14
Latvia	14	13	12
Netherlands	7	21	12
Norway	14	8	12
Finland	16	14	11
Total:	475	464	571

Table 4. Georgian citizens studying abroad at the beginning of the academic year (At the beginning of the academic year, persons) (National Statistics Office of Georgia 2020b)

Georgian students' attitudes towards studying abroad

Many Georgian students study and have studied abroad in countries such as Germany, Poland, Estonia, etc. According to the interviews conducted by edu.aris.ge, the main sentiment for them is that the attitudes between the students and their professors are more casual overseas than in Georgia. Even in a country such as Germany, student-professor relationships are open and collegial. However, a student in France has stated that there is a gap between

the students and their professors and during lectures, students' roles are rather limited. (Studinfo.ge 2018.)

A student who currently studies in Riga, Latvia pointed out that the mandatory practical pieces of training after the first and second years of studies are great opportunities for them, and they call it “an interesting nuance” (Studinfo.ge 2019a). Students also mention that they wish that higher education in Georgia was fit to the students and helpful for developing the abilities to highlight their talents and skills (studinfo.ge 2019b). Most of the students answer that coming back to Georgia after finishing studies are in their plans, as they want to use the knowledge gained abroad for the country's benefit.

4.2 Education in Finland

Compulsory education in Finland starts at the age of six with pre-primary education. When children turn seven, they start basic education that lasts for nine years from grades 1 to 9. Almost all schools in Finland are public, with a few exceptions of private schools. (Finnish National Agency for Education 2018).

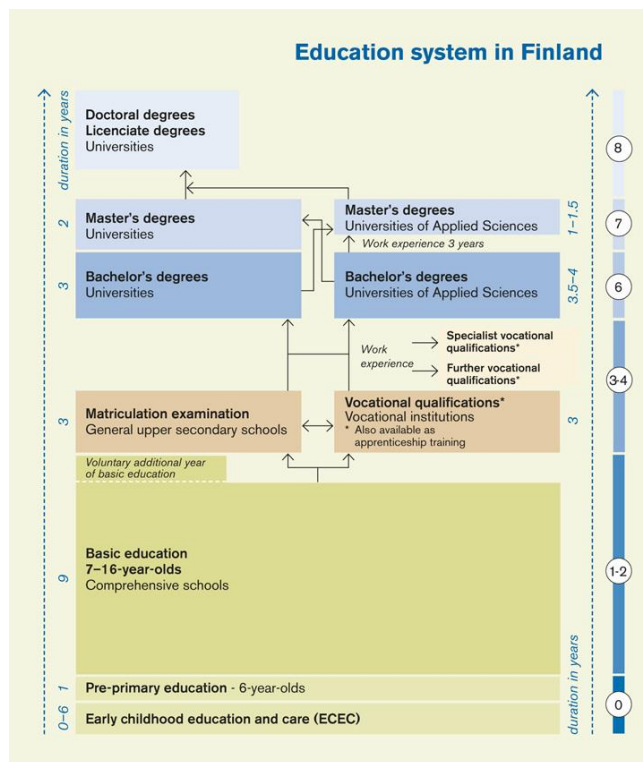


Figure 2. Finnish Education System (Studyinfo n.d.)

Higher education in Finland

Higher education in Finland comprises of universities and universities of applied sciences. The universities engage in both education and research and allow awarding doctorates. The universities of applied sciences focus on professional higher education and engage in applied research and development. (Finnish National Agency for Education 2020).

The admission of new students is decided by each higher education institution independently, as well as the criteria based on which of the students are selected. Depending on the educational background, applicants may be divided into separate applicant categories during the application process. The admission criteria for every applicant should be consistent for those belonging to the same category. Exceptions can be made to consistent admissions to a limited extent if the purpose of meeting the educational needs are for a given language. (Ministry of Education and Culture n.d.)

Citizens of European Union member countries and the European Economic Area are exempt from tuition fees for higher education leading to a degree. As of August 1st, 2017, students who do not come from the EU or EEA are subjected to tuition fees. (Ministry of Education and Culture n.d.)

University degrees

Universities in Finland offer bachelor's and master's degrees as well as academic, artistic and third-cycle postgraduate degrees (Ministry of Education and Culture n.d.).

Bachelor's degrees last for three years and require completing 60 ECTS each academic year. Master's degrees are taken after completing bachelor's degrees or some other equivalent studies. Postgraduate degrees include doctoral and licentiate's degrees, which are completed after a master's degree or equivalent studies. (Ministry of Education and Culture n.d.)

Professional requirements in medicine and dentistry differ from those of regular degrees, due to this, universities organize licentiate degree programs without

preceding bachelor's and master's degree programs. (Ministry of Education and Culture n.d.)

Universities of Applied Sciences

Universities of applied sciences, on the other hand, provides only bachelor's and master's degrees (Ministry of Education and Culture n.d). These degrees are constructed for the evolving requirements and the needs of the working world and emphasise on occupational fields rather than on theory. (Studyinfo n.d)

The bachelor's and master's degrees awarded to the graduates of Universities of Applied Sciences are equal to the degrees of the same level earned at universities. They provide professional specialization programmes and degree modules as open university education or other studies that do not award degrees upon completion. (Ministry of Education and Culture n.d.)

Universities of applied sciences are multidisciplinary, and their activities highlight their connection to working life and regional development. They carry out applied research, development and innovation and artistic activities serving education. Universities of applied sciences have autonomy and freedom of education and research. They make independent decisions on matters related to their internal administration as they are independent legal entities. (Ministry of Education and Culture n.d.)

Study environment in Finland

This snippet reviews the international degree students' opinions on the Finnish study environment and what makes the country a desired destination for many foreign students.

For the international degree students, the most important reasons for choosing to study in Finland are the content and cost of education, quality of research and reputation of the higher education institutions, according to the research by oph.fi. (Garam 2018.)

91% of the surveyed students had overall satisfaction in 2017 with their studies in Finland. New students who arrived in Finland in 2017 were most satisfied with the service and orientation provided to them by their higher education institution of choice. (Garam 2018.)

As the learning environment and facilities are the strength of Finnish HEIs, the students' level of satisfaction plays an important role in validating that. Students are satisfied or very satisfied (92-95%) by their learning environments, such as libraries, classrooms, virtual learning environments. (Garam 2018.)

Not only studies but living environment might influence the students' decision to study in Finland on a great level. A huge majority (90%) of the international students are satisfied with the quality of accommodation. The aspect respondents are most satisfied with are the safety and security of Finland. 97% of international students consider Finland as a safe country for living. (Garam 2018.)

5 Education export and internationalization of education

5.1 Internationalization of higher education

Internationalization of higher education is a global phenomenon and an integral part of many universities around the globe, including Finland. Gibbs and Maringe (2008) in their book borrow one of the most widely used definitions of internationalization by Knight and de Wit, who explain the concept as *the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution*. Internationalization of education not only means the abovementioned but is also focused on providing quality educational experiences, restructuring and upgrading the higher education system and services. Internationalization is seen as a key resource and a strategy to develop higher education in line with international educational, social, economic and cultural developments and a resource for responding to global developments and imperatives. (Gibbs & Maringe 2008.)

Rank	Country	Number of students
1	Russian Federation	2.733
2	Viet Nam	2.528
3	China	1.738
4	Nepal	1.161
5	India	776
6	Pakistan	708
7	Bangladesh	620
8	Iran, Islamic Republic of	615
9	Germany	585
10	Nigeria	533
11	United States	453
12	Estonia	419
13	Sweden	329
14	Ghana	329
15	Italy	320

Table 5. Top 15 countries of origin of international students in Finland in 2017 (OECD Statistics 2019).

The table above represents the most common countries of origins which students come to Finland. It includes students studying at the tertiary education level and does not separate degree and non-degree students or the level of studies, e.g. bachelor's or master's levels. The latest data comes from 2017.

Predictably, Russia dominates the list with more than 2,700 students coming from there, Vietnam is second with more than 2,500 students and China, Nepal and India complete the top five list. In the same statistical data, Georgia is represented by only 10 students, which places the country at the bottom of the list with countries such as North Macedonia, Libya and Namibia. (OECD Statistics 2019.)

Rank	Country	Number of students
87	Libya	10
88	Namibia	10
89	Georgia	10

Table 6. Georgia in comparison to the previous table (OECD Statistics 2019.)

5.2 Education export in Finland

To define the term “education export” or to find a different term for export of services related to the Finnish know-how in education, a working group was appointed to prepare an export strategy for Finnish education by the end of 2009. The working group decided that the term “Export of education expertise” is a more accurate term than “education export” when describing Finnish education export business. However, the latter term is still widely used, including in the administrative language, as it is a more common term in the English-speaking countries. (Juntunen 2014.)

Nowadays export of the Finnish education expertise is defined as *export of the expertise in education-based products, services and solutions for foreign clients (with two exceptions) and beneficiaries by tapping all potential modes of mobility of services across the borders*. The term “Education export” implies commercial activities and is associated with the fact that it is a service that is profit-oriented. (Juntunen 2014.)

6 LAB University of Applied Sciences

LAB University of Applied Sciences is a higher education institution that operates in Lahti and Lappeenranta and also provides online education. It is the sixth-largest University of Applied Sciences in Finland with over 8,500 students and focuses on innovation, business and industry. As stated by its website, its strengths include the circular economy, design, the commercialization of innovations and service innovations for health and well-being. (LAB University of Applied Sciences 2020a.)

Study programs at LAB University of Applied Sciences

LAB University of Applied Sciences offers English degree programmes in the fields of engineering, business, tourism and hospitality and nursing. Studies include on the job training and projects done in cooperation with employers and companies in the field, giving students opportunities to start integration into working life during their studies. (LAB University of Applied Sciences 2020b.)

Business	Technology	Health Care and Social Services	Tourism and Hospitality
BBA, International Business, Lahti	Mechanical Engineering and Production Technology, Lappeenranta	Bachelor of Health Care, Nursing, Lahti	Bachelor of Hospitality Management, Lappeenranta
BBA, International Business, Lappeenranta		Bachelor of Health Care, Nursing, Lappeenranta	
BBA, Business Information Technology, Lahti			

Table 7. Bachelor's level study programmes in English at LAB University of Applied Sciences (LAB University of Applied Sciences 2020f.)

7 SWOT analysis

In this chapter, the author conducts a SWOT analysis of both Georgian and Finnish HEIs. The focus will be from the Georgian students' point of view, as they represent the research population.

7.1 Georgia

Higher education in Georgia is regarded as an essential part of a person's life and often, the pressure from society makes it almost mandatory to enter a university right after high school graduation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native Language • Variety of program choices (including some that are completely funded by the state) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuition fees • Quality not on par with the rest of the world
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange studies • Foreign grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitors • Private institutions
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

Figure 3. Georgian HEIs SWOT Analysis

Georgian HEIs strong points are having all programs accessible in the native Georgian language, which a large majority of the students speak, excluding some people living in the regions populated mostly with ethnic minorities. The variety of program choices for the students applying to study places gives them the freedom to not only consider one program but choose as many as they would like and sort them according to their needs and priorities.

Some programs are fully funded by the government, such as mathematics, physics and other sciences that give students a huge opportunity to earn their degrees without the hustle of thinking about paying for their education. (GuriaTV 2020).

Tuition fees represent the weakness of Georgian public higher education. However, not all students who study on paid programs have to pay them. State grants, that they can earn by achieving high scores at the national entrance examinations, can partially or fully cover them. The rest of the students are subjected to paying fees. The quality of Georgian education still is far away from the average world standard. The country is still recovering from the collapse of the Soviet Union and by being part of it until around 30 years ago, its education still is influenced the soviet study methods and attitudes.

In recent years, Georgia has become a part of the Erasmus network community and as a result, each year, tens of students and academic staff go abroad in the framework of the project. They experience the modern education and have the leverage to integrate the methods acquired overseas into their education. Thus, studying abroad earns an advantage over competitors in the job market after graduation.

Georgia has many public and private HEIs that offer relatively similar courses and programs. The education market is prone to high competitiveness. As much as it allows the market competitors to improve their offerings, it also creates a situation in which supply exceeds demand for the HEIs. Private institutions are a source of threat for the public HEIs as, usually, their quality of education is better

perceived by having professionals who are experts in their fields. Private institutions usually charge higher tuition fees than public ones that allow them to have bigger budgets, thus, more money to afford better professionals.

7.2 Finland

Higher education in Finland has gone under changes over the last few years, especially since starting to collect tuition fees from some nationals.



Figure 4. Finnish HEIs SWOT Analysis

Finnish education in its essence is free for the local students and the EU/EEA citizens. The highly regarded standard of education is on par with the rest of the world. Completing a degree in Finland allows students, including those coming from Georgia, to work abroad, especially in the EU, after graduation.

Introducing tuition fees for non-EU/EEA students has put a strain on the students from the rest of the world to apply and study at Finnish HEIs. Georgia is part of the group of these students, meaning students from there have to pay for the whole duration of their studies and these fees are significantly higher compared to those of Georgian HEIs. Practical matters related to arriving in Finland and adjusting to the local life take a toll and relocating is not an easy task for any international student.

Like the Georgian HEIs, Finnish HEIs offer great opportunities for exchange studies all over the world. On top of that, practical trainings are parts of the studies for universities of applied sciences and students are required to complete them,

allowing them to get their hands on a real job space and experience professional life while being a student. In some schools, students can receive funding if they complete their practical training outside Finland and do them for at least a certain number of hours per week.

As mentioned above, Finland no longer offers every student free education. Students might find it difficult to choose the country as their study destination abroad and they might prefer to go to the countries which have free or less expensive tuition. Germany, for example, is a very popular destination for Georgian students as education there costs significantly less money than in Finland.

8 Survey analysis results

Quantitative data was collected to support answering the research questions. An online structured questionnaire with 35 questions was distributed to the research population through Google Forms. The survey was active from the 25th of February until the 20th of March 2020. In total, 41 responses were collected. Appendix 3 shows in detail to the distribution of every response by each question.

More than half of the survey respondents were from Kutaisi. Tbilisi, the country's capital, accounted for only 17% of the population sample. Responses from other parts of the country were merged into one cluster. The respondents were from many different places, which is not relevant to the content of the research. 56,1% of them were studying in the 11th grade and the rest - in the 12th.

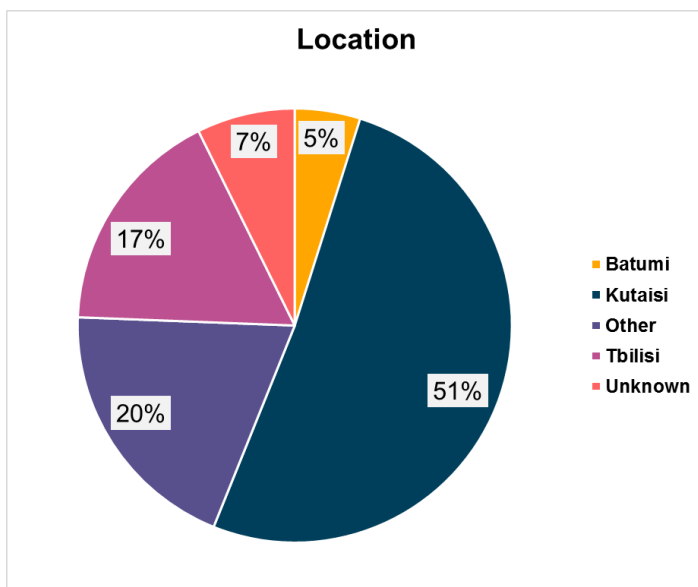


Figure 5. Respondent locations

Grade 12	Grade 11	Total:
23	18	41
56,1%	43,9%	100%

Table 8. Respondent distribution by grades

According to the study, the respondents' median command of the English language is between intermediate and good. Most students know it at least on some level. However, the data is only backed by the respondent claims and there is no official way to check the validity of the answers.

Level of English Skills	Frequency	Percentage
Satisfactory	3	7%
Intermediate	18	44%
Good	13	32%
Excellent	7	17%
Total	41	100%

Table 9. Question 3: Level of English skills

The survey data demonstrates that most students are comfortable or very comfortable (67,5%; n=40) studying entirely in English and only a few are against the idea. When testing the data, the results did not indicate ($r=0,308$; $\text{sig}=0,053$)

any correlation according to Pearson’s test between the level of command in English and the comfortability of studying in the same language. This implies that students are not necessarily afraid of using a foreign language whether they know it well or not.

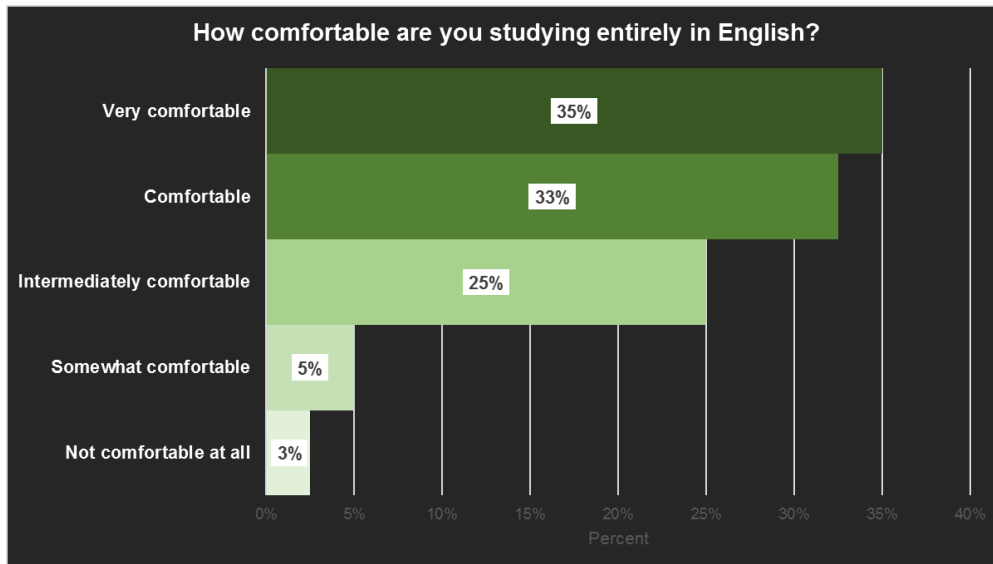


Figure 6. Question 4: How comfortable are you studying entirely in English?

Out of the 41 survey participants, only four have not yet decided to continue studying further after graduating from high school. Generally, students in Georgia have decided early on, before the last year of school, whether to continue studies on the tertiary level or not. This is why it is worth noting that one 11th grader out of 18 total has not considered going to an HEI when three out of 23 in the 12th grade have not made the same decision.

35 respondents answered the question about their desired study programs. The questionnaire had listed the programs that LAB University of Applied Sciences currently offers to its international students. However, the participants were free to add their own choices.

The most popular study program is international business among the respondents, five chose Health Care and Nursing and only three - Tourism and Hospitality Management. Law was the program that three different students listed unprompted, even though LAB University of Applied Sciences does not offer the program. Mechanical Engineering and Product Technology was not as popular,

provided only one student chose it. The other study programs that the students themselves suggested but LAB University of Applied Sciences does not offer are represented in the table in *italics*.

Degree Programme	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor of Business Administration, International Business	15	37%
No answer	7	17%
Bachelor of Health Care, Nursing	5	12%
<i>Law</i>	3	7%
Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality Management	3	7%
<i>Medicine</i>	2	5%
<i>International Relations</i>	2	5%
<i>Engineering</i>	1	2%
<i>Computer Sciences</i>	1	2%
Bachelor of Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Production Technology	1	2%
<i>Social Sciences</i>	1	2%

Table 10. Study program choices by respondents

For students in both grades, the most popular degree programme is International Business, with five students in 11th grade and ten in the 12th choosing it. Health Care and Nursing is more popular among younger students. Predictably, they have mentioned each of the other programs once, as they are more liberate and have more time to make their final decision. In total, 58% of the participants choose programs currently offered by LAB University of Applied Sciences.

13% of the students that are graduating in 2020 chose tourism and hospitality, where 9% each opted for law and medicine. 22% (four students) of 11th graders and 13% (three students) of 12th graders have not yet decided on their program of interest or have not answered the question at all.

Unsurprisingly, the vast majority (83%) of the students have considered studying abroad at some point in their lives and only 17% have not had the thought yet.

When comparing answers regarding thoughts on studying abroad with the ability to cover tuition fees, a negative outlook is outlined from the survey data. 70% of the students that answered “Yes” to having considered studying abroad, cannot cover tuition fees independently, only 14,7% (five respondents) can and another 14,7% are willing to search for grants.

Have you thought about studying abroad?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	34	83%
No	7	17%

Table 11. Question 7: Have you thought about studying abroad?

The most challenging issue for the survey participants is tuition fee, on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means it is not a big issue and 5 means it is, it scores 4,17 on average (n=41). Another big problem after tuition fees is practical matters. Other issues do not affect students nearly as much and they score less than three on the same scale each.

Students do not see a new country and a new culture as big drawbacks and are also comfortable with meeting unknown people in different study environments. Surprisingly, they are least uncomfortable with facing a new climate, which, given that the weather in most parts of Georgia dramatically differs from the Finnish harsh winters, is a strange result.

Tuition fees	4,17
Practical matters	3,78
New culture	2,95
New country	2,88
Different study environment/practices	2,88
Being away from home	2,71
Unknown people	2,63
Different climate	2,56

Table 12. Challenges affecting the decision-making process

Georgian high school students are not very familiar with the Finnish education system. They have barely heard about it and quantitatively their familiarity scores 1,59 (n=41) on average on a five-point scale. The lack of knowledge is a huge drawback for attracting them as prospects.

The students are actively using different methods for collecting information in the research process for their favourite schools. Although school websites are the

most popular source for information, scoring 4,27/5 on average in importance, the survey participants make decisions based on personal opinions more frequently (4,44/5). However, all listed methods, including social media and online reviews score high on the scale.

Personal opinions	4,44
Websites	4,27
Online reviews	3,83
Social media channels	3,78
Online advertisements	3,66
Other's opinions	3,56
Promotional brochures	3,54

Table 13. How important are the channels you might refer to when you are researching a school/university?

The most popular study method for Georgian students is a mixture of theoretical and practical studies.

A mixture of theoretical and practical studies	4,71
Practical	4,27
Theoretical	3,73

Table 14. How important is each type of studies [theoretical and/or practical] for you?

The survey participants, when asked about their interest in spending an exchange period at a Finnish University of Applied Sciences, give promising responses (3,80/5; n=41). This data is especially practically useful for LAB University of Applied Sciences considering how challenging the introduction of tuition fees is. This way students have an opportunity to study in Finland for a semester or two with help from a grant.

To find out where students' knowledge about the Finnish higher education system is coming from, they were asked if anyone had recommended studying in Finland to them. Only 20% answered "Yes" (n=41) and the rest gave a negative response. However, 90% of them do not know anyone who studies or has studied in Finland.

The results for both questions were tested for correlation, although Pearson's test showed no correlation ($r=0,253$) with 2-tailed significance value as high as 0,111.

Both learning environment and physical facilities play equally important roles in students and are valued very highly at 4,59 out of 5 each.

How important is for you:	Average score	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Learning environment	4,59	1,05	0,16
Physical facilities	4,59	0,77	0,12

Table 15. Importance of learning environment and physical facilities

It was important to find out which countries students think of when they are asked to list a country/countries that they associate with international education. The participants ($n=29$) mentioned the US (16) and Germany (14) most times, but other European countries such as France and the UK made the list several times. Finland was recorded on three separate occasions and Sweden and Belgium - twice each. Other countries not mentioned here but are on the maps have only been named once by each respondent who answered this question.

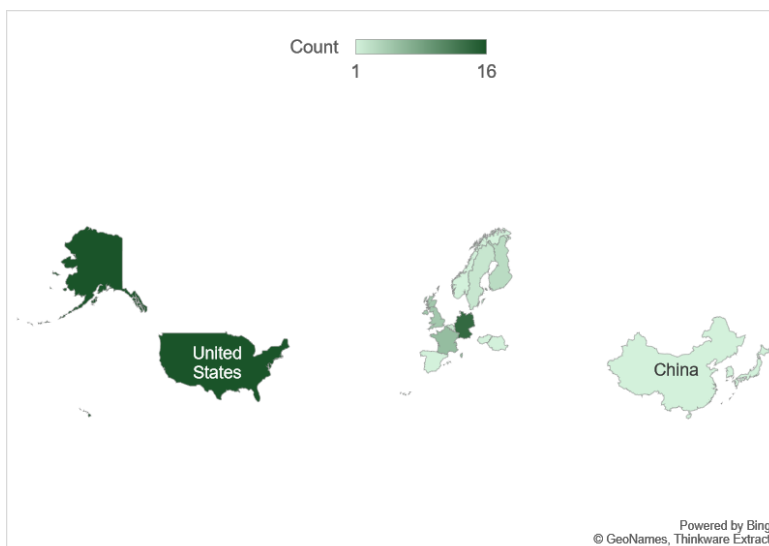


Figure 7. Which country/countries come first when you think of studying abroad? (Worldwide)

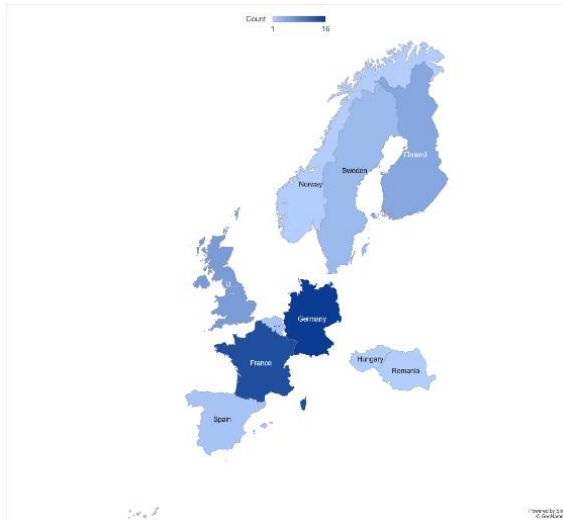


Figure 8. Which country/countries come first when you think of studying abroad? (Europe)

9 Conclusion

The survey results revealed several trends that are listed below:

- Georgian students find it quite comfortable to study entirely in English.
- The biggest issue for them is paying tuition fees.
- International Business is a popular choice among the respondents.
- There are other study programs that LAB University of Applied Sciences is not currently offering but students chose themselves.
- Georgian students are not informed about the Finnish education system sufficiently.
- A mixture of theoretical and practical studies is very desired by the students.

How can Georgia become the next potential market for LAB University of Applied Sciences?

The main research question answer will be based on the questionnaire data and analysed through the 7Ps of educational marketing mix perspective.

LAB University of Applied Sciences is ready to meet the demands for the **programs** as the surveyed students have expressed interest in studying

International Business, one of the most popular programs offered by the school. Some other degree programmes mentioned by the students are not yet offered, however, 58% of the respondents choosing current LAB University of Applied Sciences is a good percentage.

There are two things concerning the program choice. First and foremost, it is crucial to maintain the quality and put an effort into improving it to establish its identity in the customers' minds. Secondly, as LAB University of Applied Sciences develops, the HEI can start planning to offer new programs which can bring in a whole new prospect of students.

Price is a challenge for LAB University of Applied Sciences because the living costs for the international students are already high even without tuition fees. The scholarship opportunities by the school should be more accessible to the students and should encourage them to see the added value as an investment towards their future careers. Otherwise, it will be very difficult to attract students in the long run. As the survey results proved, only a few people would be able to cover tuition fees independently.

As the study revealed, the most popular **promotion** method for the Georgian students for LAB University of Applied Sciences would be putting up as much information on its website as possible, as it is evident that students research schools through the Internet most, after establishing personal opinions first.

Social media is an effective channel for promotion and according to the survey data, attracts students' attention. LAB University of Applied Sciences can integrate online reviews on social media, on the school website and on other online external resources.

As discussed in the theoretical part, **people**, the key instrument in the educational process, could represent current employees who will inform the students about the educational service and influence them to spend their student lives at LAB University of Applied Sciences. Several people have recommended to the survey participants studying in Finland so even a stronger and formal encouragement would reveal more promising results for the school.

The surveyed students feel most comfortable having the study **process** tailored to their needs by engaging in both theoretical and practical studies equally. LAB University of Applied Sciences already promotes its involvement in RDI and proudly brands itself as an institution that has studies and practical work side by side. Emphasizing on this strength would only cement its place as a desired destination for the Georgian market.

As LAB University of Applied Sciences now operates on two campuses in separate cities, students, old and new, are clustered in different **places** as well. The study showed that different study environment, including the drastically severe cold climate, is not a hindering factor for the Georgian students. The program availability in two different places at the same time leaves the new students with so much to choose from in their placement decisions, although this could be integrated into the plans at a later time.

Physical facilities in Finland, without doubt, are superior to those at most of the Georgian HEIs. The incoming students are already welcome with the rich resources from the library including access to digital materials. As most of the students will not be able to experience these facilities until probably the first day at the school, LAB University of Applied Sciences should work with its marketing department and graphic designers to give an online virtual tour to the potential students when they are making their big decisions to help them visualize what their life will look like once they are at the campus.

To sum up, LAB University of Applied Sciences can enter the Georgian market by:

- First and foremost, offering attractive scholarship opportunities.
- Adding more information on the website – students value the information collected through the web, which in turn establishes their opinions that they consider the most important.
- Comparing and highlighting why they should come here and how are they better than the countries most students associate education abroad with (USA, France, Germany).

- Offer not only full-time studies but cooperate with Georgian institutions to become their Erasmus+ partner in future.

What should LAB University of Applied Sciences do in order to familiarize Georgian students better with itself?

As the survey results demonstrated, for LAB University of Applied Sciences to familiarize itself with Georgian students, they, first, should have more general information about education in Finland available for them. The majority of the survey participants' knowledge gap is wide open on Finnish higher education. It could be a lengthy process to complete because it would require systematic planning and preparing marketing information.

Gaining trust in the Georgian market could also be time-consuming. The school would need to contact organizations and private persons to cooperate with distributing information in high schools for the students not only about the programmes and opportunities at the school, but also to introduce the application process, language requirements, entrance examination, tuition fees and scholarship schemes and practical matters.

The school could record a demo lecture available for view for the Georgian students so that they can base their expectations on their study time on actual evidence on a typical study process. LAB University of Applied Sciences could benchmark its education against the most popular countries for studying abroad for Georgian students, such as the US, France and Germany. This would allow them to influence the students to make decisions on their destination for studying abroad.

As the survey indicated, students are positive about the opportunity of choosing Finland as their student exchange destination. Currently, LAB University of Applied Sciences does not have a partner school in Georgia, so it would be a lengthy process to partner up with a Georgian university, however, potentially rather successful.

How can LAB University of Applied Sciences promote itself to attract potential students from Georgia?

The survey results reported that Georgian students use many methods when they are researching HEIs. As personal opinions matter to them most, LAB University of Applied Sciences should pay utmost attention to how they are represented in media, among its students and alumni networks. Opinions from these sources are highly influential to the potential students. They find information about schools from their websites most frequently. The school has to have the majority of questions answered there and have nice and attractive visual data representing its activities and accomplishments.

Online reviews play major roles in the student decision-making process as well. A great recommendation for LAB University of Applied Sciences would be to have a dedicated page for voluntary reviews written by its previous students and staff so that future students can make decisions by analysing honest and correct information.

Future recommendations for LAB University of Applied Sciences

For future, LAB University of Applied Sciences can start looking for partner higher education institutions in Georgia that they can work together as Erasmus program partners. It gives them more realistic opportunities to enter the Georgian market first by establishing itself as an exchange program destination. This will help build trust and long-term opportunities for Georgian students.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Georgian students' interest in the Finnish UASes

25.02.2020

Dear student,

I'm a fourth-year student of international business at LAB University of Applied Sciences in Lappeenranta, Finland.

As a compulsory part of my studies, I am writing a bachelor's thesis on the following topic: How can Georgia become the next potential market for LAB University of Applied Sciences? The purpose of my thesis report is to find out if there is an interest from the Georgian students and how LAB University of Applied Sciences can promote itself to attract potential students from Georgia. The study is not sponsored by anyone and its sole purpose is to use its findings for my thesis.

You were chosen as a respondent for this study as you are in either 11th or 12th grade of a Georgian public school and are soon graduating, potentially continuing to study at a higher level of education. I would be very grateful if you participated as each and every response will help my study to have more reliable data to base the findings on. Answering this questionnaire will take no more than 15 minutes of your time.

After the research is conducted and the thesis is ready, it will be publicly available for everyone to see and read on Theseus.fi. Therefore, you are free to see it if you wish to.

The results will be available by the end of May 2020 when the thesis report is published. Your confidentiality and anonymity are protected and there are no questions that might help identify your personal data.

Please, fill in the questionnaire carefully and answer the questions as honestly and realistically as you can. If you have any inquiries regarding the questionnaire, please, do not hesitate to contact me at mariam.agiashvili@student.lab.fi. I am happy to assist you.

The deadline for answering the questionnaire is on March 20, 2020. After this date, it will be closed, and you will no longer be able to answer or modify your responses.

Thank you for participating,

Mariam Agiashvili.

mariam.agiashvili@student.lab.fi

Appendix 2

Questionnaire:

1. Your city/town:
2. What grade are you in?
 - a. 11
 - b. 12
3. What are your language skills in the English language?
 - a. I don't know the English language
 - b. Satisfactory
 - c. Intermediate
 - d. Good
 - e. Excellent

If you answered either "intermediate", "good" or "excellent" in the previous question, please, answer the next question as well.

4. How comfortable do you feel studying entirely in the English language?
 - a. Not comfortable at all (1)
 - b. Somewhat comfortable (3)
 - c. Very comfortable (5)
5. Are you planning on continuing studying at a university after high school?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Have not yet decided
 - c. No
6. Out of the listed degree program below, which one is the most interesting to you?
 - a. Bachelor of Business Administration, International Business
 - b. Bachelor of Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Production Technology
 - c. Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality Management
 - d. Bachelor of Health Care, Nursing
 - e. **Something else** – please state below:
7. Have you thought about studying abroad?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

When you think about studying abroad, how much do issues affect your decision to go abroad? 1—not at all; 5—affecting very much. (Questions 8-15)

8. Being away from home
9. Tuition fees
10. Practical matters such as living costs, visa requirements health insurance, etc.
11. New culture
12. New country
13. Different climate

14. Unknown people
15. Different study environment/practices
16. Which country/ countries come first when you think of studying abroad? (state as many as you wish separately)
17. How familiar are you with the higher education system in Finland?
 - a. 1- Not very familiar
 - b. 2
 - c. 3- Somewhat familiar
 - d. 4
 - e. 5- very familiar

How much importance do the channels you refer to have when you are researching a school/university? 1-not important; 5- very important (Questions 18-24)

18. Promotional brochures
19. Online advertisements
20. Webpages
21. Social media channels
22. Online reviews
23. Personal opinions
24. Other's opinions

Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland have a practical approach to studies and emphasize on training future professionals. How important is each type of studies for you? 1 means not important at all; 5-very important (questions 25-27)

25. Theoretical (e.g. more lectures, fewer projects, homework, etc.)
26. Practical (lectures as guidelines with the theoretical background and the majority of the courses with practical work such as group projects, case studies, presentations...)
27. A mixture of theoretical and practical studies
28. Since Finnish UASs require tuition fees for students coming from non-EU/EEA countries, would you be able to cover them independently? At LAB University of Applied Sciences, for example, the tuition fee for the academic year for students starting in autumn 2019 was 5400€/academic year. (some schools, might, however, reimburse part of your tuition for completing courses on schedule)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I am willing to search for grants/scholarships T HOME to cover the fee
29. If not as a degree student, how interested are you in spending an exchange period in a Finnish UAS? (With Erasmus+ grant and no tuition fee)
 - a. 1- not at all

- b. 2
 - c. 3 – somewhat interested
 - d. 4
 - e. 5- very interested
30. Has anyone recommended studying in Finland to you before?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
31. Do you know anyone who studies/has studied in Finland?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

If you answered “YES” to any of the previous two questions, please, answer the next question as well.

32. What was/is their impression on their experience? Please, describe with a couple of adjectives:
33. How important are the learning environment for you?
- c. Not important
 - a. Moderately important
 - b. Very important
34. How important are the facilities for you?
- c. Not important
 - a. Moderately important
 - b. Very important
35. If you wish, you can add anything you want to discuss about around the subject.

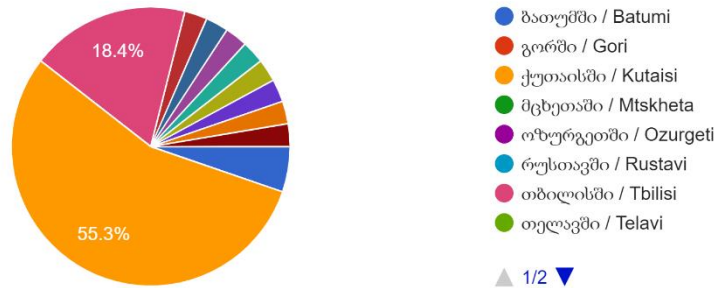
Thank you for your response!

Appendix 3

Survey reponses

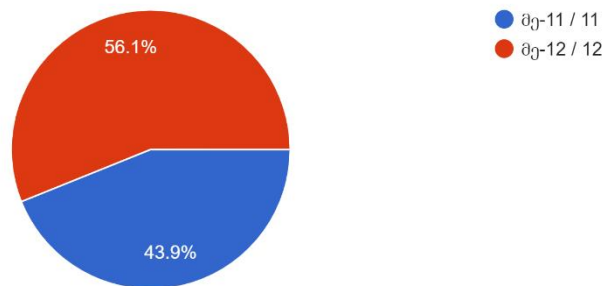
რომელ ქალაქში ცხოვრობთ? / Your city/town

38 responses



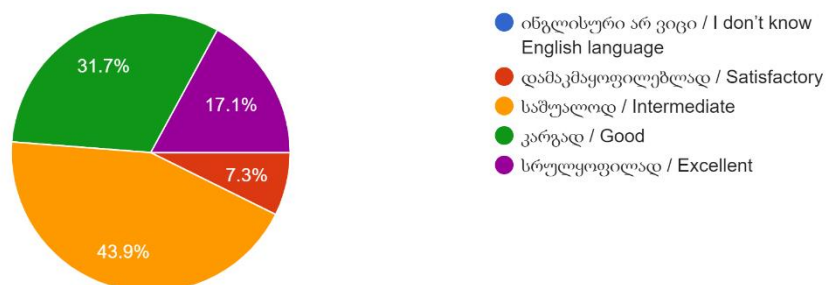
რომელ კლასში ხართ? / What grade are you in?

41 responses



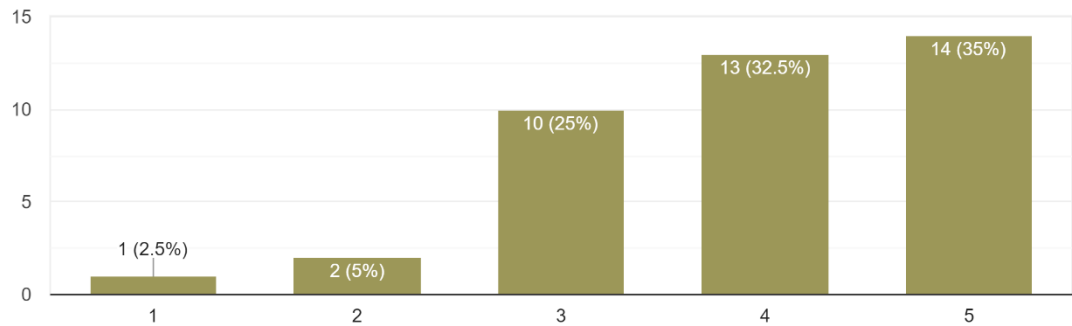
რა დონეზე ფლობთ ინგლისურ ენას? / What are your language skills in the English language?

41 responses



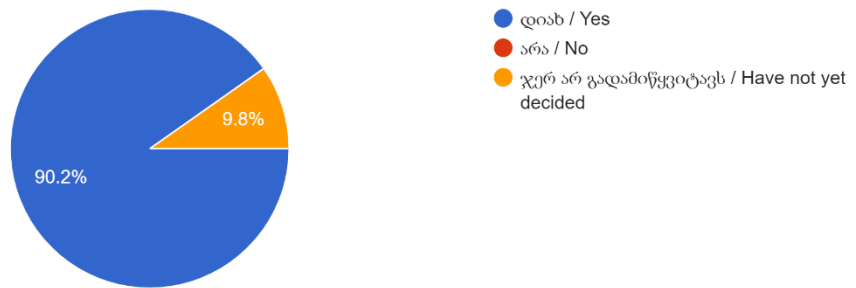
რამდენად კომფორტულია თქვენთვის ისწავლოთ მთლიანად ინგლისურ ენაზე? / How comfortable do you feel studying entirely in the English language?

40 responses



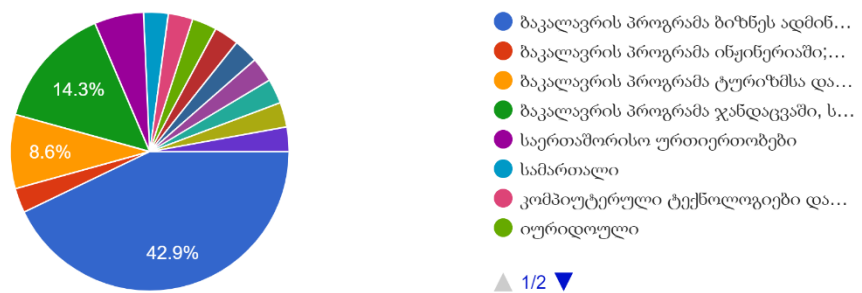
აპირებთ თუ არა სწავლის უმაღლეს სასწავლებელში გაგრძელებას სკოლის დამთავრების შემდეგ? / Are you planning on continuing studying at a university after high school?

41 responses

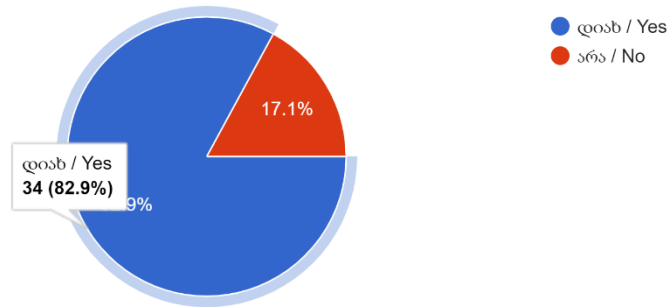


ჩამოთვლილი პროგრამებიდან რომელია თქვენთვის ყველაზე საინტერესო? / Out of the listed degree program below, which one is the most interesting to you?

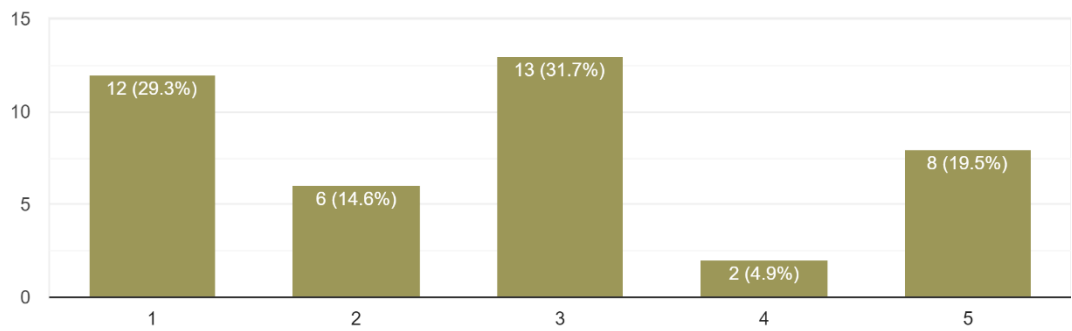
35 responses



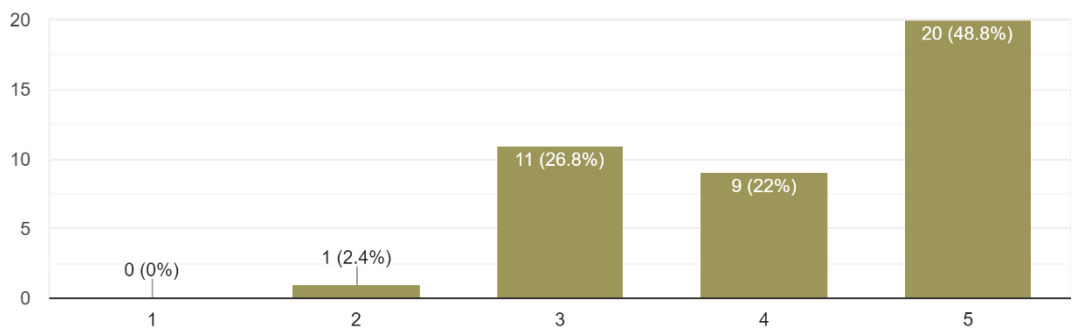
გიფიქრიათ თუ არა საზღვარგარეთ სწავლაზე? / Have you thought about studying abroad?
41 responses



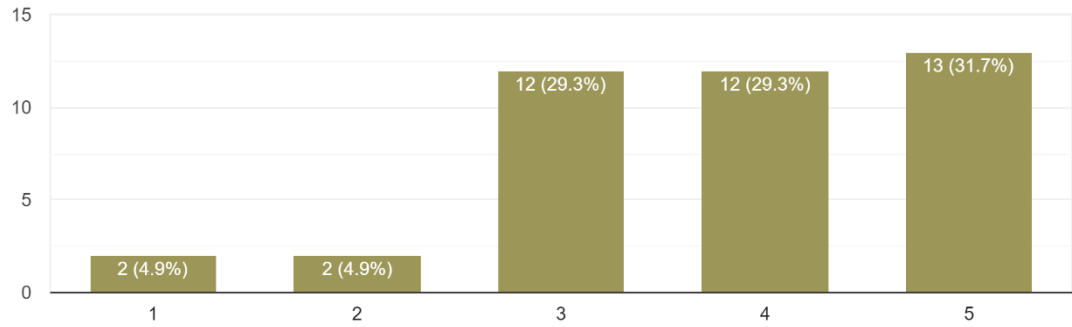
სახლიდან შორს ყოფნა / Being away from home
41 responses



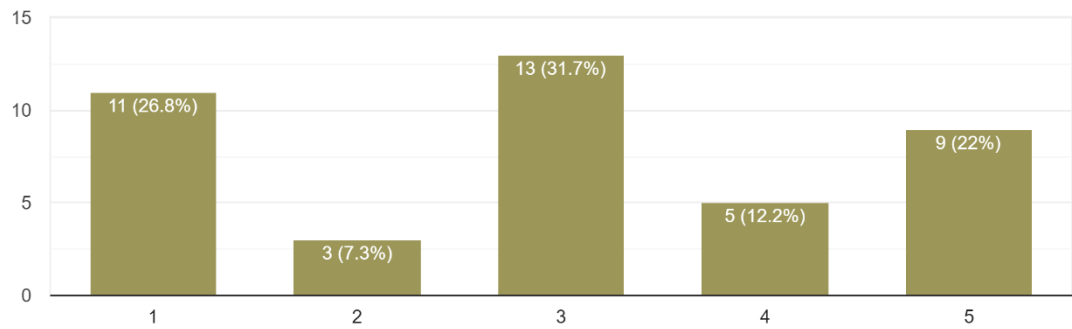
სწავლის გადასახადი / Tuition fees
41 responses



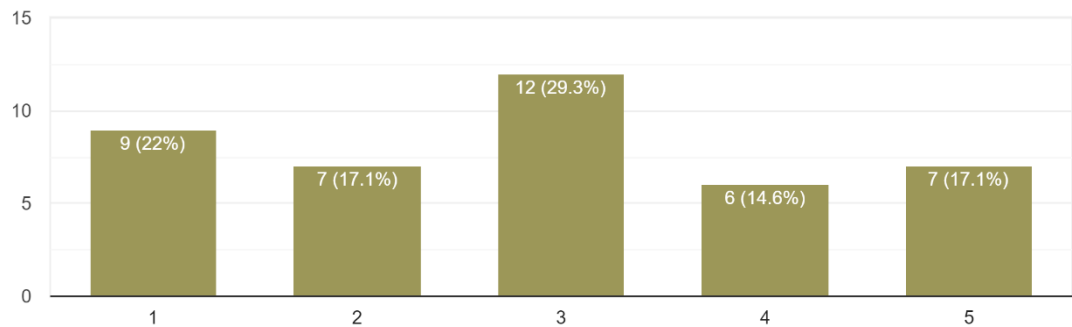
პრაქტიკული საკითხები, როგორებიცაა საცხოვრებელი ფასები, ვიზის მოწესრიგება, ჯანმრთელობის დაზღვევა და ა.შ. / Practical matters... costs, visa requirements health insurance, etc.
41 responses



ახალი კულტურა / New culture
41 responses

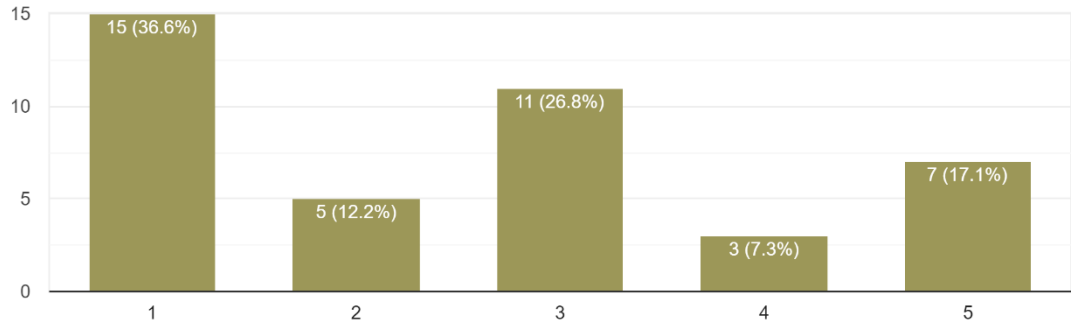


ახალი ქვეყანა / New country
41 responses



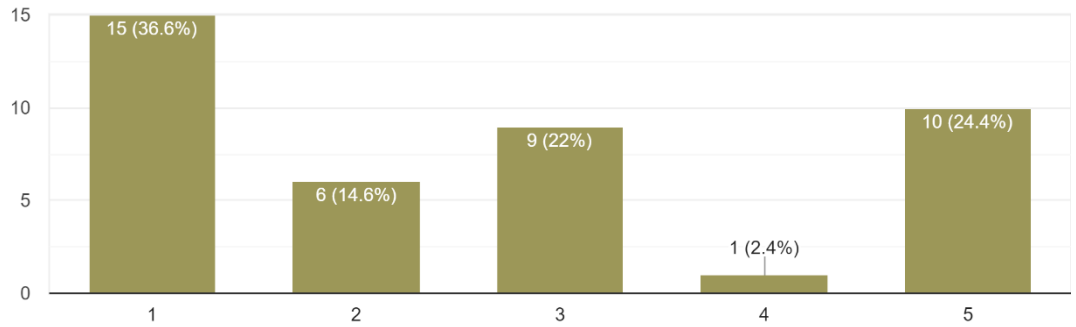
განსხვავებული კლიმატი / Different climate

41 responses



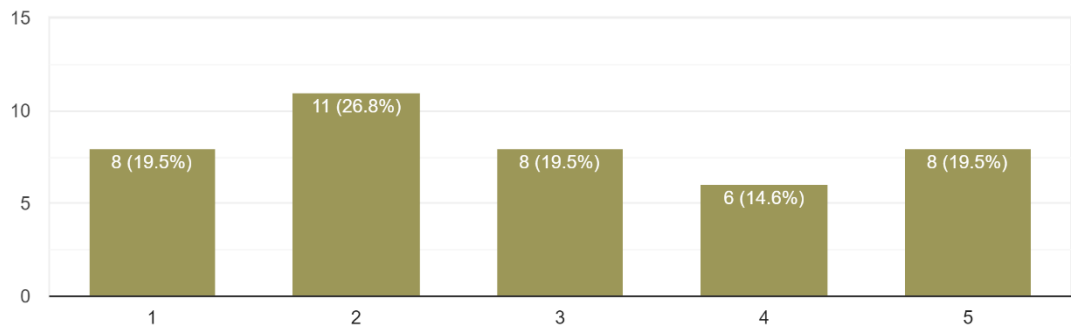
უცხო ადამიანები / Unknown people

41 responses



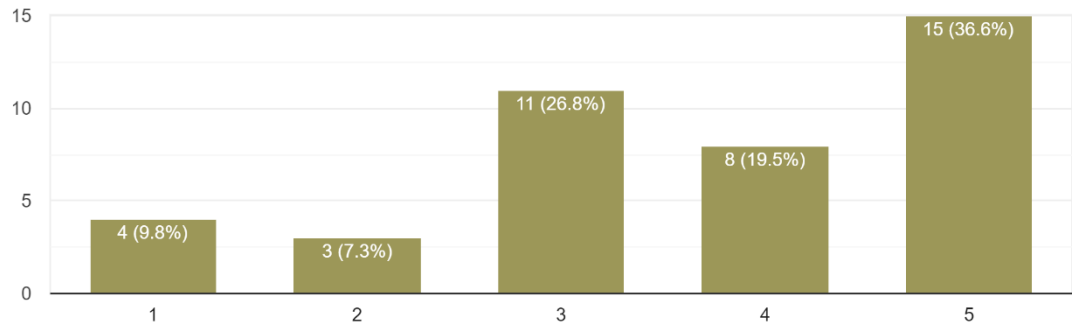
განსხვავებული სასწავლო გარემო და ჩვეულებები / Different study environment/practices

41 responses



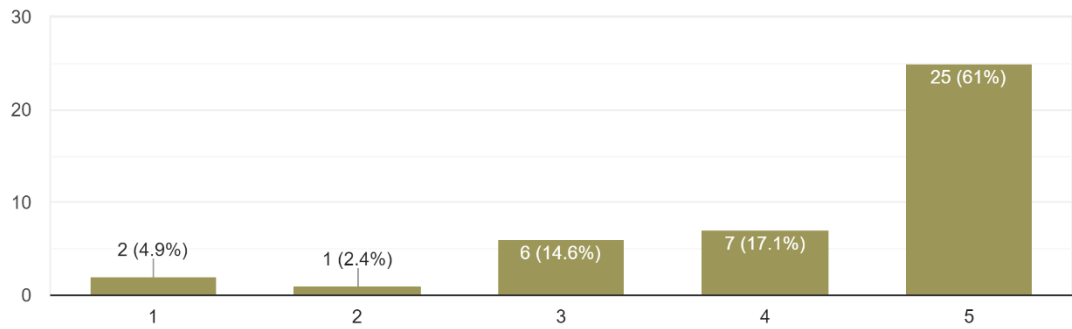
ინტერნეტ რეკლამები / Online advertisements

41 responses



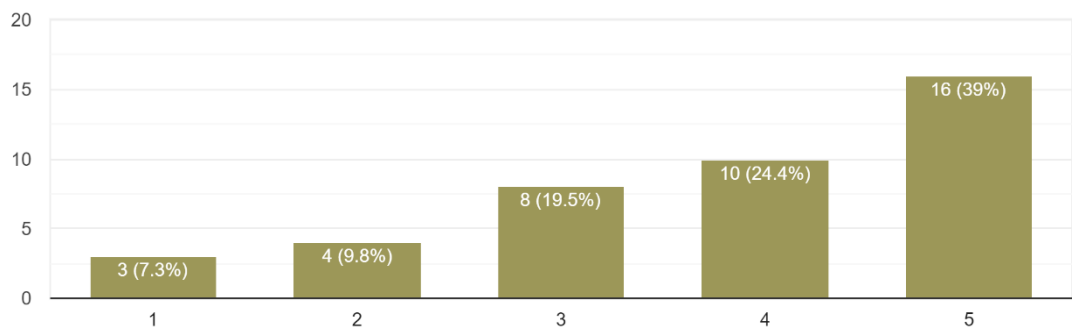
ვებსაიტები / Websites

41 responses



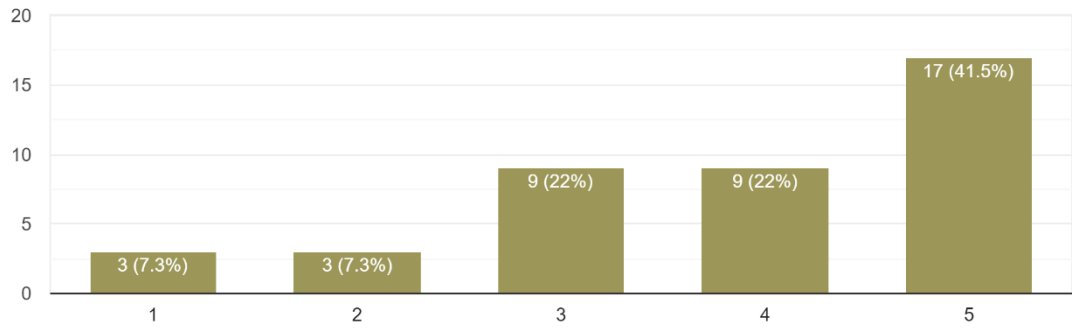
სოციალური მედიის არხები / Social media channels

41 responses



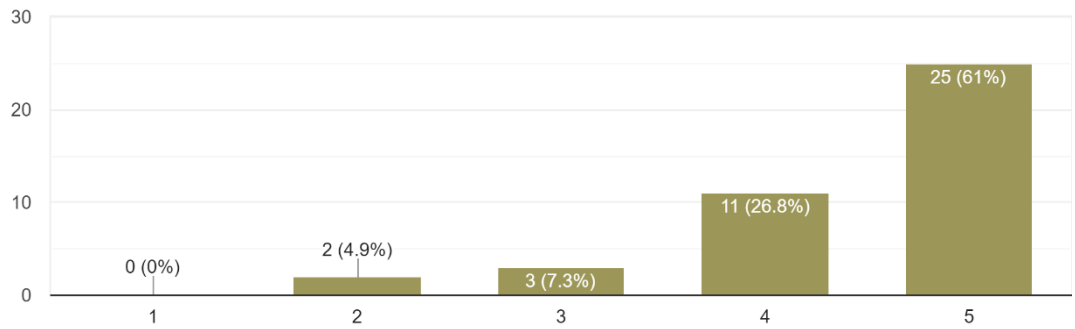
ონლაინ შეფასებები / Online reviews

41 responses



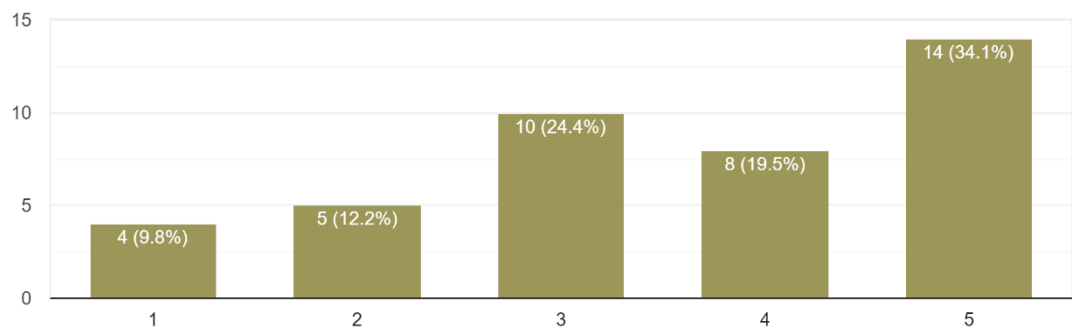
პირადი მოსაზრებები / Personal opinions

41 responses



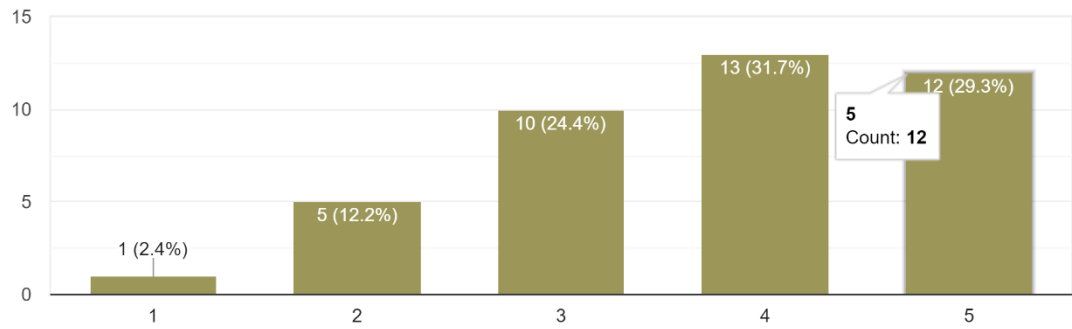
სხვების მოსაზრებები / Other's opinions

41 responses



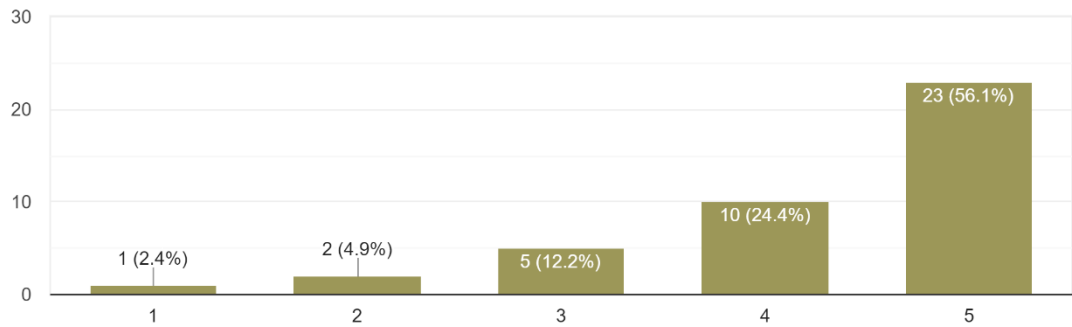
თეორიული (მაგალითად, მეტი ლექცია, ნაკლები პროექტი და საშინაო დავალება და ა.შ.) /
Theoretical (e.g. more lectures, fewer projects, homework, etc.)

41 responses



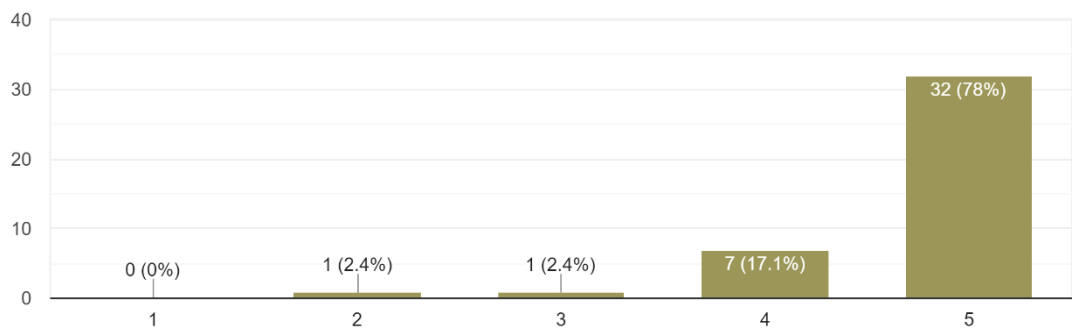
პრაქტიკული (ლექციები, როგორც დირექტივები თეორიული საფუძვლებით და კურსების უმეტესობა დატვირთული პრაქტიკული სამუშაოებით, ...oup projects, case studies, presentations...)

41 responses

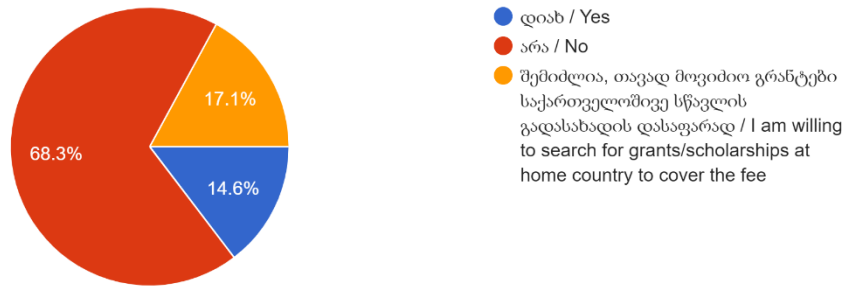


თეორიული და პრაქტიკული სწავლების შერწყმა / A mixture of theoretical and practical studies

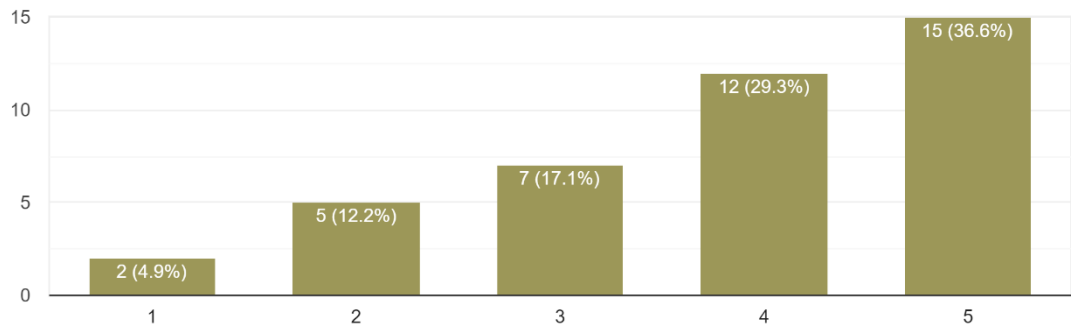
41 responses



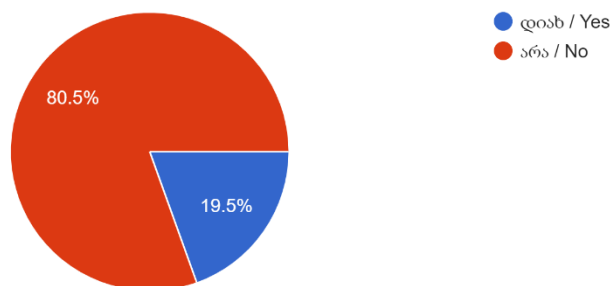
ვინაიდან ფინურ დარგობრივი მეცნიერებების უნივერსიტეტებში სწავლა ფასიანია
 ევროკავშირის არაწევრი ქვეყნების მოქალაქეებისთვის...r tuition for completing courses on schedule)
 41 responses



რამდენად დაინტერესებული ხართ გაატაროთ გაცვლითი პერიოდი ფინურ უმაღლეს
 სასწავლებელში? (Erasmus+ გრანტით და სწავლის გა...JAS? (With Erasmus+ grant and no tuition fee)
 41 responses

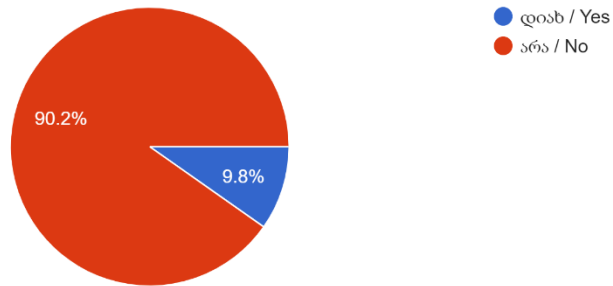


გაუწევია თუ არა ვინმეს თქვენთვის რეკომენდაცია ფინეთში სწავლასთან დაკავშირებით? / Has
 anyone recommended studying in Finland to you before?
 41 responses



იცნობთ თუ არა ვინმეს, ვისაც უსწავლია ან სწავლობს ფინეთში? / Do you know anyone who studies/has studied in Finland?

41 responses



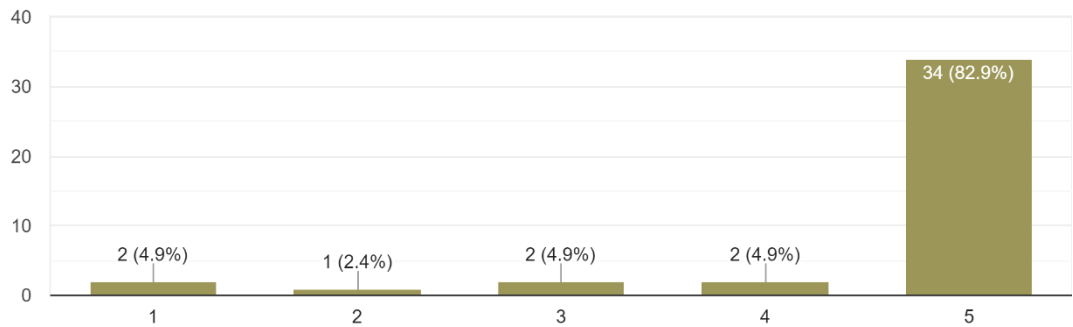
რა შთაბეჭდილება დატოვა მათზე ამ გამოცდილებამ? გთხოვთ, აღწეროთ რამდენიმე ზედსართავით: / What was/is their impression on their experience? Please, describe with a couple of adjectives:

0 responses

No responses yet for this question.

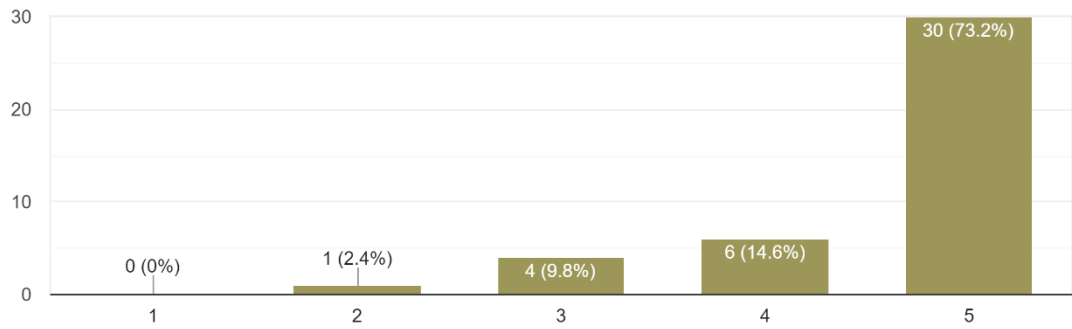
რამდენად მნიშვნელოვანია სასწავლო გარემო თქვენთვის? / How important is a learning environment for you?

41 responses



რამდენად მნიშვნელოვანია თქვენთვის მოწყობილობები (ბიბლიოთეკა, IT მომსახურება...)? / How important are the facilities for you?

41 responses



თუკი გაქვთ სურვილი, გთხოვთ, დამატოთ რაიმე თემა, რაზეც დისკუსია თქვენთვის საინტერესოა. / If you wish, you can add anything you want to discuss about the subject.

2 responses

თავისუფლება ; თანასწორობა , დემოკრატია

მაინტერესებს დეტალურად ფინური განათლების სისტემა, რას მოიცავს, როგორ მიმდინარეობს სწავლა და ა.შ, ანუ ყველა დეტალი.