



**SAVONIA**  
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

**FACTORS THAT MOTIVATE THE NEW GENERATION STUDENTS TO  
STUDY ABROAD**

**- Exchange students as a case study**

**Thesis**

**Olukayode Oladayo Adebisi**

**Degree Programme in International Business**

International Marketing Management

<b>SAVONIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES</b> Business and Administration, Varkaus Degree Programme, option Bachelor of Business Administration, International Business, International Marketing Management		
Author(s) Olukayode Oladayo Adebisi		
Title of study <b>FACTORS THAT MOTIVATE THE NEW GENERATION STUDENTS TO STUDY ABROAD</b> - Exchange students as a case study		
Type of project	Date	Pages
Thesis	April 2012	111 + 15
Supervisor(s) of study		Executive organisation
Tuula Linnas		Savonia UAS Varkaus
Abstract <p>A complete understanding of the customer's needs is the first step to achieving the principal goal of any organisation. Thus, building a solid business foundation does not only rely on capital, vision or mission but also a deep comprehension of customers' expectations. The aim of this research is to identify the current trends that motivate international exchange students to go abroad for studies. By studying two partner Universities; Savonia University of Applied Sciences Varkaus Campus Finland and the University of Economics in Katowice, the research outcome will be further strengthened. As a result, a primary focus is made on building an international communication plan for Savonia UAS Varkaus Campus based on the research results.</p> <p>The adoption of a mixed research approach is used to gather background information and analysis. Between October and November 2011, two structured on line questionnaires were directed to the international coordinators and exchange students of both case study Universities. The survey for the international coordinators from both universities focuses on establishing a framework for this research. The response rate from the questionnaire directed to the exchange students was 30 %. In addition, a face-to-face group discussion was conducted with exchange students on Varkaus Campus during the autumn semester in the academic year 2011/2012.</p> <p>The research results reveal that 6 out of every 10 exchange students go abroad to study for one of these major reasons: travelling experience, self-development, multi-cultural environment experience and language skills improvement. In addition, amongst several other factors the choice of a particular study place abroad is strongly based on distance, country, recommendations, availability of relevant courses, cost of living, educational quality and social activities. Furthermore, exchange students at Savonia UAS Varkaus commended the services received from teachers and their teaching method, learning infrastructures and the timing of email responses.</p> <p>In conclusion, the international communication plan and recommendations are made based on the research outcomes and the knowledge acquired from the theoretical framework.</p>		
Keywords Studying abroad, Exchange students, Higher education institution, Savonia UAS Varkaus		
Note		

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1	Introduction of case studies	10
2.2	Case Study – the two Universities	12
2.3	Mobility Programmes	21
<b>3</b>	<b>CONSUMER STUDY</b>	<b>24</b>
3.1	Consumer Behaviour	24
3.2	International Marketing Communication	26
3.3	Service Quality Model	29
<b>4</b>	<b>RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODS</b>	<b>33</b>
4.1	Research Problem	33
4.2	Qualitative and Quantitative Approach	33
4.3	Description of Participants	34
4.4	Data Collection and Analysis Process	37
4.5	Research Limitations and Response Rate	39
<b>5</b>	<b>RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS</b>	<b>42</b>
5.1	Result of the Structured on line Questionnaire	42
5.1.1	Background Information about the Respondents	42
5.1.2	Information about the Exchange	47
5.1.3	Evaluation of the Study Exchange	51
5.1.4	Institution’s Service Ratings by Respondents	72
5.2	Result of the Group Discussion	86
<b>6</b>	<b>FINDINGS AND COMMUNICATION PLAN</b>	<b>88</b>
6.1	Current Internal Needs	89
6.2	Current External Needs	90
6.3	Marketing Communication Plan for Savonia UAS Varkaus	91

6.3.1	Objectives .....	91
6.3.2	Internal and External Situation Analysis .....	91
6.3.3	Target Audience .....	93
6.3.4	Identification of Information Sources.....	94
6.3.5	Key Messages and Tactics .....	96
6.3.6	Budget .....	99
6.3.7	Evaluation.....	100
<b>7</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION.....</b>	<b>101</b>
7.1	Summary of Findings .....	101
7.2	Reliability and Validity .....	102
7.3	Recommendations .....	103
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>105</b>

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 Cover Letter for International Coordinators

Appendix 2 Questionnaire for International Coordinators

Appendix 3 Cover Letter for Exchange Students

Appendix 4 Questionnaire for exchange students

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

### *List of tables*

Table 1. List of UE in Katowice partner Universities.....	14
Table 2. List of Savonia UAS, Varkaus Campus partner Universities .....	19
Table 3. The exchange study programme activity on Savonia UAS Varkaus campus between 2009 and 2011.....	36
Table 4. The exchange study programme activity at the University of Economics in Katowice between 2009 and 2011. ....	36
Table 5. Respondents by their country of origin. ....	43
Table 6. Respondent rate by their host University.....	46
Table 7. Top 23 reasons for exchange students to study abroad.....	54
Table 8. Choice of media and method suitable to reach each target audience. ....	95

### *List of figures*

Figure 1. The consumer market research cycle .....	9
Figure 2. A complete model of consumer behaviour .....	25
Figure 3. A framework for International Promotion .....	29
Figure 4. Gaps Model of Service Quality .....	30
Figure 5. Respondent rate by gender.....	44
Figure 6. Respondent rate by age .....	45
Figure 7. Respondent rate by host University.....	46
Figure 8. Respondents' exchange study programme platform .....	47
Figure 9. Respondent rate by academic year.....	48
Figure 10. Study time duration of respondents at their host University .....	49
Figure 11. Subject area of studies during exchange period .....	49
Figure 12. Respondents level of study prior to exchange programme .....	50
Figure 13. Respondents Information channel about their host University. ....	51
Figure 14. Reasons to study abroad as an exchange student.....	52
Figure 15. Reasons to study abroad as an exchange student by academic year... 56	
Figure 16. Reasons to study at Savonia UAS Varkaus Campus.....	57
Figure 17. Reasons to study at the University of Economics in Katowice .....	59
Figure 18. Satisfactory level of exchange students by their host University. ....	61
Figure 19. Satisfactory level of mobility grant received for exchange programme.. 68	
Figure 20. Service ratings by exchange students at Savonia UAS Varkaus.....	72
Figure 21. Service ratings by exchange students at UE in Katowice.....	73
Figure 22. Respondents' willingness to remain in the host University's country.....	74
Figure 23. Respondents' willingness to recommend their host University to other students.....	79
Figure 24. Needs mind map. ....	88

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the past decades higher education among a few others has been classified as one of the top sector that is essential for human existence. As a result of this categorization as a basic need, institutions do not feel the need for marketing strategies to attract clients. Conversely, the 21st century has experienced an unintended paradigm shift in the higher education sector due to other medium of knowledge acquisition and a competitive environment, thus it now requires more effort to focus on ways to create awareness among target groups. In 2011, an educational research conducted at the University of Eastern Finland shows that Finnish Universities have done little marketing of themselves. (YLE 2011)

Savonia University of Applied Sciences Varkaus Campus (Savonia UAS Varkaus) is no exception but has now taken a step to bridge the communication gap between the institution and its exchange students. This research focuses on understanding the current factors that motivate potential international exchange students to study abroad by comparing the exchange students at two different institutions; Savonia UAS Varkaus and one of its partner Universities, University of Economics in Katowice, Poland. Therefore, the level of effectiveness from current marketing strategies will be known to the institutions.

However, the primary focus of this research is to identify all possible reasons why international exchange students choose Savonia UAS Varkaus as their exchange place. After their motives have been identified, an international communication plan will be created to meet the current needs of prospective exchange students. The author of this thesis has taken keen interest in the internationalization of students due to his voluntary service as a tutor on Savonia UAS Varkaus campus. In addition, the researcher saw a different but developed approach to exchange programmes compared to what he has experienced and thus felt strongly motivated to devote his BBA thesis on rebranding Savonia UAS Varkaus by working towards strengthening the institution's international mobility programmes.

## 2 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

Over years, there have been many scholars, successful marketers, iconic business personnel and innovative entrepreneurs who believe in the power of market research. Thus, this research is essentially designed to study what the consumers really want and to provide a solution to meet their needs. The importance of knowing what an exchange student wants and expects before going abroad to study, is a key factor to the success and development of higher education institution's internationalization.

Moreover, the inevitable changes (advancement of technology, globalization, climate change, economical fluctuation and so on) in the human race are periodically affecting the desires of consumers. Therefore, this research focuses on identifying the current factors that an exchange student considers before choosing a study place abroad. The figure below clearly illustrates the non-stop cycling process of a market research which is caused by changes in consumers preferences.

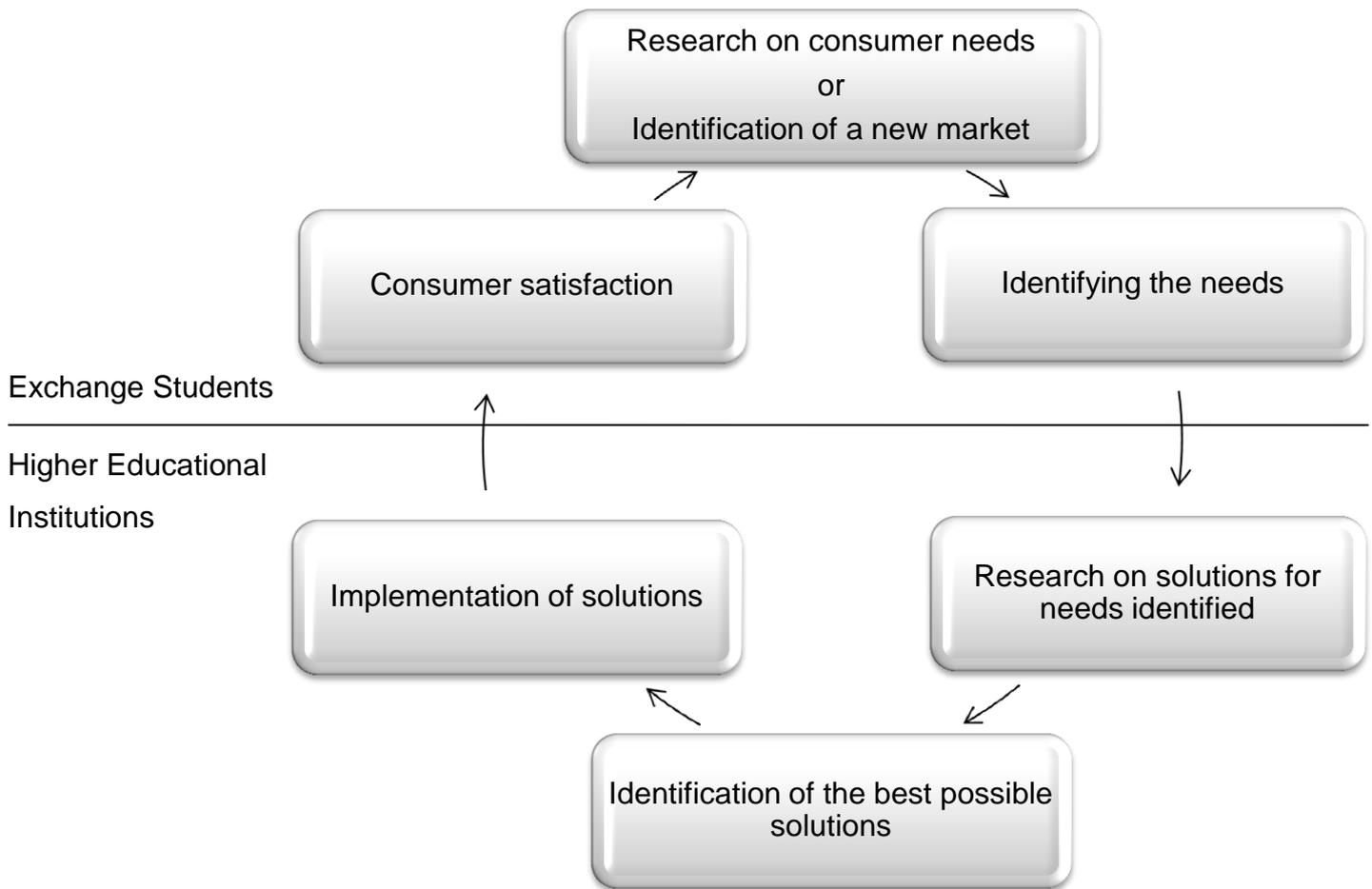


Figure 1. *The consumer market research cycle.*

In addition, the predictable changes which affect the human race are not the only reason for this feasibility study but also the growth in the diversity of students at the higher education level is becoming overwhelming. Preferences in studying abroad vary from student to student, as humans we all have different ideas and opinions to what is important in our lives. Thus, this research aims at providing information on how diversity in students can be managed properly and more effectively. This research will also expose potential profitable market area for higher education institutions (HEIs), whereby their resources can be fully effective and utilized to its maximum. Prospective exchange students are so vast in different parts of the world today and there is the need for HEIs to penetrate into such areas by starting up a partnership with Universities within such regions.

Another important objective for this research is to eliminate the traditional assumptions on reasons why exchange students choose to study abroad. Information on the trendy factors that motivates an exchange student in choosing to

study abroad and selecting a particular higher education institution as his or her destination will be gathered. Therefore, the awareness of what the new generation exchange students really want will help higher education institution (HEI) to develop a tailored international marketing communication plan. This would save cost on reducing non-functional marketing communication methods and focus more on the effective methods.

## **2.1 Introduction of case studies**

One of the major driving forces promoting the world development today is globalization. Historical facts point out that globalization has been in existence for many years but in the past few decades, we have seen a tremendous change in how nations have embraced and incorporate globalization in its national policies. Globalization has been enhanced and intensified by technological developments such as the internet.

According to Globalization101.org, Globalization is defined as the acceleration and intensification of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and government of different nations which is prominently driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology. Globalization is seen as a very crucial issue with its positive and negative effect on the society. In spite of many complains laid down by anti-globalization writers such as Jeff Gates (Democracy at risk), globalization has made its penetration into our everyday life whether we like it or not. (Ghauri & Cateora 2010, 24)

As observed in many other institutions and sectors in the society, the effect of globalization on higher education institution (HEI) is the evolvement of internationalization as a strategy to integrate intercultural dimension into the HEI functions such as teaching, research and services. Intercultural dimension is an essential factor that has influenced and affected HEI in many countries all over the world. The rapid growth of internationalization in HEI can be seen amongst students and staff who engage themselves in various types of exchange programmes. Also there has been increase in the number of courses, development of several international programmes to meet the demand of cultural diversity in HEI. In

addition, the rate of partnership between HEIs nationally and internationally in recent years has increased. On the international market, Universities now come together to offer their students the opportunity for joint or double degrees programmes. (Knight & Teferra 2008) Thus, on the national level Universities across Europe now seek to combine competitive forces together by merging up. Finland for instance has seen a rapid reduction in the number of Universities from 20 to 15 in January 2010. (The Chronicle of Higher Education 2011)

The intensity of globalization and internationalization within the HEI sector is further proven by the former minister of education in Finland. In December 2006 according to a *Times Higher Education* (THE) publication, the Minister of Education then Antti Kalliomäki explained the importance of the merging system in the Finnish higher education system which is aimed at developing a strong international competitiveness. “The fact is”, said the former Minister, already, “we have not been successful enough in attracting foreign teachers, researchers and students”, and the task of doing so is made all the more difficult by having too many institutions in the country. (The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education 2008)

### **Exchange Programmes**

Exchange Programmes are the platform for which internationally oriented students and staff can utilize the opportunity of having a more practical international exposure by going to a specific University abroad. The word “exchange” does not literally mean that it is a form of trade, that is, exchanging a student for another student is not mandatory. Nonetheless, there is an agreement between two or more Universities about the terms and conditions that covers exchange programmes. Included in the agreement are specified numbers of accepted student or staff per academic year, specific language of study, length of exchange programme and so on.

These Universities abroad, known as the host University must be a partner of the University from which the Student/Staff is going out from, known as the home University. A student arriving at a University abroad is known as the in-coming exchange student, while a student leaving his own University to study abroad is known as the out-going exchange student. The exchange programmes are

designed for both staff and students to choose a partner University abroad where the staff can be a guest lecturer and the students can go for studies/work placements/thesis writing purposes. Exchange programmes aims at not only improving language skills of staff and students but to provide a practical knowledge of other cultures and to also enhance and broaden their mind on global issues. (Savonia UAS 2010, 3)

Exchange programmes have been widely accepted by many HEI but still it is a big challenge to have a single governing body that will bring all Universities together. There are different issues affecting the establishment of a single governing body. Issues such as cultural, economic, political and technological are still key factors hindering the existence of a single system of Exchange programmes. Nevertheless, there has been an improvement in the past decades with the existence of the European Union which supervises the mobility of staff and students of its member states. There are several types of exchange programmes which differs from one University to the other, such programmes will be later identified in the later part of this chapter.

## **2.2 Case Study – the two Universities**

Two distinctive Universities have been selected for the purpose of this research. The choice was made based on the ability to acquire adequate quality information, reaching a wider range of cultural diversity, conducting survey for a larger internalization group of students, validity and reliability of this thesis work and to compare and contrast the effectiveness of the marketing communication strategies of both Universities based on the information gathered from their in-coming exchange students. The case study Universities are:

- University of Economics in Katowice, Poland
- Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Varkaus Campus, Finland

## **University of Economics in Katowice**

The University of Economics in Katowice (UE in Katowice) which was founded in the late 1930's is highly recognized as a research and educational centre in the Silesia region of Poland. As a business school, the University promotes courses integrating both practical and theoretical fields. The University provides four faculties for its students which are:

- Economics
- Management
- Finance and Insurance
- Information technology and communication

The academic level of the University is divided into three different categories; Bachelor's level (3 years), Master's level (2 years) and Doctoral level (4 years). The Institution offers both full time and part time studies conducted in Polish language at every academic level. UE in Katowice offers above 60 specialization areas at its three campuses in Rybnik, Bielsko-Biala and Katowice which is its largest. As at the academic year 2011/2012, the University's campus in Katowice has a total number of 15,000 degree students. (UE in Katowice 2011)

On the international sphere, the University has taken internationalization policy as a priority. (UE in Katowice 2011) UE in Katowice is participating in international researches, entering into partnership with HEIs around the world, supporting student and staff exchange programmes. The University offers various studies in foreign languages to attract potential international students. In winter semester of the academic year 2011/2012, the University campus in Katowice received a total number of 78 exchange students from its partner Universities. And a total number of 64 degree students had the opportunity to go for an exchange programme abroad. (UE in Katowice 2011)

The University offers its students and staff various medium of exchange programmes such as; Bilateral agreement, LLP- Erasmus, and CEEPUS. The most common channel used by its students and staff is LLP-Erasmus which is promoted by the European Union (EU). Nevertheless, HEI partners outside the EU territory

are bonded by a bilateral agreement. UE in Katowice has approximately 170 partners in 38 different countries all around the world. (UE in Katowice 2011)

Table 1. List of UE in Katowice partner Universities (UE in Katowice 2011).

No:	University Name	Agreement	
		Erasmus	Other
<b>AUSTRIA</b>			
1	Fachhochschule des bfi Wien GmbH	X	X
2	Fachhochschulstudiengänge Burgenland GmbH	X	
3	Fachhochschule Wiener Neustadt für Wirtschaft und Technik	X	
4	FHS Kufstein Tirol Bildungs GmbH	X	
5	Karl-Franzens-Universität-Graz	X	
6	Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien	X	X
<b>BELGIUM</b>			
7	Haute Ecole 'Groupe ICHEC-ISC Saint Louis-ISFSC'	X	
8	Haute Ecole Paul-Henri SPAAK		X
9	HUB Brussel	X	
10	Karel de Grote-Hogeschool, Katholieke Hogeschool Antwerpen	X	
11	Plantijnhogeschool van de Provincie Antwerpen	X	
12	Universiteit Hasselt	X	
<b>BELARUS</b>			
13	Belarus Economic State University		X
<b>BULGARIA</b>			
14	University of Economics - Varna	X	
15	University of National and World Economy	X	
<b>CANADA</b>			
16	Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue		X
<b>COLOMBIA</b>			
17	Universidad de Ibagué - Coruniversitaria		X
<b>CROATIA</b>			
18	Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku	X	
19	Sveučilište u Rijeci	X	
20	Sveučilište u Splitu	X	
21	Sveučilište u Zagrebu	X	
<b>CZECH REPUBLIC</b>			
22	Anglo-Americká vysoká škola	X	X
23	Masarykova Univerzita v Brně	X	X
24	Slezská Univerzita v Opavě	X	X
25	Vysoká škola báňská - Technická Univerzita Ostrava	X	X
26	Vysoké Učení Technické v Brně	X	X
<b>DENMARK</b>			
27	Vitus Bering Danmark	X	
<b>ESTONIA</b>			
28	Tallinna Tehnikaülikool	X	

<b>FINLAND</b>			
29	Kemi-Tornio ammattikorkeakoulu	X	
30	Laurea ammattikorkeakoulu	X	
31	Mikkelin ammattikorkeakoulu	X	
32	Oulun Seudun ammattikorkeakoulu	X	
33	Pohjois-Savo (nowadays Savonia) ammattikorkeakoulu	X	
34	Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu	X	
35	Turun ammattikorkeakoulu Åbo Yrkeshögskola	X	X
<b>FRANCE</b>			
36	Ecole de Management de Normandie	X	
37	Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Clermont-Ferrand	X	X
38	Groupe Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Toulouse	X	
39	Groupe Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Troyes	X	
40	Groupe Ecole Supérieure de Commerce Dijon-Burgogne	X	
41	Institut Catholique de Paris	X	
42	Institution de Préparation à l'Administration et à la Gestion	X	
43	Institut National Polytechnique de Lorraine	X	
44	Institut Supérieur du Commerce	X	
45	IUT2 Grenoble - Université Pierre Mendès France	X	
46	Negocia, Centre International de Formation à la Vente et à la Négociation Commerciale	X	
47	Université d'Artois	X	
48	Université de Bretagne Occidentale - U.B.O. (IUT Quimper)	X	
49	Université de Haute Alsace	X	
50	Université de Savoie	X	
51	Université de Valenciennes et du Hainaut-Cambrésis	X	
52	Université Jean Monnet de Saint-Etienne	X	
53	Université Lille 1, IUT A	X	
54	Université Montesquieu-Bordeaux IV	X	
55	Université Panthéon-Assas Paris II	X	
56	Université Paul-Valéry (Montpellier III)	X	X
57	Université Paul Verlaine - Metz	X	
<b>GERMANY</b>			
58	Akademie für Führungskräfte der Wirtschaft Bad Harzburg		X
59	Berufsakademie Mosbach	X	
60	Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel	X	
61	Europa - Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder)	X	
62	Fachhochschule Brandenburg	X	X
63	Fachhochschule Deggendorf	X	
64	Fachhochschule Nordhausen	X	X
65	Georg August Universität Göttingen	X	
66	Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft (HTW) des Saarlandes	X	
67	International School of Management ISM Dortmund	X	
68	Technische Fachhochschule Wildau	X	X
69	Technische Universität München	X	

70	Universität Bremen	X	
71	Universität Rostock	X	
72	Universität Trier	X	X
<b>GREECE</b>			
73	Ethniko kai Kapodistriako Panepistimio Athinon	X	
74	Technologiko Ekpedeftiko Idrima-Kavalas	X	
<b>SPAIN</b>			
75	Universidad de Alicante	X	
76	Universitat de Barcelona	X	
77	Universidad de Cantabria	X	
78	Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha	X	
79	Universidad de Córdoba	X	
80	Universidad de Extremadura	X	
81	Universitat de Girona	X	
82	Universidad de Granada	X	
83	Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria	X	
84	Universidad de Málaga	X	
85	Universidad de Oviedo	X	
86	Universidad de Salamanca	X	
87	Universidade de Santiago de Compostela	X	
88	Universidad de Sevilla	X	
89	Universidad de Valladolid	X	
90	Universidad de Vigo	X	
91	Universidad Politécnica de Valencia	X	
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>			
92	Christelijke Hogeschool Windesheim	X	
93	Dutch Institute of Economics in Rotterdam		X
94	Hogeschool van Arnhem en Nijmegen	X	X
95	Universiteit van Tilburg	X	
<b>CHINA</b>			
96	Hong Kong Baptist University		X
<b>INDIA</b>			
97	Indian Institute of Finance, New Delhi		X
<b>IRELAND</b>			
98	Institute of Technology, Sligo	X	
99	Institute of Technology, Tralee	X	
100	Letterkenny Institute of Technology	X	
<b>ICELAND</b>			
101	Reykjavik University	X	
<b>KOREA</b>			
102	Ajou University		X
103	Soongsil University		X
<b>LITHUANIA</b>			
104	Mykolo Romerio Universitetas	X	X
105	Universitas Studiorum Polona Vilnensis		X
106	Vilniaus Gedimino Technikos Universitetas (VGTU)	X	X
107	Vilniaus Universitetas	X	X
<b>NORWAY</b>			
108	Høgskolen i Harstad	X	
109	Høgskolen i Telemark	X	

110	Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet	X	
	<b>PORTUGAL</b>		
111	Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra	X	
112	Instituto Politécnico de Porto	X	
113	Instituto Português de Administração de Marketing (IPAM)	X	
114	Universidade do Algarve	X	
115	Universidade de Aveiro	X	
	<b>RUSSIA</b>		
116	Kaliningrad State Technical University		X
117	M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University		X
118	Petersburski Państwowy Uniwersytet Komunikacyjny		X
119	Russian State Social University in Moscow		X
120	Saint Petersburg State University of Economics and Finance		X
121	Southern Federal University		X
	<b>ROMANIA</b>		
122	Academia de Studii Economice din Bucuresti	X	
123	Universitatea "Babes-Bolyai" din Cluj-Napoca	X	
124	Universitatea din Craiova	X	
125	Universitatea din Pitesti		X
	<b>SINGAPORE</b>		
126	Singapore Management University		X
	<b>SLOVAKIA</b>		
127	Ekonomická Univerzita v Bratislave	X	X
128	Slovenska poľnohospodarska univerzita v Nitre	X	
129	Technická Univerzita v Košiciach	X	X
130	Trenčianska univerzita Alexandra Dubčeka v Trenčíne	X	
131	Žilinská univerzita v Žiline	X	X
	<b>SLOVENIA</b>		
132	Univerza na Primorskem	X	
133	Univerza v Ljubljani	X	
134	Univerza v Mariboru	X	
	<b>SWITZERLAND</b>		
135	University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland	X	X
	<b>SWEDEN</b>		
136	Södertörns högskola		X
137	Stiftelsen Högskolan i Jönköping	X	X
	<b>TAIWAN</b>		
138	Kainan University		X
139	National Cheng Kung University		X
140	National Taiwan University		X
	<b>TURKEY</b>		
141	Ankara Üniversitesi	X	
142	Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi	X	
143	Ege Üniversitesi	X	
144	Hacettepe Üniversitesi	X	
145	Okan Üniversitesi	X	
	<b>UKRAINE</b>		

146	Donetsk State University of Management		X
147	Kyiv National University of Trade and Economics		X
148	Lviv Polytechnic National University		X
149	National Academy of Science of Ukraine		X
150	Odessa National Polytechnic University		X
151	Ternopil National Economic University		X
152	Zaporizhzhya National University		X
	<b>USA</b>		
153	Plattsburgh State University of New York		X
154	University of Northern Iowa		X
	<b>HUNGARY</b>		
155	Általános Vállalkozási Főiskola	X	
156	Budapesti Gazdasági Főiskola	X	
157	Miskolci Egyetem	X	X
158	Szechenyi Istvan Egyetem	X	
	<b>GREAT BRITAIN</b>		
159	Nottingham Trent University	X	X
160	The University of the West of Scotland	X	X
161	University of Glamorgan Higher Education Corporation	X	X
162	University of Huddersfield		X
	<b>ITALY</b>		
163	Università degli Studi di Ferrara	X	
164	Università degli Studi di Genova	X	
165	Università degli Studi di Messina	X	X
166	Università degli Studi di Milano		X
167	Università degli Studi di Perugia	X	
168	Università degli Studi di Siena	X	
169	Università degli Studi di Torino	X	
170	Università di Bologna	X	

### **Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Varkaus Campus**

There is no way better way to introduce Savonia UAS Varkaus Campus, without introducing its organizational body. Savonia University of Applied Sciences is described as one of the biggest institutions in Eastern Finland with approximately 6500 students. The institution was founded in the early 1990's. Savonia UAS is a multidisciplinary Institution of higher education, which offers approximately 30 Bachelor level degree programmes and nine Master level programmes in seven different study fields. The other forms of operation include adult education, service activities and research and development activities. Savonia campuses are located in Iisalmi, Kuopio and Varkaus. Savonia UAS Varkaus is a small but internationalized unit with approximately 550 degree students as at autumn semester in the academic year 2011/2012. (Savonia UAS Varkaus 2011)

Savonia UAS Varkaus offers two degree studies; Industrial Management and International Business in English language. Its International Business degree is only offered on bachelor level, while its Industrial Management degree is available for both bachelor and master levels. The academic year 2011/2012 autumn semester recorded a total number of 22 exchange students. The campus offers its students and staff various medium of exchange programmes such as; Bilateral agreement, LLP-Erasmus, TEMPUS, NORDPLUS, FIRST and NORTH-SOUTH. (Savonia UAS Varkaus 2011) Like the University of Economics in Katowice, the most common exchange programme channel among students and staff of Savonia UAS Varkaus campus is the LLP-Erasmus programme. Savonia UAS Varkaus has approximately 73 partners in 28 different countries all around the world. (Savonia UAS Varkaus 2011)

Table 2. *List of Savonia UAS, Varkaus Campus partner Universities (Savonia 2011).*

No:	University Name	Agreement	
		Erasmus	Other
	<b>AUSTRALIA</b>		
1.	Australian Catholic University, Sydney		X
	<b>AUSTRIA</b>		
2.	FH bfi Wien University of Applied Sciences	X	
3.	FH Joanneum Gesellschaft mbH	X	
4.	Upper Austria UAS, Steyer, Wels, Hagenberg Campus	X	
5.	FH Salzburg GmbH	X	
	<b>BELGIUM</b>		
6.	HELMo Haute Ecole Libre, Liege	X	
	<b>BULGARIA</b>		
7.	Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"	X	
	<b>CHINA</b>		
8.	Hebei University of Technology		X
9.	Shijiazhuang University of Economics		X
10.	West Anhui University		X
11.	Wuhan Institute of Technology		X
	<b>CZECH REPUBLIC</b>		
12.	University of Hradec Kralove	X	
13.	University Tomas Bata in Zlin	X	
14.	University of Finance and Administration	X	
	<b>DENMARK</b>		
15.	VIA University College (Vitus Bering)	X	
	<b>FRANCE</b>		
16.	ESDES School of Management, Universite Cath. De	X	

	LYON		
17.	IMEA, Besancon	X	
18.	Universite de Paris-Sud XI	X	
19.	Universite Pierre Mendes, De Grenoble	X	
20.	Ecole de Management de Normandie	X	
21.	Groupe TROYES	X	
22.	Universite de Savoie	X	
	<b>GERMANY</b>		
23.	Fachhochschule Brandenburg	X	
24.	Hochschule fur Technik und Wirtschaft Dresden	X	
25.	Hochschule Harz	X	
26.	Baden Wuttenberg Cooperative University - Mannheim	X	
27.	Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg - Lörrach	X	
28.	Hochschule Mittweida	X	
29.	FH EMDEN -Leer	X	
30.	Fachhochschule Regensburg	X	
31.	Worms University of Applied Sciences	X	
	<b>HUNGARY</b>		
32.	Budapest Business School	X	
	<b>INDIA</b>		
33.	Banasthali University		X
34.	Jaipuria Institute of Management, Noida, New Delhi		X
35.	Dayananda Sagar Institut, Bangalore		X
	<b>IRELAND</b>		
36.	Institute of Technology Carlow	X	
37.	Institute of Technology Tralee	X	
	<b>ITALY</b>		
38.	Università degli studi di Genova	X	
39.	Università Politecnica delle Marche (Ancona)	X	
40.	Università degli Studi Perugia	X	
41.	Istituto Tecnico Commerciale		X
	<b>KOREA (SOUTH)</b>		
42.	Chung-Ang University		X
	<b>LATVIA</b>		
43.	Rezeknes Augustskola	X	
44.	Riga Internatiola School of Economics and Business Administr	X	
45.	Graduate School of Information Systems Management	X	
	<b>LITHUANIA</b>		
46.	Kaunas College	X	
47.	Vilnius College of Higher Education	X	
48.	LCC International University, KLAIPED	X	
49.	Vilnius Co-operative College	X	
	<b>MEXICO</b>		
50.	Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Tamaulipas, A.C.		X
	<b>NETHERLANDS</b>		
51.	Noordelijke Hogeschool Leeuwarden	X	
52.	Windesheim University of Professional Education	X	

	<b>NORWAY</b>		
53.	Harstad University College	X	
	<b>POLAND</b>		
54.	University of Gdansk	X	
55.	University of Economics in Katowice	X	
56.	University of Silesia, Katowice	X	
57.	Radom Academy of Economics (Wyzsza Szkola Handlova)	X	
58.	Dolnoslaska Wyzsza Sluzb Publicsnych ASESOR	X	
59.	Politechnika Opolska	X	
	<b>PORTUGAL</b>		
60.	IPL - Instituto Politecnico de Lisboa (ISCAL)	X	
61.	Instituto Politecnico De Santarem	X	
62.	Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias	X	
	<b>ROMANIA</b>		
63.	"GH Asachi" Technical University of Iasi	X	
	<b>RUSSIA</b>		
64.	St. Petersburg State Polytechnical University		X
65.	Astrakhan State University		X
	<b>SLOVAKIA</b>		
66.	Bratislavská Vysoká škola Práva	X	
	<b>SLOVENIA</b>		
67.	LEILA, Kadrovsko Svetovanje d.o.o.		X
	<b>SPAIN</b>		
68.	Universitat de Girona	X	
69.	Universidad de Córdoba	X	
	<b>SWEDEN</b>		
70.	University of Gävle	X	
	<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>		
71.	Oxford Brookes University	X	
72.	University of Abertay Dundee	X	
73.	University of Huddersfield		X

### 2.3 Mobility Programmes

Mobility programmes are organised in and outside the EU area to facilitate the quality of education and to improve diversity. Cultural diversity is mostly encouraged which increases the awareness of Europeans. (Olkinuora 2006, 15) The mobility programmes common to the case study Universities are as follows:

- **CEEPUS** (Central European Exchange Program for University Studies) is a platform designed for students and teachers within the Central European

countries based on the international agreement. This programme enhances exchanges leading to joint degrees from participating Universities. Mobility grant for students and teachers is covered by CEEPUS. (CEEPUS 2012) This programme is only applicable to UE in Katowice.

- **Eucorem** is a joint exchange programme specifically for master's students in order to prepare professionals in the field of consumer policy, consumer protection, customer relationship management, marketing, research and market analysis. Mobility grant is provided by the European Commission (DG Health and Consumer Protection - DG SANCO). The programme is implemented jointly by three European Universities: University of Economics in Katowice (Poland), l'Université de Haute Alsace in Colmar (France) Economic Academia de studios in Bucharest (Romania). The students will have to spend one semester each on the various campuses of the participating Universities and at the end of the study programme graduates will receive three University diplomas. (Eucorem 2012)
- **FIRST** (Finnish-Russian Student and Teacher Exchange) programme supports the exchange of higher education students and teachers between Finland and Russia. (CIMO 2012)
- **Nordplus** is also a higher education exchange programme for students and teachers. The programme offers mobility grant to educational cooperation in lifelong learning between partners in the Baltic and Nordic areas. The participating countries are Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden. (CIMO 2012)
- **NORTH-SOUTH-SOUTH** is higher education institution networks programme that focuses on students and teachers exchange between higher education institutions in Finland and developing countries. The programme commenced since 2004 and it is in its third programme phase in 2010–2012. This programme is specifically funded by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs with a budget of 4 million euro for its third phase. (CIMO 2012)
- **TEMPUS** is European Union's programme which supports the exchange of student and staff of higher education in the EU's surrounding area. This programme promotes institutional cooperation between the EU and Partner Countries. The partner countries are wide spread in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean region. The programme is closely implemented alongside the Erasmus Mundus programme which

provides scholarships to third country students giving them the opportunity to partake in top-level Master courses and Doctorate programmes outside the EU. (European Commission 2012) This programme is only applicable to Savonia UAS Varkaus.

- **LLP** (Lifelong Learning Programme) is an initiative of the European Union Commission. The programme is designed to support learning experiences of interested individuals at various educational levels within the EU area. LLP is financed with a budget of about 7 billion Euros to cover the expenses of staff and students/pupils for the year 2007 to 2013. One of the LLP sub programmes is the LLP-Erasmus, which consist of staff and students within the higher education sector. The LLP-Erasmus programme is designed to create a “European Higher Education Area”, which should enhance innovation across its continent. Students can only go abroad through this exchange programme for a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 12 months. Before the exchange period participating students are eligible for the LLP-Erasmus grant which is provided to subsidise the extra cost of living and studying abroad. The Erasmus grant is not a fixed amount and therefore it is prone to fluctuations. In the academic year 2009/2010 a decrease of 6.7 % from the previous was recorded bringing the average monthly grant for students going for either internship or study abroad to 254 euros. LLP-Erasmus programme is the most common mobility channel in the EU territory. As at the end of 2009/2010 academic year, 2.3 million European students have had the opportunity to take part in both study and work placement abroad. (Erasmus – Facts, Figures & Trends 2012, 4) This programme is applicable to both Savonia UAS Varkaus Campus and UE in Katowice.

### **3 CONSUMER STUDY**

As it was earlier mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis report, the consumer research cycle is an integral part of the success of any institution. Therefore in order for this feasibility study to provide a proper guideline for HEIs on how to recruit and manage its exchange student, there are several theoretical structures to be considered.

#### **3.1 Consumer Behaviour**

Today's world of a competitive market requires a deep understanding of the consumer needs which will enhance the effectiveness of an institution's marketing strategies. Not only is the competitive market an influence to look into consumers but also the dynamism which leads to constant change in the society is another important reason to be considered. The American Marketing Association defines consumer behaviour as "the dynamic interaction of affect and cognition, behaviour and the environment by which human beings conduct the exchange aspects of their lives." This can further be explained as the thinking and feeling process that humans experience which influences their purchasing decision. Things in the environment such as, advertising, recommendation, price, product packaging, brand image and many others contributes largely to the contents of what humans think and feel. (Peter & Olson 2005, 5)

Consumer behaviour is defined as "the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society." (Perner 2010) This definition of consumer behaviour further explains how human behaviour can be influenced on three different levels; as an individual, as a group with mutual goal, or as an organisation whereby crucial decisions are made.

As this thesis focuses on identifying current factors that influences exchange students decision on studying at a particular institution abroad, thus, this research is poised for developing and enhancing consumer oriented thinking by HEIs. The

expected outcome is to create solutions to meet the needs of the exchange students. Although the word “marketing” may be perceived as a gimmick scheme, it is actually the medium that is used to convey the solutions for consumer needs. Consequently, this research is seen from a marketing point of view. (Engel et al. 1990, 3 - 7)

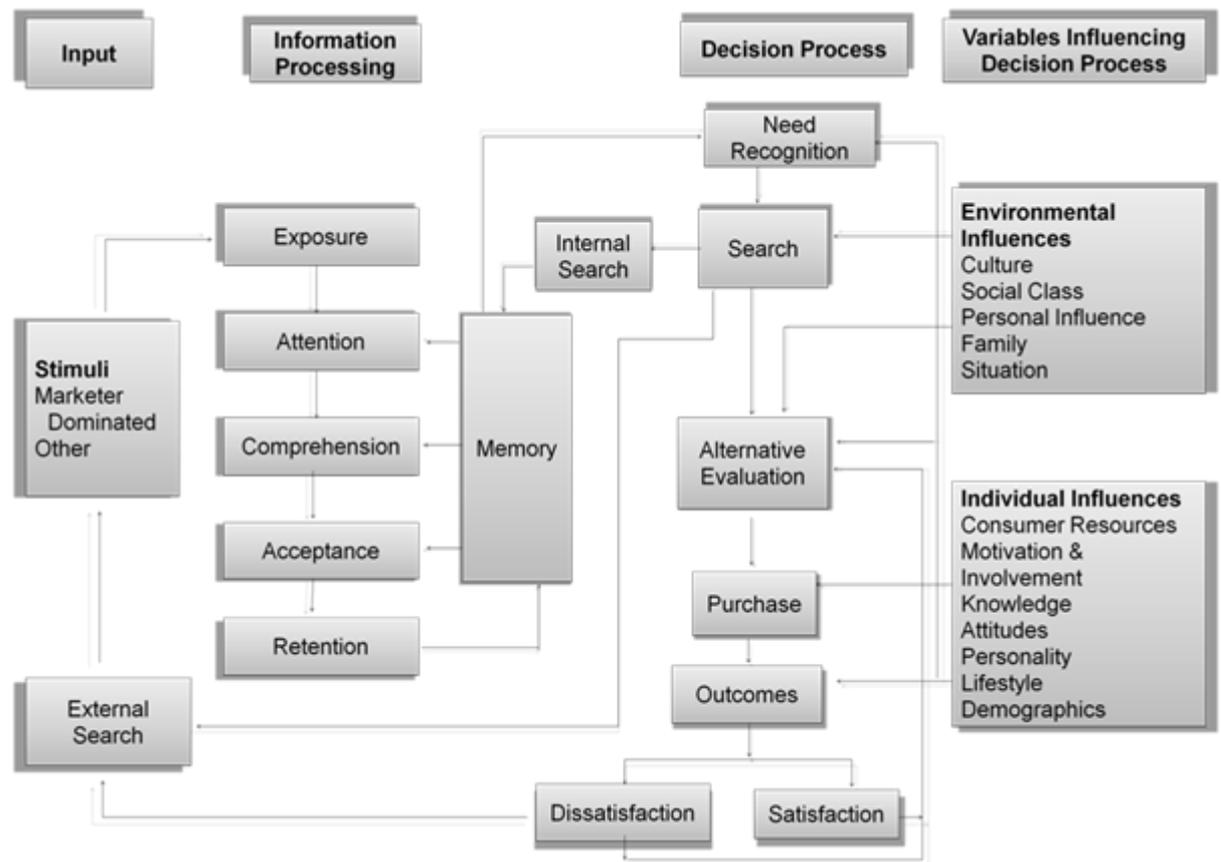


Figure 2. A complete model of consumer behaviour. (Engel et al. 1990, 482)

The above figure shows the decision processes of consumers before and after making actual purchase. As illustrated above there are many factors considered before reaching a conclusion on the decision making process. Such factors include the internal stimulus and the external influences. In spite of all other factors, need recognition is still of utmost importance to human’s decision making process. In other words need recognition is the basis for decision process. (Engel et al. 1990, 488)

These needs are mostly influenced by changes in circumstances, for example, one's employer is requiring additional language skills for an admired position in the company which will obviously lead to taking up some extra language lessons. Another influence is the product acquisition, meaning that by choosing a product it may create the need for further products. A typical example of this in the educational service field is the arrival of joint degree studies. This joint degree studies allows a student to have both educational and socio-cultural knowledge of several countries where the partner Universities are located. It is essential to know that marketing is unable to create a need in human but relatively it performs as a stimulant to awaken the awareness of both conscious and subconscious needs. (Engel et al. 1990, 490 - 494)

### 3.2 International Marketing Communication

According to Delozier (1976) he defines marketing communication as the process of presenting an integrated set of stimuli to a market with the intent of evoking a desired set of response within the market set and setting up channels to receive, interpret and act upon messages from the market for the purposes of modifying present company messages and identifying new communication opportunities. (Fill 1995, 5)

This definition implies that marketing communication creates a dual communication between the institutions and their audience through stimulated channels. It helps to position institutions through the context in which receivers perceive and understand product-based messages, and also through cognitive response where receivers are viewed as active problem solvers. Technological developments have enhanced the five principal marketing communication tools also known as the promotional mix:

- **Advertising** is a form of mass communication which is not specifically directed to an individual but designed to develop brand awareness, values and associations for the targeted audience. Although the cost of advertising may be exceedingly high, it is considered as an important marketing tool for its ability of reaching a wider range of audiences. Either on national or international markets, advertising have the potential of engaging its audience

for a short term basis. Nevertheless, in today's world advertising has very low effect on sales as the audience find it difficult to believe the messages being passed to them through the platform of advertising. (Fill 2009, 21)

- **Sales promotion** is the integration of different marketing techniques which are systematically used to generate high sales volume and to gather substantial marketing information from non-personal audience. Sales promotion is usually used as of form of added value to persuade the purchasing power of targeted audience. As a key factor of in the communication tools, sales promotion is used to generate immediate sales which are on a short term financial basis. (Fill 2009, 538)
- **Public Relations** is defined by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) as a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its publics. According to a PR theorist, James E.Grunig, describes PR as the management of communication between an organization and its publics (stakeholders). Therefore PR is a communication tool used by all organisations in spite of its market operating area which aims to build a positive image and mutual relationships with its stakeholders on a long term basis. (Fill 2009, 564-565)
- **Direct marketing** as a strategic communication tool focuses on individual customers with the use of personalised messages which aims to build a long term relationship. This has replaced the traditional door to door marketing used by organisations with a more sophisticated approach such as telemarketing, direct mail or email communication with their existing or potential customer. Comparing to other communication tools, direct marketing is less expensive and it gives the company a competitive edge with many cost advantages. Thus direct marketing has become a very important channel which enhances effective communication between the company and its selected audiences. (Fill 2009, 624)
- **Personal selling** is a marketing communication tool that involves face-to-face activities between the sales personnel(s) and the target audience(s). This interpersonal mode of communication is often targeted towards a smaller scale of audience compared to that of advertising. The audience

could be an individual or a group who are either introduced to a new product or reminded of an existing product in order to take proper action required by the employer of the sales personnel(s). Personal selling is perceived to be of a very high important communication tool as it generates an immediate two-way communication between the organisation and its consumers but it comes with a high cost. (Fill 2009, 654- 655)

All these have been enriched and developed to effectively reach targeted audience. (Fill 2009, 19)

Thus as the name “International Marketing Communication” implies, it is the utilization of marketing communication tools on the international markets. Therefore, the national approach on marketing communication cannot be equally used on the outbound areas. International marketing communication requires strategic planning and a careful execution. Factors such as cultural issues and media choices influence the communication approach when dealing in an international market. A major communication challenge on the international market is the language, as an organisation cannot apply a single language when operating on a global level. (Ghauri & Cateora 2010, 471)

In addition the values, attitudes, beliefs and perception of a target international market are relatively different from one another. Also economic development is another essential factor that is necessary to be considered when choosing a communication medium. For instance many third world countries are still lacking behind technological developments, thus it would be a disaster for an organisation planning to use the internet as its main marketing campaign in any of these countries. (Development Goals 2011)

Significantly, the uniqueness of cultures has been a major challenge for international promotion personnel. Nevertheless, a six step approach has been built to globally confront the challenges faced in international promotion. (Ghauri & Cateora 2010, 463)



Figure 3. *A framework for International Promotion.* (Ghauri & Cateora 2010, 463)

### 3.3 Service Quality Model

Services in the world today have come to be an inseparable aspect of a company's operation. It might not be clearly visible to the organisations on what the customers consider as a quality service. As simple as a clearly placed sign post might be, it is very crucial to the service quality of an organisation. For instance a pregnant woman, who drives down to a mall for shopping purposes, expects to see a sign post directing her to the specialized parking space right from entrance of the parking lot. On getting to the parking area she expects to have enough space to open her door without any difficulties from stepping out of her car. Such experience would go a long way in the customer's rating of an organisation's service quality level.

Thus the importance of a quality service in any organisation cannot be overemphasized as a business' paramount goal is to maintain customer's loyalty in order for its business to remain successful. A business can only be successful if there are consumers for its product, for that reason there is no doubt on the essential role a consumer plays in the growth of an organisation. It is known that a

strategic marketing and effective sales attract new customers, but what retains their loyalty is the outstanding customer service that last long in their minds and later transforms gradually into the build-up of trust in the organisation. Consequently, consumer service development and management is very important in the overall long term achievement of an organisation. (Karl 2009)

### Gaps Model of Service Quality

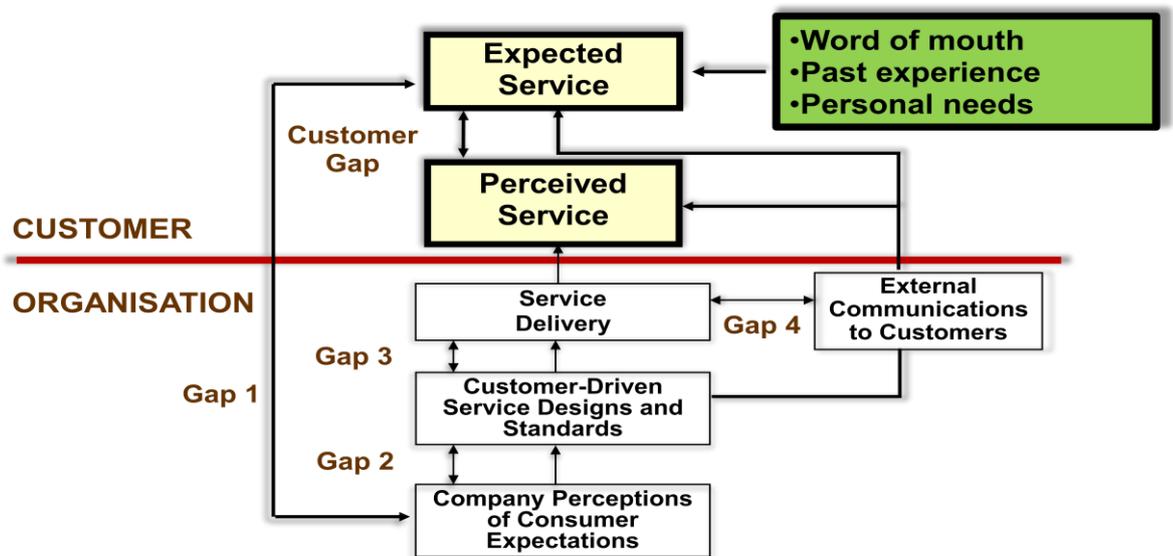


Figure 4. *Gaps Model of Service Quality*. (Zeithaml et al. 2009, 43)

Gaps model introduces the framework for service quality. It illustrates the most critical service quality gap to close, which is the customer 4 gap. This is the difference between the consumer's expectations and perceptions. Thus, this model further gives detailed gaps which occur in organisations, called the provider gaps. There are four of this provider gaps which take full responsibility of the customer gap.

- **Gap 1 (The Knowledge Gap)** entails the perception of organisation in contrast with what the customers expect. Thus, not knowing what customers expect is caused by the lack of adequate marketing research, poor communication between the management and the customers, a shift in focus in building relationship with existing customers to the hunt for new customers and a poor compliant management.

- **Gap 2 (The Service Design and Standards Gap)** is the misinterpretation of customers' expectations which leads to not having the right service designs and standards. It can be caused by poor service design, lack of setting a standard service quality goals and mismanagement of tangibles in line with both customer and staff expectations.
- **Gap 3 (The Service Performance Gap)** specify on the difference between the service quality standard set, and the actual implementation of it which turns out to be a poor delivery. This is caused by deficiencies in human resource department policies, difficulties faced with service intermediaries, sometimes problematic customers and failure to match supply and demand.
- **Gap 4 (The Communication Gap)** describes the difference between performance and the actual promises made by the organisation to the customers. It is mostly caused by poor integrated services marketing communication, ineffective management of customers' expectations, giving high hopes in advertising or personal selling, poor internal communication among management and staff.

As a result of these gaps, the development of several determinants has evolved to assess service quality in organisations. These determinants have been eventually represented into five dimensions namely; Assurance, Empathy, Reliability, Responsiveness and Tangibles.

**Assurance:** This deals with the extent of knowledge and courtesy the staff shows towards customers during service operation and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. This is often concerned with services (banking, medical, legal and so on) that have unpredictable outcome. Such trust and confidence is mostly built in the person that linked the customer to the company. Nevertheless, companies should always ensure to build trusting relationship with their customers.

**Empathy:** This is the manners in which staffs provide services to customers in an approachable, caring and individualized way. Customers are delighted when they receive customised service treatment and to know that they are important and understood by companies they have transactions with. This feeling of recognition has great influence on customer satisfaction and it gives the firm a better competitive advantage.

**Reliability:** This is perceived as the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. These promises could be about delivery, services provision, problem resolution, and pricing. Companies that keep their promises, mainly promises about service outcomes and core service attributes are found attractive to customers. Thus, reliability is an indispensable feature of any organisation as customers always have great expectation on this regards. As long as a company always keeps its promises, trust and confidence is gradually built before clients. For example, personnel that keep to the time frame allotted to deliver service at a given period encourage the development of trust and confidence about the firm in the minds of the customers.

**Responsiveness:** This is the willingness to help customers and to provide just-in-time services. It is essential that an organisation is very attentive and acts promptly when dealing with issues concerning their customers. These issues could be customer request, questions, complaint, and problems. The time period of waiting for assistance, response to questions and resolving problems of customers are very important determinants of responsiveness in an organisation's operation. In order for any organisation to be successful in the dimension of responsiveness, they are advised to always make the opinion of their customers their priority for setting standard of operation and product or services offered.

For an organisation to be highly responsive, they need a well- staffed customer service departments as well as responsive front line people in all contact positions. The responsiveness of an organisation is poor when customers find it very difficult to get through to and organisation on phone or had to wait for the reply of an enquiry e-mail for so many days.

**Tangibles:** This specifies on the representation of service as a physical appearance either in the premises or inside an organization. The physical appearance comes in terms of visible evidences, such as facilities (chairs, equipment and so on), the communication materials, and even the staff within an organization. The physical facilities are often used by mostly new customers to make quality and image assessment. Most service industries (hotels, retail stores and so on) identify tangibles as an essential part in creating service quality strategy. (Zeithaml et al. 2009, 111 - 115)

## **4 RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODS**

### **4.1 Research Problem**

The research is aimed at identifying all possible trendy factors that exchange students consider before choosing a study place abroad. As Savonia UAS Varkaus is the commissioner of this research, it is interested in knowing why exchange students choose its campus as a study place. By looking into the international mobility operation of its institutional partner in Poland, Savonia UAS Varkaus aims to develop its international marketing communication channel. Therefore, with the production of the most effective international marketing communication medium, Savonia targets to enhance and stabilize the rate of in-coming exchange students on Varkaus campus.

#### **The main research question is:**

- What are the main factors that exchange students consider before going abroad to study?

#### **Sub question is:**

- How did exchange students get to know about Savonia UAS Varkaus?
- How would exchange students rate the services of Savonia UAS Varkaus?

### **4.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Approach**

The nature of this thesis work tackles the “why” behind an exchange student’s choice of studying at a particular University outside his/her home country. As there are many unstructured factors affecting both the conscious and unconscious mind of these students, a qualitative research approach is necessary for providing answers to unquantifiable responses expected. A qualitative research handbook written by Denzin and Lincoln (1994, 2), the duo describes qualitative research as a multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life

story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives. The qualitative research approach used in this research consist; observation, group discussion, informal interview and personal experience.

Quantitative research as described by Creswell is “an inquiry approach useful for describing trends and explaining the relationship among variables found in the literature. To conduct this inquiry, the investigator specifies narrow questions, locates or develops instruments to gather data to answer the questions, and analyzes numbers from the instruments using statistics. From results of these analyses, the researcher interprets the data using prior predictions and research studies. The final report, presented in a standard format, displays researcher objectivity and lack of bias.” (Creswell 2002, 58) The use of structured on line questionnaire is used to gather the data for statistical analysis.

As a result, this thesis work requires a mixed research approach. A mixed research approach can simply be defined as the integration of the elements of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Using the mixed research approach provides a more substantial evidence for studying the research problem. It also gives the opportunity of using all tools of data collections which is connected to this research problem. (Creswell 2002, 59)

### **4.3 Description of Participants**

There are two sides to a coin in which both sides complement each other. Thus, in the case of this dissertation, the two sides involved in this research are the HEI representatives of both Universities and likewise their in-coming exchange students. The international coordinators of both Universities are the appropriate personnel to inquire about the institution's policy on exchange programmes. These coordinators remain highly relevant to the validity of this research by providing genuine internal information regarding the prerequisite of accepting exchange students into their Universities and how their welfare is being managed while they are studying at their University. By the means of on line questionnaires, exchange of e-mails and meeting with the international coordinators all the data needed for this research was gathered.

And on the other hand which are the exchange students, the research focuses on knowing their push and pull factors. The push factor as described in the book, *The Dynamics of International Student Circulation in a Global Context* (De Wit et al. 2008) refers to the internal influences that build the motive in an exchange student to choose to study abroad. For example, a student might choose to study abroad due to his/her passion for language skills development or building up self-confidence or even for the purpose of self-discovery. While the pull factor explains the external solutions that best suits their inner needs. These factors attract prospective exchange students to study at a particular higher institution abroad. But on the other hand, the pull factors can as well generate the need in an exchange student due to the power of a carefully studied target market and a strategic marketing plan to influence decisions. For instance, an exchange student might have been fantasizing about a specific country since he/she was a teenager, and on getting to the University, he/she realizes that his/her dream country was available on the list of exchange partner Universities, "what an opportunity!" he/she would exclaim. This is to illustrate how the power of a push factor can influence an exchange student's decision of choosing a University abroad to study. (De Wit et al. 2008)

Thus, the essential part of this research projects on knowing both the internal and external factors that influences the decision of in-coming exchange students to choose their host institution as a study place. The statistical data in table 3 and 4, originally collected at the International relations offices of both Universities indicates the number of both in-coming and out-going students from the academic year 2009/2010 to the autumn/winter semester in 2011.

Table 3. *The exchange study programme activity on Savonia UAS Varkaus campus between 2009 and 2011.*

	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012 (Autumn semester)	Total
<b>In-coming Students</b>	32	16	23	71
<b>Out-going Students</b>	12	7	9	28

Table 4. *The exchange study programme activity at the University of Economics in Katowice between 2009 and 2011.*

	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012 (Autumn semester)	Total
<b>In-coming Students</b>	92	152	78	322
<b>Out-going Students</b>	156	145	64	365

The researcher's choice of using five semesters is made to study the sequence of changes (if any) in the decisions made to study abroad by exchange students. Another reason is to monitor the consistency rate of in-coming exchange students at the University of Economics in Katowice and Savonia UAS, Varkaus. In addition, a large sample group is very efficient for the survey conduction in order to create a reasonable hypothesis for the reasons why exchange students choose to study at a particular institution abroad.

Thus, a total number of 393 in-coming exchange students were targeted as a sample population. Consequently, the diverse nature of the group and their geographical location required the creation of an online questionnaire to be

administered. Nevertheless, more information was gathered from the researcher's personal experience as an exchange student at the University of Economics in Katowice during the winter semester in 2010 and also observations were made during his four months' work placement as a trainee at the International promotion department of UE in Katowice from March 2011 - June 2011.

#### **4.4 Data Collection and Analysis Process**

Building a framework to achieve a quality research data for this case study requires quite much preliminary collection of information. From the researcher's personal experience as an ex-exchange student, a structure of international mobility obstacles was drawn sequentially to generate questions to ask the international coordinators of both Universities. Background questions were asked in order to know the case study HEIs policies covering its international mobility programmes. Information regarding the institution's policy on financial grants, types of mobility programmes available, amount of exchange study places available for both incoming and out-going students, selection criteria for exchange students and how the welfare of exchange students are being managed. The gathering of this internal information was done via the exchange of e-mails, cover letter with a clear introduction to the structured on-line questionnaire (see appendix 1&2), and a face-to-face meeting with one of the international Coordinators.

The next phase of the research commenced with the collection of secondary data to formulate structured questions for the on line questionnaires to be administered to the targeted group of exchange students. Question ideas were gathered from both secondary and primary sources, such as:

- Erasmus exchange student's brochure on Varkaus campus, 2009/2010 autumn semester.
- Guidebook for future exchange students. Thesis report by Johanna Teivainen, 2010.
- International student barometer entry wave 2010.

- Personal experience of the researcher as a tutor for international students on Savonia UAS Varkaus campus, 2009/2010 academic year.
- Personal experience of the researcher as an exchange student at UE in Katowice, 2010/2011 autumn semester.

With the aid of the above mentioned sources, a total number of 20 questions was strategically designed and organised to tackle the research problem. The age group of the participants was considered in the designing of the questionnaire and thus it brought about an unambiguous and interesting questionnaire structure. The survey aimed at gathering information such as; demographics, level of studies prior to exchange programme, reasons for going abroad to study, reasons for choosing a particular University, rating of the host University services, level of interest for staying longer in their host University's country, general satisfactory level of their host University and suggestions for service improvement. (see appendix 4)

Furthermore, a research was made to gather the e-mail addresses of the proposed sample group in order to send them the invitation to fulfil the on line questionnaire. Along the line, some challenges (see research limitations) were faced by the researcher to gather the e-mail addresses of 393 in-coming exchange students of both Universities and these resulted to 320 successfully sent e-mails. Some of the survey invitation was sent to the participants using the researcher's personal e-mail address and his social media network platform (Facebook), in order to aid quick responses from his friends and acquaintances. While other survey invitations were sent through the e-mail addresses of the International Coordinators of both Universities, so as to show the importance and reliability of the questionnaire. The on line questionnaire was made available for the target group on the 19th of October 2011 and a plan was drawn for it to last for a period of 2 weeks with a possibility for an extension of 10 days. This extension period was planned for allowing more time to the sampled group to complete the on line survey.

In addition to the on line survey, a group discussion was arranged with the exchange students on Savonia UAS Varkaus campus to know more about the students, to identify more spectacular reasons on why they have chosen to study at their host University, to know how they find the services of Savonia UAS Varkaus campus after they have spent over half of the Autumn semester and to build up a friendly relationship. After comparing the timetable of the exchange students in

order to find a suitable time, the group discussion was organised on the 4th of November 2011 at 15.30. The researcher arranged for the meeting to be held on the school premises in the “TV room” but due to some challenges (see research limitations) encountered, the meeting was changed to the common room at the student dormitory. The group discussion was created to be in a semi-formal atmosphere in order for the exchange students to feel relaxed and to freely express themselves. Thus, snacks and non-alcoholic drinks were provided as light refreshment for the exchange students.

The sitting arrangement in the common room was made in a circular form whereby the researcher could stand in the middle of the room for the students to see and hear him clearly. Furthermore, the process of the group discussion started with the researcher introducing himself to each of the student in order to know everyone by name which will gradually build trust and a sense of understanding to the participants. The researcher went further to tell the students about his experience as a tutor on Savonia UAS Varkaus campus and to show a short video clip of his exchange study programme at the University of Economics in Katowice. Afterwards, all the participants had the opportunity to share their own experience about the reasons why they have chosen Savonia UAS Varkaus as a study destination, their opinion on the services rendered on the Campus and how they have managed to adjust to their new environment.

The process of the group discussion lasted for approximately two hours and ended with the exchange of contacts (social media network) between the students and the researcher.

#### **4.5 Research Limitations and Response Rate**

It is quite impossible to conduct a well-planned research without a few or many setbacks during the process. These challenges are what make the whole information gathering process interesting and difficult to tackle. Thus, this case study is no exception from encountering several problems during the research process. Firstly, the collection process of the e-mail addresses in order to send the participants an invitation to complete the on line questionnaire was a bit

challenging. This was because some of the students had already graduated and they had stopped using their University's official e-mail address. Therefore, this brought about approximately 19 % reduction of the initially expected 393 e-mail invitation messages to be sent.

Secondly, despite sending the survey invitation by e-mails to some of the respondents via the international coordinators, it still does not prove effective enough as these students were not familiar with the researcher. Therefore some of the respondents did not feel obliged to fulfil the on line survey while some others did because of their familiarity with the researcher. In addition, the vast group of the target participants located in different geographical area around the world makes it quite challenging to guarantee a successful e-mail delivery. There are possibilities that the email sent by the researcher was received as a spam message making it impossible for the participant to fulfil the on line questionnaire. In addition, the questionnaire invitation was sent to the students during the academic session, which was a very busy time for their school activities. As a result, it reduces the chances of getting a high response rate. During the period of when the on line questionnaire was made live on the internet, three reminder e-mails were sent to the sampled group because of the low response rate received.

Thirdly, the researcher sent e-mail messages to the group of exchange students on Savonia UAS Varkaus campus during the autumn term 2011 to invite them for a group discussion scheduled for 28th of October 2011, but none of the students responded to this message. Thus, indicating that they were unavailable for the meeting. Nevertheless, the researcher went further to reschedule another meeting for 4th of November 2011 at 14:00. Prior to this day, the researcher met with some exchange students on the School premises and reminded them of the newly scheduled meeting. In spite of the reminder, the meeting began 90 minutes later and also a change in venue was made due to the students not being aware of the meeting. The researcher was told by one of the exchange students that the students hardly communicate with the University's official e-mailing system. Consequently, making it impossible for most of the students to read the invitation message sent to them.

## **Response Rate**

By the last day of the time period for the on line questionnaire, there were 118 respondents, which is approximately 30 % of the total number (393) of targeted exchange students that attended both the University of Economics in Katowice, Poland and Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Varkaus Finland during the academic year 2009/2010 to the autumn semester in the year 2011. Bearing in mind that 19 % of the total amount of the targeted group was out of reach for the researcher due to invalid contacts causing a failure in the e-mail invitation messages to be delivered.

## **5 RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

### **5.1 Result of the Structured on line Questionnaire**

There were 20 structured on line questions that were arranged in an order to start with quantitative questions and end with qualitative questions which for example is the open ended question. (See appendix 4) The responses received from the on line questionnaire will be presented in details and analysed.

#### **5.1.1 Background Information about the Respondents**

The background information focused in this on line questionnaire is; country of origin, gender, age and host University. The demographics have been gathered to be able to distinguish the variables according to the host Universities of the exchange students and to identify prospective exchange students. These would strengthen and prepare host institutions for a better future market segmentations.

Table 5. Respondents by their country of origin.

Countries	Respondents	Savonia UAS, Varkaus	UE in Katowice
Austria	3	2	1
Belgium	4	3	1
Bulgaria	5	0	5
Colombia	6	0	6
Croatia	3	0	3
Czech Republic	6	4	2
Finland	1	0	1
France	19	3	16
Germany	5	3	2
Greece	2	0	2
Hungary	2	0	2
Italy	1	1	0
Latvia	1	1	0
Lithuania	6	5	1
Netherlands	1	1	0
Poland	1	1	0
Portugal	5	0	5
Romania	12	0	12
Russia	1	1	0
Singapore	1	0	1
Slovakia	5	1	4
Slovenia	2	0	2
South Korea	1	0	1
Spain	17	1	16
Taiwan	3	0	3
Turkey	4	0	4
Ukraine	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>91</b>

The table 5 above shows the number of respondents according to their country of origin. There are a total number of 118 exchange students from 27 different countries that fulfilled the on line questionnaire. Highlighted in the above table are the top countries from where the exchange students come from according to their host Universities. In respective order; France, Spain and Romania are the countries producing the largest amount of out-going exchange students according to the respondents who attend UE in Katowice. These statistics can be considered as valid as the European Commission's Erasmus student mobility statistics shows that in the 2009/2010 academic year, Spain sent the most students abroad with over 31 000 students leaving for another country. They are followed by France, Germany, Italy and Poland supporting the highest number of out-going students. (Erasmus –

Facts, Figures & Trends 2012, 4) Meanwhile majority of exchange students who attended Savonia UAS Varkaus, tend to come from countries such as; Lithuania, Czech Republic, Belgium and Germany.

### Gender of the respondents

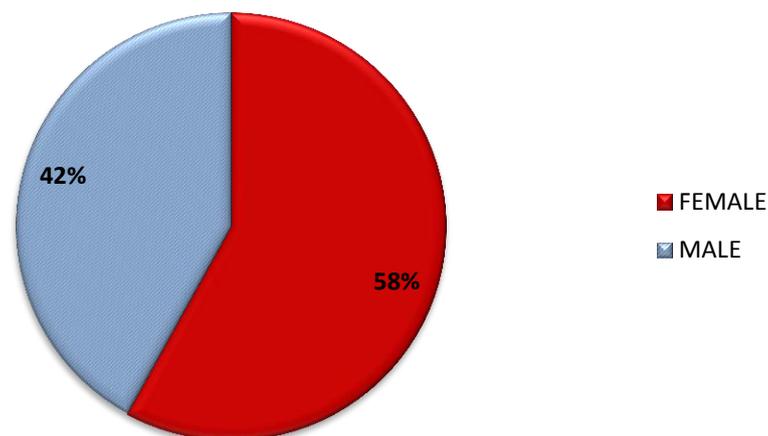


Figure 5. Respondent rate by gender ( $n=118$ ).

Figure 5 indicates that females exchange students represent a larger percentage of the total sampled group with 58 %. While the male exchange students have approximately 42 % of the 118 students that fulfilled the questionnaire. Figure 5 shows in relation to the amount of female and male exchange students that attended both Savonia UAS Varkaus and UE in Katowice, women are better represented in the sampled population than men.

## Age of the respondents

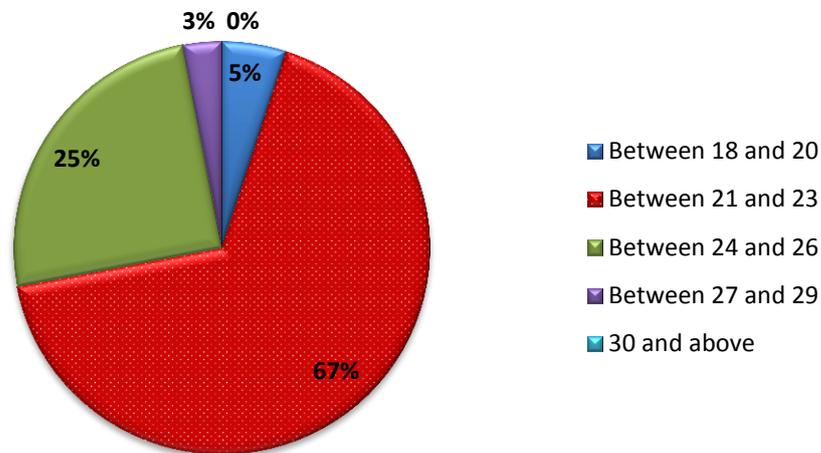


Figure 6. Respondent rate by age ( $n=118$ ).

Figure 6 clearly indicates the majority age group of exchange students. Thus, this is a vital data to help narrow down the focus area for HEI's when targeting possible exchange students. As shown in the figure above, 67 % represent a larger percentage of students within the age range 21 and 23 that participate in exchange programmes abroad. While students from age 27 and above are less likely to go abroad for exchange study programme.

## Host institution of the respondents

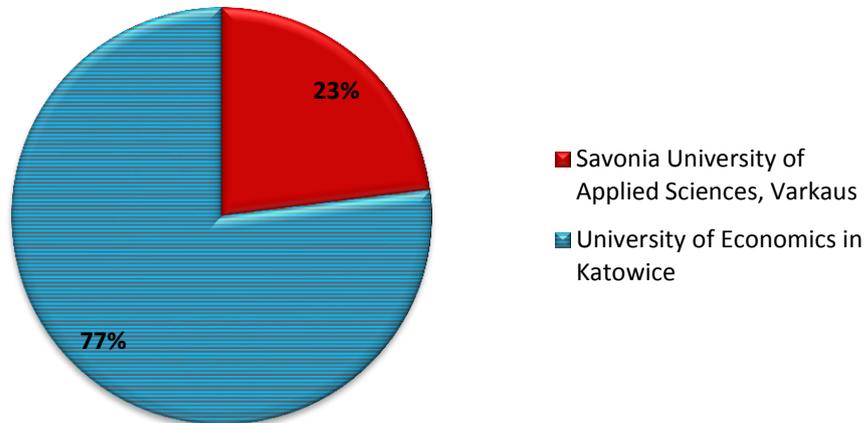


Figure 7. Respondent rate by host University (n=118).

Figure 7 indicates the percentage rate of the respondents according to their host University. A total of 27 exchange students who attended Savonia UAS Varkaus between the academic year 2009/2010 to autumn semester 2011 attempted the on line questionnaire out the targeted group of 71 in-coming exchange students. While 91 in-coming exchange students at UE in Katowice out of 322 targeted sample group fulfilled the on line questionnaire. The table 6 below will give a clearer picture of what has been explained.

Table 6. Respondent rate by their host University.

	Population	Response	Response rate
Savonia UAS Varkaus	71	27	38 %
UE in Katowice	322	91	28.3 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>30 %</b>

Therefore, as shown in table 6 the response rate of exchange students who attended Savonia UAS Varkaus is quite higher than the exchange students at UE in Katowice.

### 5.1.2 Information about the Exchange

#### Exchange programme channel of the respondents

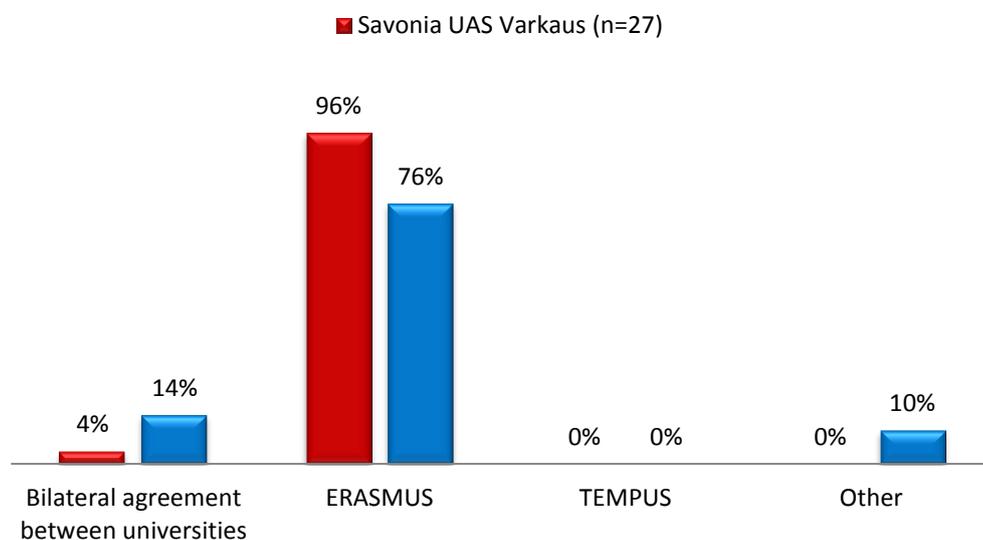


Figure 8. Respondents' exchange study programme platform.

The figure above clearly shows that at both Universities, the most common study exchange programme channel is the ERASMUS, with 80 % of the total number of respondents (118) using the most popular exchange programme platform within the European Union. Although there is a huge gap between the EU funded exchange programme and other study exchange platforms used, the bilateral agreement between Universities is still widely recognised among others (Eucorem, CEEPUS).

## Academic year of the respondents

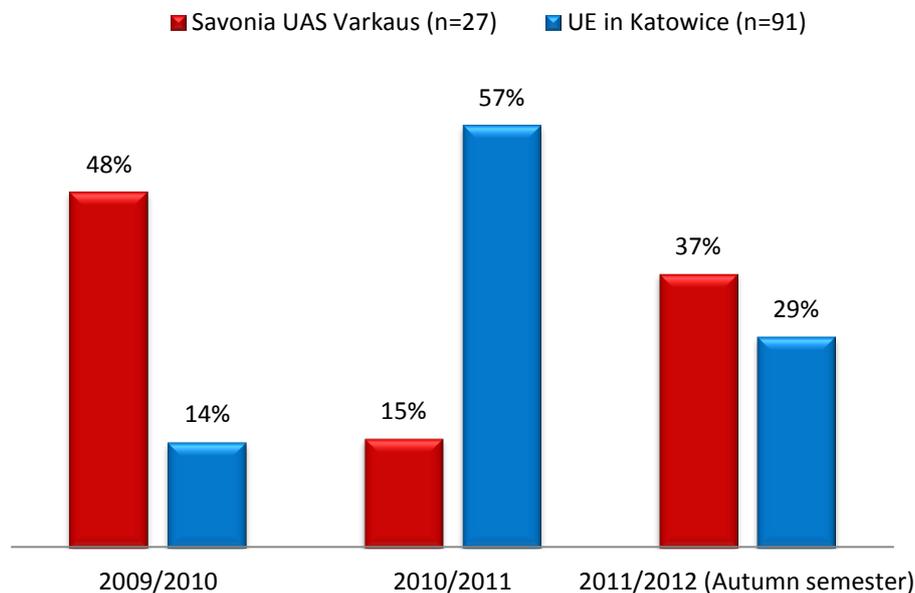


Figure 9. Respondent rate by academic year.

Figure 9 indicates the academic year 2009/2010 as the lowest respondent group of exchange students from UE in Katowice as this group was the most challenging group to reach due to undelivered messages and they had no knowledge about the researcher. In contrast, the highest percentage of respondents from Savonia UAS Varkaus came from the 2009/2010 group as the researcher maintained the communication gap with this group after his voluntary service as one of their tutor. The exchange student group in the academic year 2010/2011 from UE in Katowice recorded the highest response rate because they have had face-to-face contact with the researcher and therefore somewhat felt obliged to fulfil the on line questionnaire. Meanwhile the groups of exchange students from both Universities in the autumn semester in 2011/2012 fared well as some of the exchange students from this group had the opportunity to meet and know more about the researcher.

### Length of exchange period of the respondents

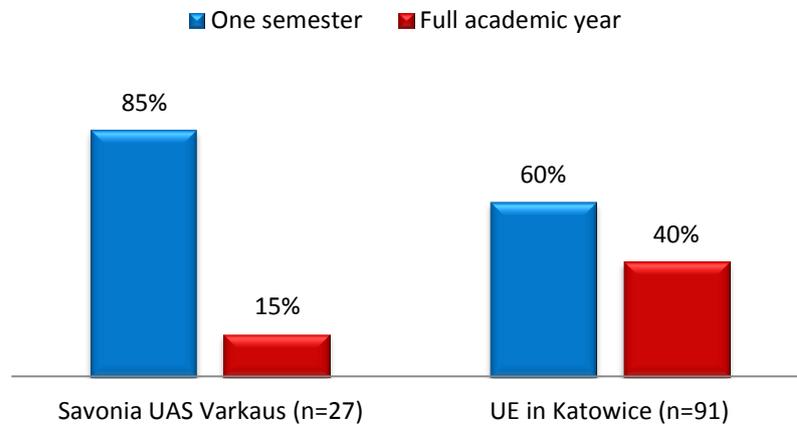


Figure 10. Study time duration of respondents at their host University.

The figure 10 shows how long exchange students choose to study at their host University. More exchange students who study at the University of Economics in Katowice tend to study for a longer period than the exchange students who study at Savonia UAS Varkaus Campus.

### Study area of the respondents

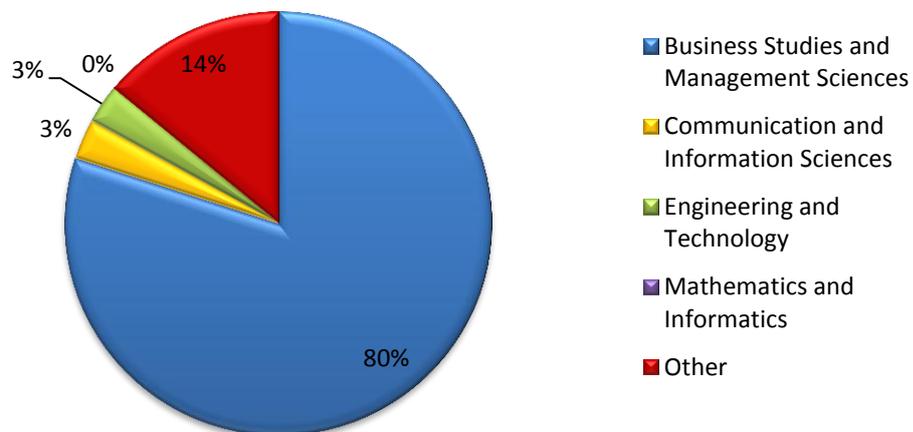


Figure 11. Subject area of studies during exchange period (n=118).

According to figure 11, 80 % of the exchange students who responded to this survey chose to study courses related to business studies and management sciences at their host Universities.

### Study level of the respondents

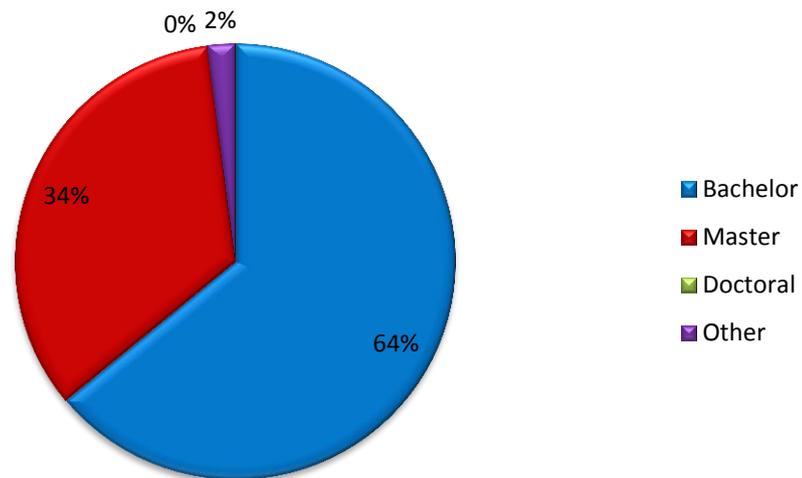


Figure 12. Respondents level of study prior to exchange programme (n=118).

As shown in the figure 12 above the largest percentage of the respondents participated on study exchange programme during their bachelor studies. Nevertheless, out of 34 % of respondents on master's programme, only one student was studying as an exchange student at Savonia UAS, Varkaus. Other master students studied as exchange students at UE in Katowice based on the terms of the masters programme from their home University.

### 5.1.3 Evaluation of the Study Exchange

#### Information channel of the respondents

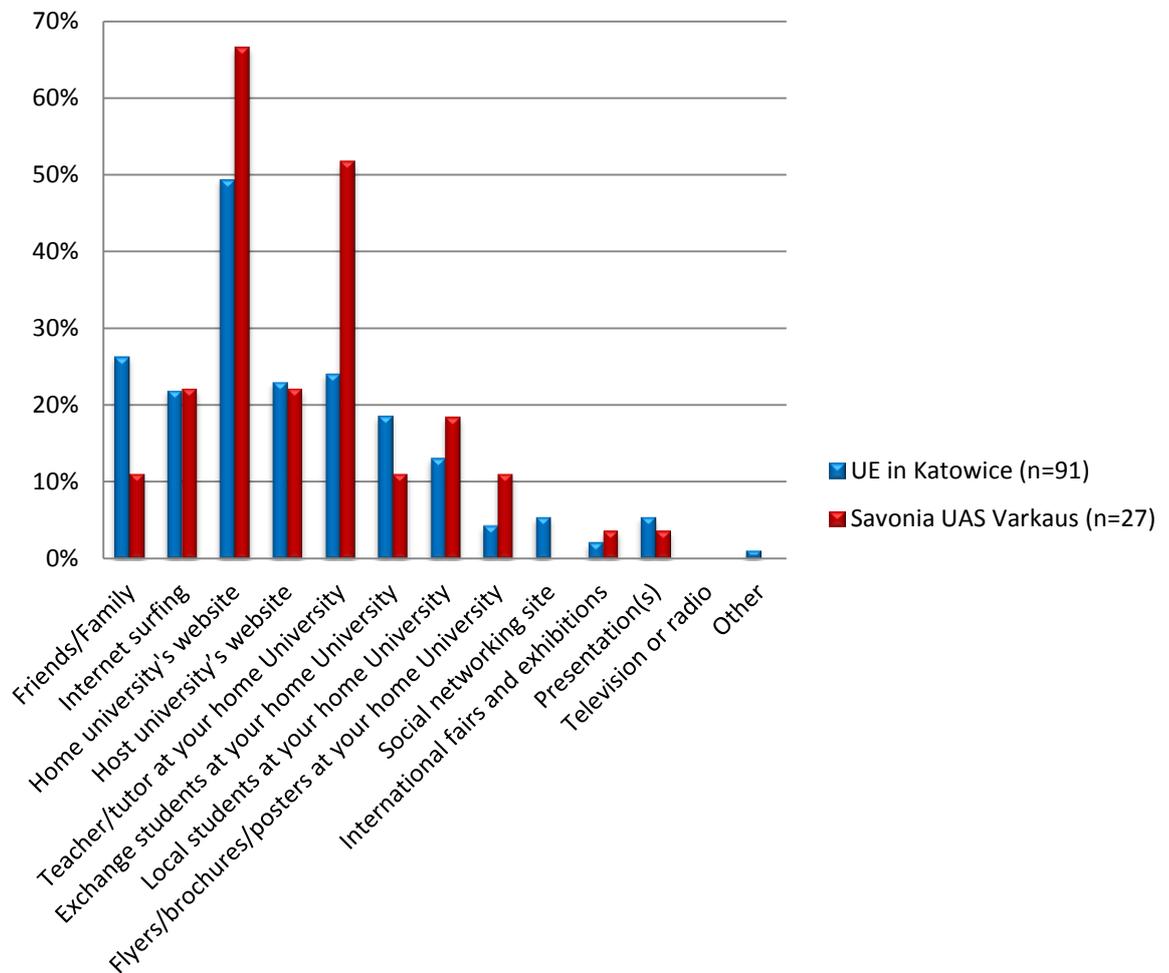


Figure 13. Respondents Information channel about their host University.

Figure 13 above depicts several information passages that conveyed the news about their host University prior to their exchange programme. Some of this information channels (Websites, Exhibitions, Teachers/Tutors) are powered by the host University while others are powered by satisfied individuals (Friends/Family, other exchange students, presentations) who might have heard about or had contacts with the host University. According to the respondents representing both Universities, the most effective way they got to know about their host University is from their home University's website. On the other hand, satisfied individuals who

have had contacts one way or another with the University of Economics in Katowice have being very effective in sharing information about the institution making it the second highest information channel for the 91 exchange students that responded to this survey.

### Reasons to study abroad of the respondents

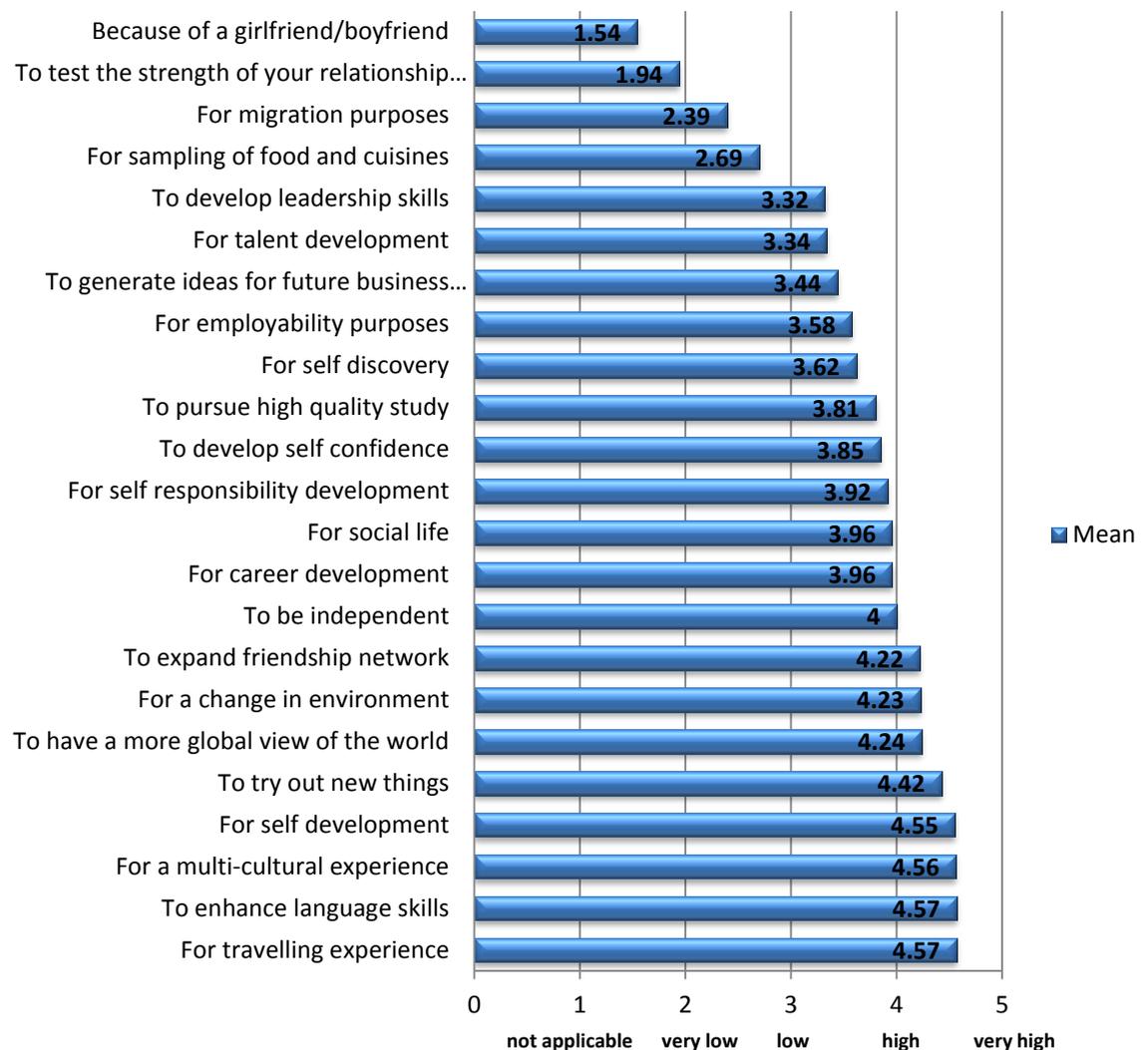


Figure 14. *Reasons to study abroad as an exchange student (n=118).*

The figure 14 above indicates the 23 different reasons which are considered to be highly important motivating factors for potential new generation exchange students

according to several educational research reviewed and the researcher's observation as an exchange student. (See subchapter 4.4) The sampled population were asked to rate their motivating factors for going abroad to study, using the order of scale 1 to 5. (1 = not applicable, 2 = very low, 3 = low, 4 = high, 5 = very high)

Therefore according to the figure 14 the most important reasons for exchange students to study abroad were "for travelling experience" and "to enhance language skills" with the average mean of 4.57 respectively. The other high important reasons are "for a multi-cultural experience", "for self-development", "to try out new things", "to have a more global view of the world", "for a change in environment", "to expand friendship network", and "to be independent". Of the least importance are "because of a girlfriend/boyfriend" and "to test the strength of your relationship with your partner". The researcher has not given a separate analysis for the two respondents groups in this question because the initial reason to go abroad for studies is common to the students within the sampled population. Therefore, for any differences to be made it will be in their choice of study destination.

At this stage it is worth mentioning that the use of ordinal scale is to give an order for the variables used in figure 14 and it may not give the exact measurement of the responses received. (Rodger 2004) Nevertheless, it is required to verify figure 14 by showing the actual percentage rates of the variables according to the number of respondents.

Table 7. Top 23 reasons for exchange students to study abroad (n=118).

	Variables	1 - Not applicable	2 - Very low	3 - Low	4 - High	5 - Very high
1.	for travelling experience	1%	0%	7%	26%	66%
2.	for a multi-cultural experience	1%	0%	7%	27%	65%
3.	to enhance language skills	0%	1%	6%	29%	64%
4.	for self-development	1%	1%	3%	33%	62%
5.	to try out new things	1%	2%	7%	34%	56%
6.	for a change in environment	4%	1%	11%	36%	48%
7.	to have a more global view of the world	2%	3%	10%	39%	46%
8.	to expand friendship network	0%	2%	14%	44%	40%
9.	to be independent	4%	6%	14%	38%	38%
10.	for career development	5%	3%	18%	38%	36%
11.	for social life	2%	6%	20%	39%	33%
12.	for self-responsibility development	2%	7%	21%	39%	31%
13.	to develop self confidence	4%	6%	20%	40%	30%
14.	to pursue high quality study	4%	7%	22%	38%	29%
15.	for self-discovery	6%	15%	16%	34%	29%
16.	for employability purposes	3%	9%	33%	36%	19%
17.	for talent development	8%	12%	37%	25%	18%
18.	to develop leadership skills	8%	10%	42%	22%	18%
19.	to generate ideas for future business purposes	5%	7%	39%	37%	12%
20.	for sampling of food and cuisines	21%	19%	37%	15%	8%
21.	for migration purposes	36%	17%	25%	14%	8%
22.	to test the strength of your relationship with your partner	59%	12%	11%	11%	7%
23.	because of a girlfriend/boyfriend	73%	14%	5%	3%	5%

Table 7 indicates the top 23 reasons why the respondents chose to go abroad for studies. Variables such as “travelling experience”, “multi-cultural experience”, “enhancement of language skills”, “self-development” and “willingness to try out new things” top the list of factors why the sampled population chose to go abroad for studies. Thus, the mean showed in figure 14 is relatively similar and can be considered as a valid scale of measurement since there are equal distances between each rank.

Furthermore, there were other motivational reasons for going abroad to study mentioned by the respondents; there were only 7 answers to this question:

- 1) “To have a better purchasing power.”

- 2) "To live a new experience in a new environment away from home."
- 3) "I'm Spanish, and just 24 years old, so I didn't know how Spain was during the first years in EU. Living in Poland I could know how could be the beginning in my country."
- 4) "To check the former country of my family."
- 5) "Since my childhood, I'm interested at Finland culture and it was a very good opportunity to come here for my Erasmus."
- 6) "To enjoy my year, make more parties without stopping to study :) To break the routine."
- 7) "Of course, I've ever been interested to visit countries from northern Europe. Especially Finland is well known for its education system. At least since the pisa-studies everybody knows it. Sadly the level of study is def. not that high like in Germany. I really love the landscape of Finland. It isn't spectacular but every lake has its own character."

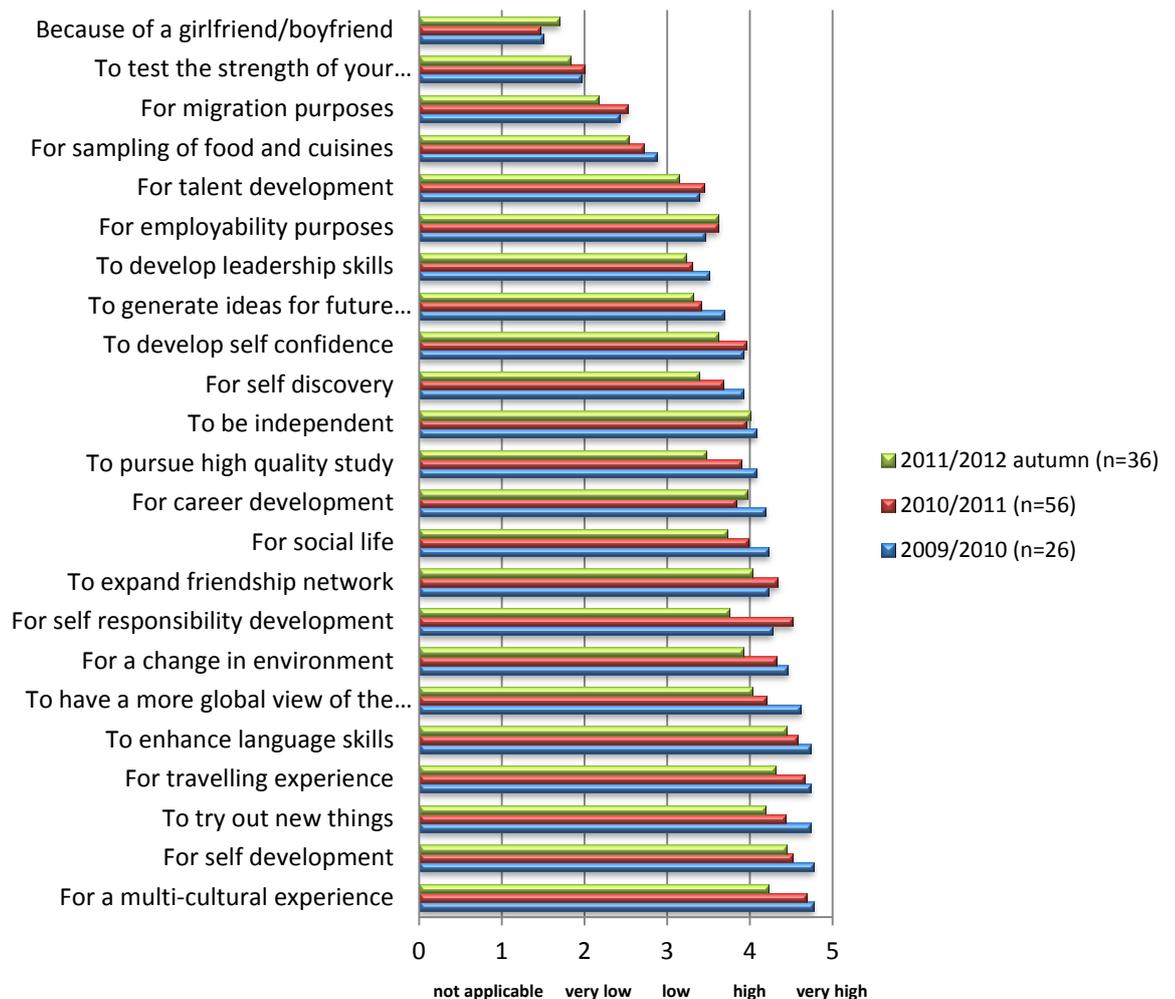


Figure 15. *Reasons to study abroad as an exchange student by academic year.*

As shown in figure 15, within three academic years there has been some slight consistency in the priority list of reasons to study abroad as an exchange student. Nevertheless, there are some growths observed in the least important reasons to study abroad. In the academic year 2009/2010, the number one reason for studying abroad was the same for the respondent group in 2010/2011. However a change occurred in the autumn semester of academic year 2011/2012, as the respondents chose “for self-development” as their most important reason for studying abroad. On the other hand the variable; “for a multi-cultural experience” slipped down to the fourth spot on the list of top reasons for studying abroad as an exchange student.

The following figures 16 and 17 will indicate 28 various reasons why the sampled population chose their host University as their study destination. In this regard, the first figure (figure 16) will show the responses received from Savonia UAS Varkaus Campus exchange students between the year 2009 and 2011 autumn semester. Figure 17 will show the responses received from the second group of exchange students that studied at the University of Economics in Katowice between the year 2009 and 2011 autumn semester. Using scale 1 to 5 (1 = not applicable, 2 = very low, 3 = low, 4 = high, 5 = very high), the sampled population rated the importance of the variables applicable to them.

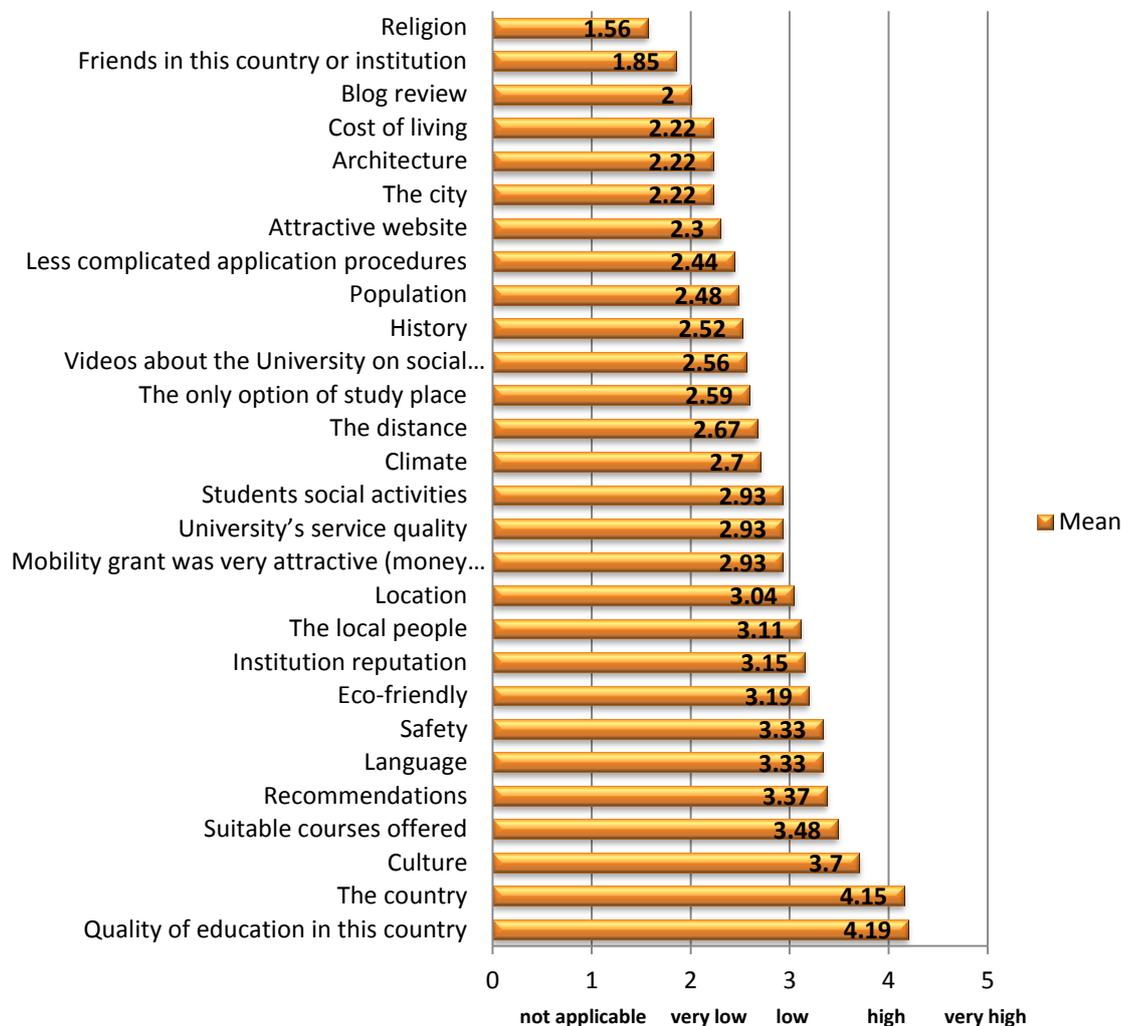


Figure 16. *Reasons to study at Savonia UAS Varkaus Campus (n=27).*

The figure 16 shows the most important reasons why the respondents chose to study at Savonia UAS Varkaus Campus. As indicated in the figure above, the variables of high importance are “quality of education in this country” and “the country”. In contrast, the least importance considered are “religion” and “friends in this country or institution”.

Nevertheless, the respondents had a few other reasons mentioned which are:

- 1) “Because that was mostly only option where I could go together with my friend.”
- 2) “I expected a high challenge for myself from the finish education system.”

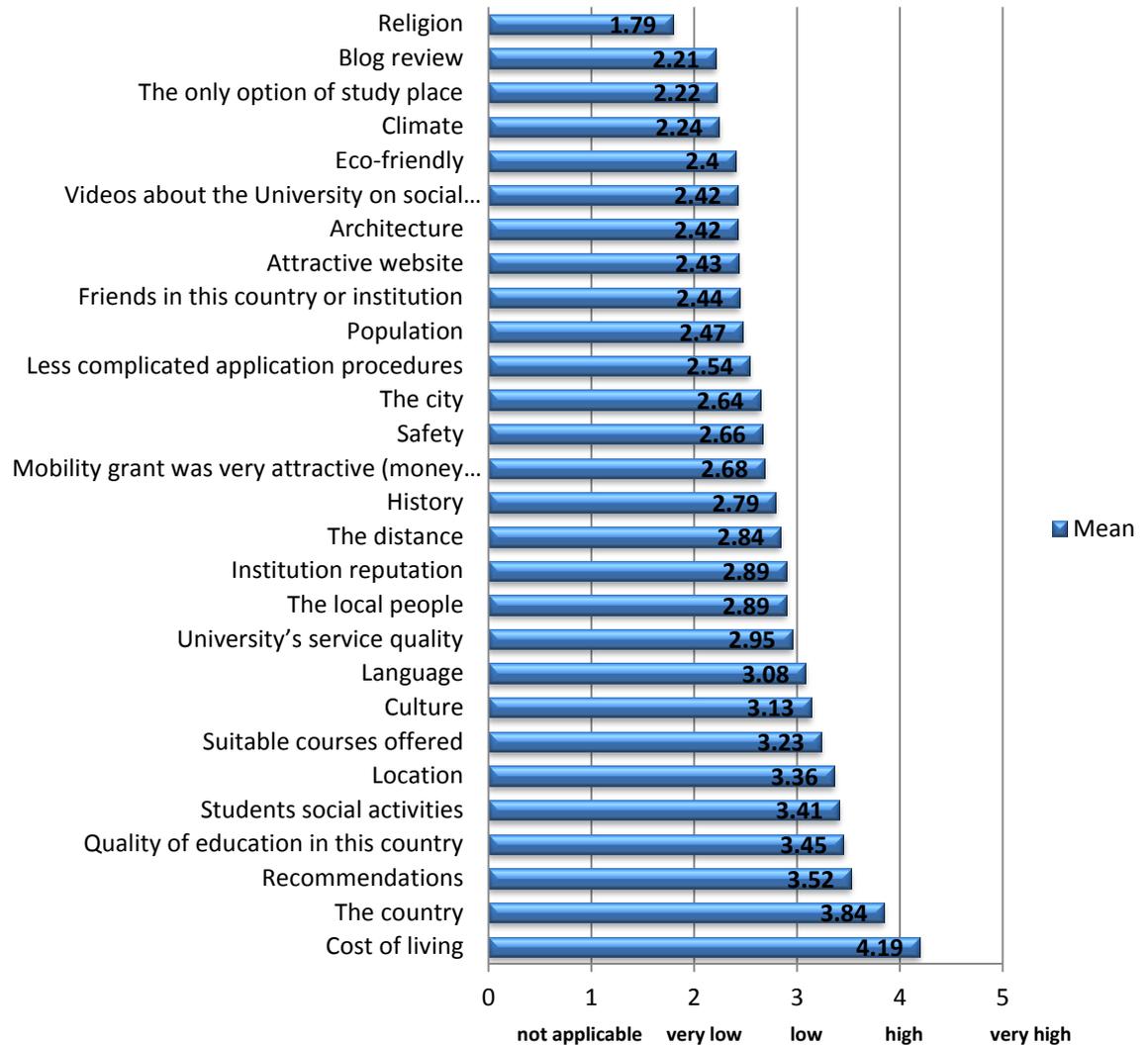


Figure 17. *Reasons to study at the University of Economics in Katowice (n=91).*

In the figure 17 for exchange students who studied at UE in Katowice gave a high importance rating for the variable “cost of living”. On the other hand, the respondents indicated “religion” as the least importance variable.

Furthermore, a few respondents mentioned other reasons for choosing to study at UE in Katowice:

- 1) “I did not choose the host Universities. Those were the terms of the Master’s Program.”
- 2) “My home University’s international exchange programme application procedure is such that I choose five Universities and which one I am posted

to depends on how my University's Office of International Relations sorts all the applications. So this University was one of, but not my top choice.”

- 3) “A good location to travel all Europe, the cost of living and a place where everybody who do Erasmus likes.”
- 4) “English Learning ... for a Spanish guy, the language is so important”
- 5) “My budget also (not only according to the grants)”

As a result of the responses received the two respondents groups; exchange students of Savonia UAS Varkaus and UE in Katowice have a very distinctive perspective of choosing their host University as a study destination. For exchange students choosing to study in Katowice, the standard of living in Poland is considered as a top priority unlike their mates who choose to study in Varkaus based on the quality of education in Finland among many other decision making factors. To consider looking on figure 16 and 17 we would see that what is considered as a top reason for exchange students in Katowice is seen among the lowest reasons for exchange students who study in Varkaus. Meanwhile, the top reason for Savonia UAS Varkaus exchange students which is the quality of education in Finland can be found among the top 4 reasons for exchange students who choose to study at UE in Katowice. Thus, in the later part of this chapter we would be able to identify if the top expectation/reason of the exchange students for choosing to study in either Varkaus or Katowice was met.

## Overall satisfactory level of the respondents

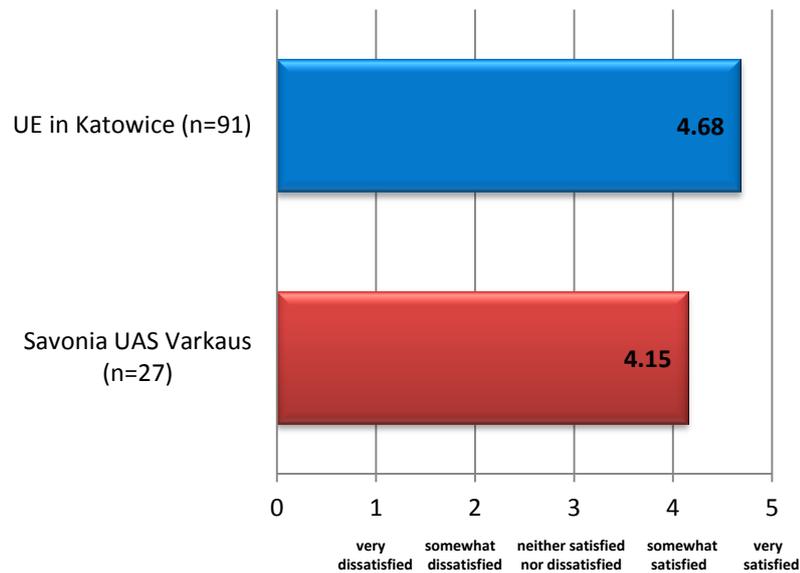


Figure 18. *Satisfactory level of exchange students by their host University.*

The figure 17 above shows the level of overall satisfaction of the exchange students during their exchange study programme at their host University. Using the scale of 1 to 5 (1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = somewhat dissatisfied, 3 = neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4 = somewhat satisfied, 5 = very satisfied), the respondents rated their overall satisfactory level. According to the responses, the average mean of responses of exchange students at UE in Katowice shows that they are more satisfied with their programme at the institution having 4.68 than exchange students who studied at Savonia UAS Varkaus.

Furthermore, the exchange students were asked to justify their rating by shortly explaining why they chose a particular satisfactory level. Thus, the responses gotten are as follows:

### a) Responses from exchange students at Savonia UAS Varkaus (n=13):

- 1) "Because thanks to the exchange programme I made my dream of studying abroad come true. I built some new relationships that last till now, I visited a lot of new places and I met my future husband :\*"

- 2) "The level of studies, the teachers were so interesting. I learnt so much there!"
- 3) "I was happy about my Erasmus because we were a funny Erasmus group but we weren't lucky about the location of our University. Varkaus is a city a few dead for young people who want to move all the time and know a lot of thing."
- 4) "Because of the other Erasmus student and student activity."
- 5) "It was the best choice in my (student) life. I met a lot of interesting people - both local people and other exchange and we still keep in touch with lot of them. I improved my English a lot - I am not so afraid to say something (even bad) like before. I could experience different attitude to study, different cultures, food, and people. In any way it was great enrichment of my life! Everybody should go!"
- 6) "Suitable courses, perfect lectures and teachers, new knowledge."
- 7) "I've got everything what I expected from the programme."
- 8) "It's great to meet so many new people away from home. I like to travel and have lots of opportunities to do so. Finland is a country to where I probably wouldn't have come for holidays."
- 9) "There were amazing people, nature, culture."
- 10) "Because it was a new experience not only for new way to study, but also it gave to me a lot of experience of living."
- 11) "First time when I arrived no one didn't wait for me so by myself in strange city I try to find dormitory."
- 12) "I have new friends from all over the world and I had a chance to know new system of learning. I improved my language a lot. I have got the best experiences of my life."
- 13) "The level of education is low. In accordance to my home country the stuff we get taught here in a 4th year course is the same like in my country in a 1st year course. A lot of those contents are ignored in my country because of

their weaknesses. I expected a challenge and got today 3 credits for making a few kids dancing.”

**b) Responses from exchange students at UE in Katowice (n=38):**

- 1) “Beautiful year abroad, I've met new friends, visit new cities and improve my English skills.”
- 2) “I think my level of satisfaction is so high because thanks to the Erasmus I have had the opportunity to live in another country, experience another culture, living in a closer way the history of this country and its people, and get used to living in a climate different for me. I had also the chance to travel to other countries, to improve my English and to learn more about myself and my adaptability and sociability. The fact of studying at another University has been very interesting too. But I honestly think the best thing about making an exchange is the people you meet, everything that people from another countries and your own brings you, the multicultural experience; the fact of being around people from different countries, with different languages, and with their own different individual experience, and sharing all with you has been amazing. I have been so lucky to do my exchange in a country that I love, with people from the ESN that has really helped us from the beginning and has organized many activities, and with a group of exchange people who were fantastic. I recommend everybody to make an exchange, especially in a country that it is somehow different from yours because it offers the possibility to learn more in every way.”
- 3) “Because it was all that I was expecting and more.”
- 4) “It was a really cool experience, I discovered myself put in a range of situations I wouldn't have faced if I remained in Romania. I broadened my views, I understood way Romania is where it is.”
- 5) “Because I went with two other colleagues of my University and in my opinion, I would have a better experience if I went by myself, and because I only went for one semester, and it was the spring semester.”

- 6) "I didn't enjoy it as much as most people do, but it was still a good experience to live overseas on my own and to have contact with different people and cultures."
- 7) "Was the best experience in my life."
- 8) "It was an amazing experience, and I miss already my Erasmus. Everyone should go and enjoy."
- 9) "Because I think that it was the best experience in my life."
- 10) "Beside the small problems (that I have already forgotten) I loved my exchange and at that time I fell in love with Poland."
- 11) "I have to come back ... I think we would have to do some exchange year more, because just one year is very poor! Lol"
- 12) "Because I just have 1 month here and in 3 study weeks, I have lost 2 classes because the teacher there wasn't in the classroom. But in general the education is good, is total different to Colombia, his methods, evaluation, teachers, Campus, etc; I think that I have to know and learn more in this 4 months and I think that maybe, I will be very satisfied."
- 13) "It was a wonderful experience."
- 14) "Because the University level of study is higher than I expected, living in the dormitory is so exiting, I made new friends from different countries and generally I love to be here in Poland. I must admit that I'm little bit disappointed of the city."
- 15) "This was the best year in my student's life! I met new friends, meet new cultures, traditions. Had a great time and parties :) I liked the courses that I took, it was very interesting, the lecturers were very good and they represent the information in the most interesting way :)"
- 16) "Because of everything I experienced during my exchange period and all amazing people I met."
- 17) "Because I met a lot of interesting people. I had a great living experience in Poland including all prospects of the culture of one country - architecture,

history, food, drinks...Etc. The University gave us a good level of educations and I practised a lot my English. The whole experience was full with joy - a lot of parties and the same time knowledge - for myself like a person and for the other nations that I met there. I consider that kind of experience very helpful and important for every person who wants to discover his/her self and also wants to learn how to communicate and to live with people from all over the world.”

- 18)“I improve a lot my English language, I met very nice people (inhabitants and other Erasmus student), and I enjoyed a lot.”
- 19)“It was well organized, with a lot of activities, i met a lot of people from different countries, and I improved my English.”
- 20)“Very good experience, we were well welcomed by the polish student, it was very friendly with polish students, with Erasmus students, and the studies were not as hard as in France :)”
- 21)“Because I met some amazing friends from all over Europe and I had the opportunity to travel all around Eastern Europe. It was an incredible year that I will never forget!!!”
- 22)“Discovered new teaching approaches, learn by more practical team projects.”
- 23)“I have achieved my personal goals, I have practiced English, I knew new cultures, not only the polish one, I met new people, I have wonderful friendship links now and I could discover new places in Europe.”
- 24)“Because I have met myriads of people, I have improved my English and I have travelled a lot.”
- 25)“I had a great time, meet a lot of interesting people, belonging to different cultures. I`ve seen a lot of places, experienced a lot of new things, I had the opportunity to experience a new educational system.”
- 26)“The foreign students were great, it's was incredible to meet so many people from all over the world. I had higher expectations regarding the University and the teachers. The courses were not very hard and I would have

expected to have more difficult tasks. Also, the local people in Katowice were not very friendly with foreigners so that was a shortcoming.”

- 27)“I discovered new lifestyle, met new people with different opinions -helped me get broader perspective in academic /personal life; experienced country specific activities -sauna, polish-specific nightlife; made new contacts in a new country.”
- 28)“Because it was the best year of my life, not only academic but also in my personal life, meeting very nice people from everywhere, good friends for ever, and I have known lot of new places, cities and customs. Everything was perfect.”
- 29)“Because it was much better than I had even thought in all levels. It was a once in a lifetime experience.”
- 30)“I met great people from everywhere in Europe or Asia, some of them I know I’ll keep contact with. I discovered a new language and opportunities to see the world differently and from other historical background. I gained in maturity and I get to know myself better.”
- 31)“I feel that way because it was the first time that I studied abroad and it was a very great experience!”
- 32)“It is exciting to live in a different country, for me especially, because it is my first time going abroad. I like the multicultural environment I live in. A lot of new facts and curiosities about the different countries have revealed to me. Almost everyone from the Erasmus program is open-minded young person and it is always useful and enjoyable to communicate with this type of people. We all want to travel around and we do it. And the time we spend together is always great and unforgettable! Besides I improve significantly my language and communication skills. In my point of view Erasmus is a unique and valuable experience and it will be the best period of my student years.”
- 33)“Many courses have been removed, I haven't the lessons that I chose before my left.”
- 34)“It was a cool experience, I would like to do it again.”

35)“I found what I expected.”

36)“I could meet many friends from diverse countries and travel was so easy due to location and people were kind.”

37)“I have met great people from numerous countries during my exchange study programme. I have learnt a lot about their culture. I am sure that I have found friends for life. I lived an unforgettable experience for one year. That's why I am very satisfied. Thanks to ESN, we did many things with Erasmus students. The atmosphere was PERFECT. We were lucky to be welcome like that. In addition, I liked living in Poland. It is really different country and culture in comparison of my country. Katowice has also an important history. This country has a lot to offer. There are many things to discover, life is cheap there ( food, mountains, history, sea, borders...) I also improve a lot my English (even if I still make stupid mistakes ! :D ). That's an important point! I wanted to practise English and I DID all day long. However, the only negative point is about studies in the University. I was disappointed about courses. The level was not high as I expected for a master degree's. I didn't learn a lot. I already knew all I had seen during the class in France and some teachers were not involved.”

38)“It has been an amazing experience.”

## Satisfactory level for mobility grant by the respondents

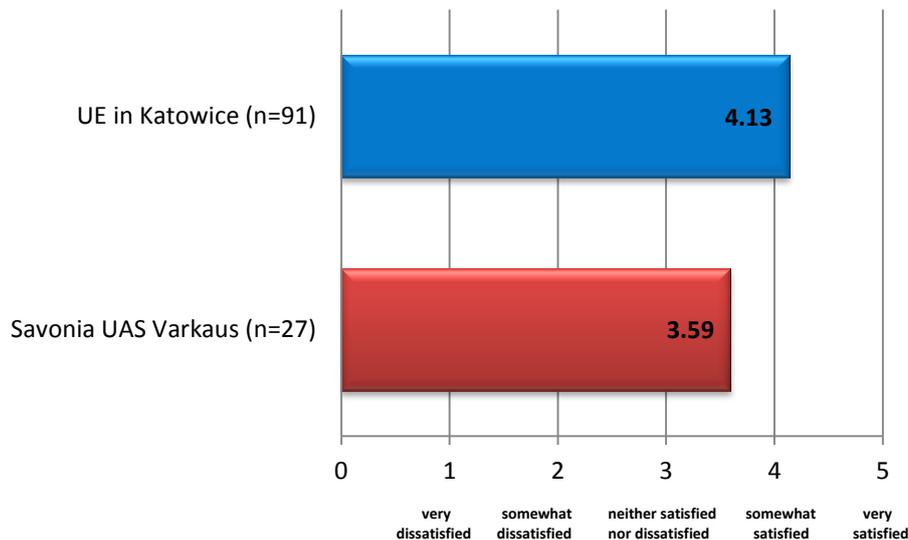


Figure 19. Satisfactory level of mobility grant received for exchange programme.

In figure 18, using the scale of 1 to 5 (1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = somewhat dissatisfied, 3 = neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4 = somewhat satisfied, 5 = very satisfied), the respondents rated their satisfactory level for the mobility grant they received in support for their exchange study at their various host Universities. The average mean of responses received from exchange student at UE in Katowice shows a high level of satisfaction with the average of 4.13. On the other hand which is slightly lower is an average number of 3.59 rating by exchange students who studied at Savonia UAS Varkaus.

In addition, the exchange students were asked to justify their rating by shortly explaining why they chose a particular variable. Thus, the responses gotten are as follows:

### a) Responses from exchange students at Savonia UAS Varkaus (n=10):

- 1) "Because the money I was given was enough to pay for the place in student dormitory and for the food. That means that my basic needs were covered. After coming back home I was given some extra money from my home University. That was a nice surprise :)"

- 2) "The life cost in Finland is higher than the other country in Europe. We didn't get enough for our Erasmus."
- 3) "The grant was high enough to pay apartment and food and that was important most. It was not one of the most important things in this case."
- 4) "It does not even cover living cost. Anyway, it was worth of it."
- 5) "It was enough to cover living and traveling expenses."
- 6) "Varkaus is kind of in the middle of nowhere. With no car here it's hard to get around."
- 7) "The grant was high enough so I could pay a rent and food. Without that I could not afford to study abroad."
- 8) "If I have more money, I could travel more."
- 9) "It was enough for the necessary expenses like rent, food, but not enough for entertainments."
- 10) "It is necessary to be mobile. I don't have a car here in Varkaus and that decrease the possibilities to travel around, or go to buy the food u'll need."

**b) Responses from exchange students at UE in Katowice (n=36):**

- 1) "It was ok, but I didn't feel like Rockefeller."
- 2) "I earn enough to pay my rent, buy food, parties and travelling."
- 3) "I hadn't a good mobility grant, so I can't say that I'm satisfied with it."
- 4) "Because of the organisation of the Master's program, we got the grants a lot later than expected, and the sum of it, 1500 EUR/semester, is not enough for more than 5 months of studies in a foreign country."
- 5) "In France, it was far from enough but in Poland, the 1500 euro I received was perfect for a good life."
- 6) "Did not have one."
- 7) "Because I enjoyed my time there and learnt a lot of new things."

- 8) "I don't received grant by my country, I just received a support of 50 % in the host."
- 9) "I think the monetary amount was enough to pay my stay in the country."
- 10) "My year was perfect, although just one year was so poor."
- 11) "It was Ok, but always could be more :) It was enough for rent, transport expenses and a little bit of the living cost."
- 12) "Like Spanish, we have good luck for the grant that we have to be living in Poland. I think is enough to make your normal student life, with this grant I could cover all my necessities and even I come back with a little bit of the money."
- 13) "Neither too much, nor too little."
- 14) "The life in Poland is not expensive. The point is that out home University gave us not enough money. Amount like 250 euros per month is enough I think :)"
- 15) "They didn't pay the amount at the beginning of the Erasmus period. And this amount was okay for Poland but not enough for other countries."
- 16) "It's enough for the basic spending."
- 17) "We had a good grant from our University, especially for our master."
- 18) "I think that is unfair to receive different level grant according to the country you come from."
- 19) "We got never enough grant to study."
- 20) "Because it made me think differently about the world :)"
- 21) "It was enough to pay our rent and for food, and even to have some trips (even if my parents also sustained me)"
- 22) "It fulfilled what I was looking for. However, some details could be better"
- 23) "Because I have had the time of my life in Katowice <3"

- 24) "It was satisfactory for my level of spending; it covered most of the basic things related to my life style."
- 25) "For Poland the grant I had (350 Euros) was enough for living expenses so I can't complaint. It is not an expensive country and the prices, especially for food were accessible. Of course, if you want to travel you need more money."
- 26) "Erasmus offers good support if you visit a non-euro currency country."
- 27) "Because the money was enough to cover the 80 % or more of the monthly expenses."
- 28) "Was a good experience, I learned a lot and I do not regret anything."
- 29) "I feel that way because it helped me to pay everything (flat, food, etc)"
- 30) "The money grant is enough to pay for the dormitory, which is a significant amount, and to live a modest life. But, of course, we are young people who want to have fun at some time. Besides we want to travel and to see and try new things. And if we want to do it, we cannot rely only on the money we receive."
- 31) "Because the University, teachers, team of international promotional office and international office, country, culture etc. Everything was great."
- 32) "I'll have the grants 2 months after the start of the courses, so I have to use my own money."
- 33) "I like the studying program and I think this experience will be very good for my career development."
- 34) "No scholarship and expensive dormitory fee."
- 35) "Only 100€ per month wasn't enough."
- 36) "I am okay because I worked at the same time during my study. I could live with grant and salary. Only the mobility grant wouldn't have been enough."

### 5.1.4 Institution's Service Rating by Respondents

The sampled populations were given 17 different aspects of services connected to their host University. These respondents were asked to rate the services in order of scale 1 to 5. (1 = not applicable, 2 = poor, 3 = average, 4 = good, 5 = very good)

#### Savonia UAS Varkaus service rating

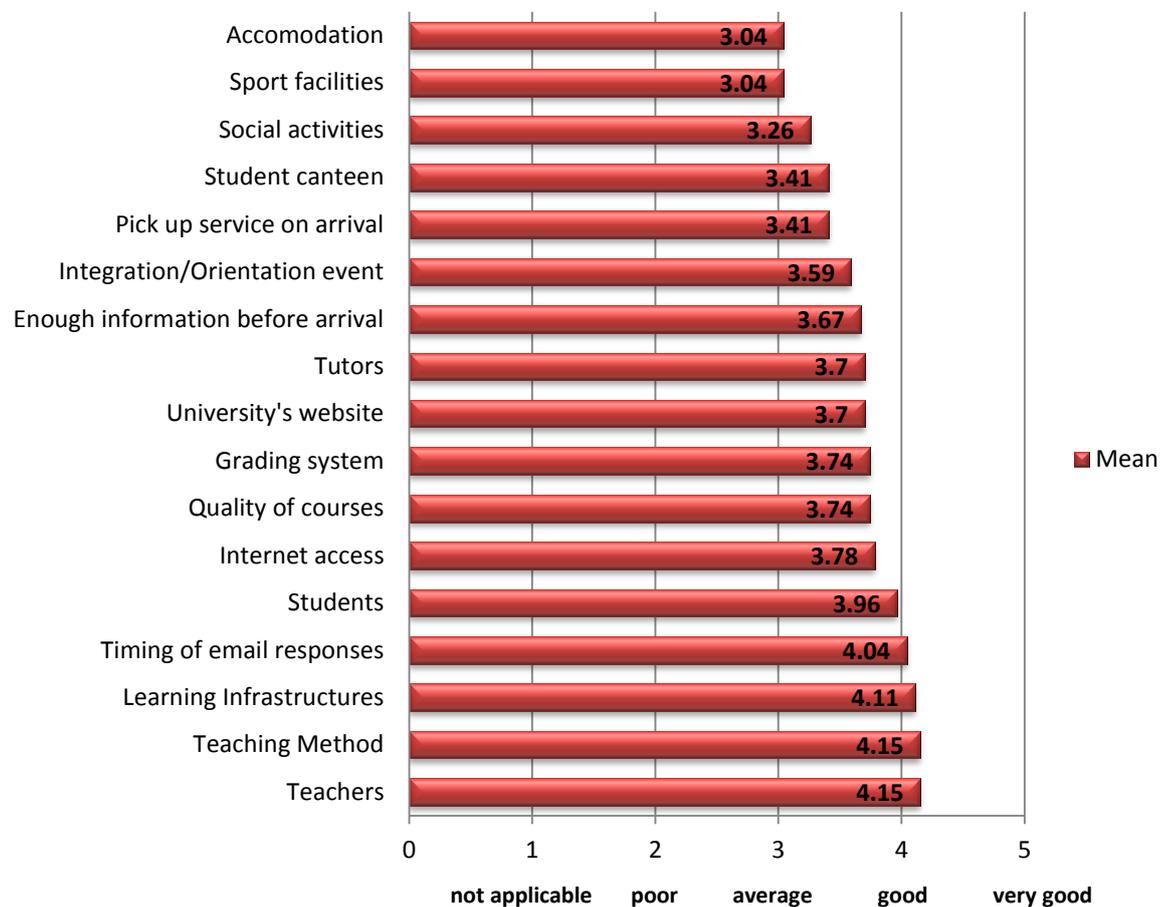


Figure 20. Service ratings by exchange students at Savonia UAS Varkaus (n=27).

In the figure 19 exchange students at Savonia UAS Varkaus rated “teachers”, “teaching method”, “learning infrastructures” and “timing of email responses” as good services encountered during their study programme. Meanwhile all other

service variable provided for them was rated on the average with “social activities”, “sport facilities” and “accommodation” listed as their least satisfactory.

### UE in Katowice service rating

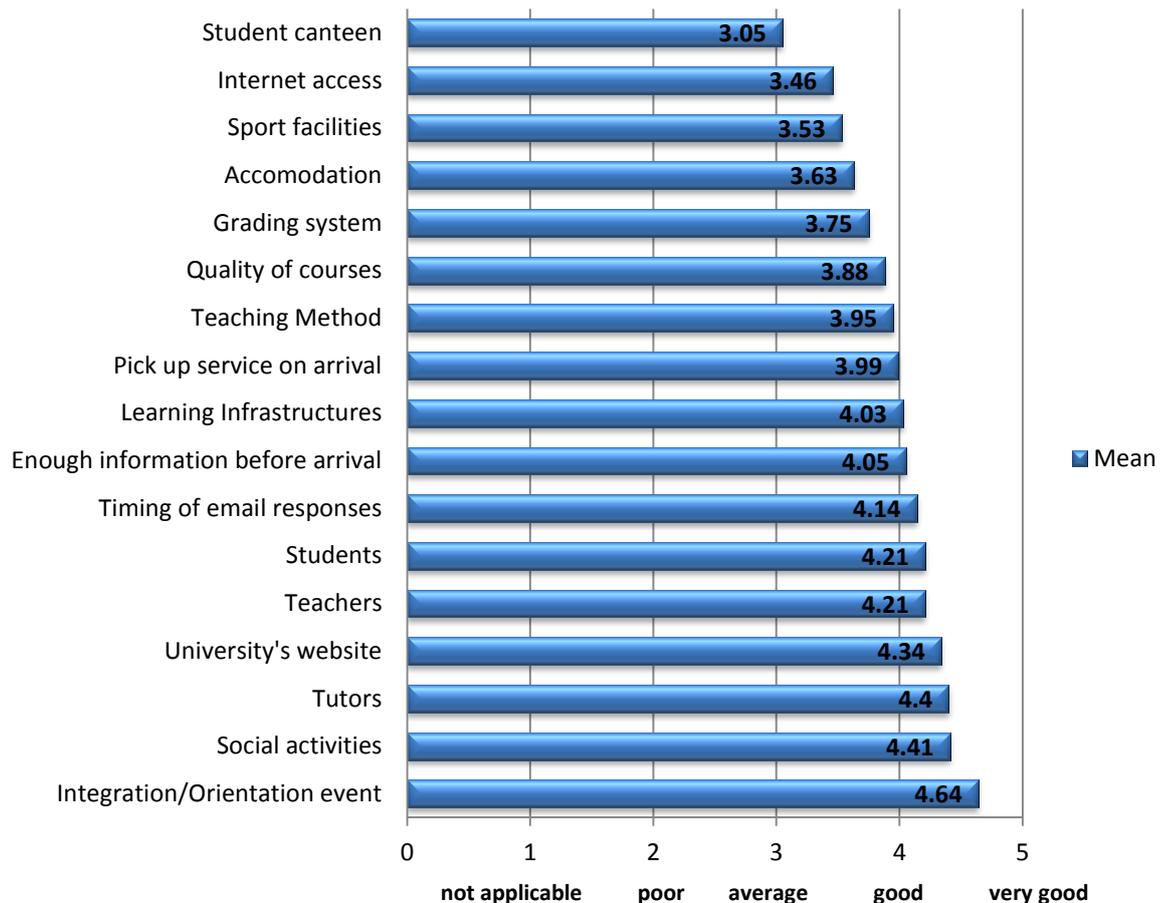


Figure 21. Service ratings by exchange students at UE in Katowice (n=91).

As the figure 20 indicates, the respondents who studied at UE in Katowice rated the majority of the services rendered to them by their host institution as good. The most satisfactory service was “integration/orientation event” with the average mean of 4.64, while the least satisfactory service was “student canteen” with the average mean of 3.05.

Figure 19 and 20 indicates the differences in the two respondents groups as exchange students from Savonia Varkaus Campus find the services offered by the teachers most satisfactory and at the other end in Katowice, exchange students find the integration event organised by their host University as the most satisfactory service. Nevertheless, exchange students from Katowice also rated the service received from their teachers as “good” while the orientation event organised in Savonia Varkaus Campus was rated as “average”.

### Possibility of staying longer at host University's country

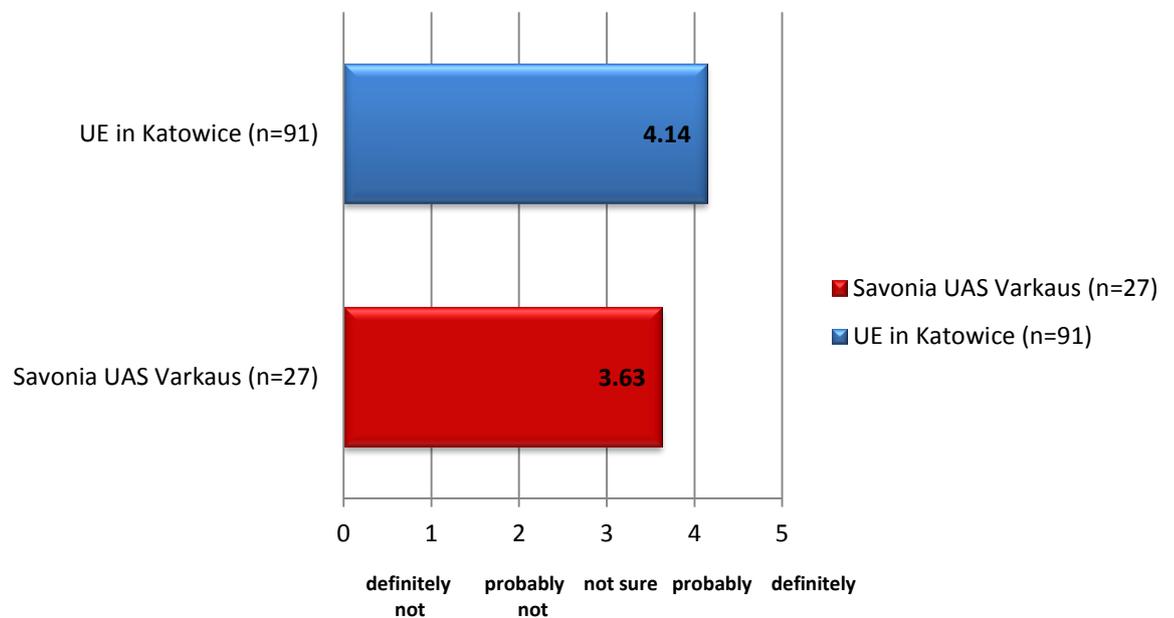


Figure 22. Respondents' willingness to remain in the host University's country.

In the figure 21 above, respondents were asked if they might stay longer at their host University's country. Using the scale 1 to 5 (1 = definitely not, 2 = probably not, 3 = not sure, 4 = probably, 5 = definitely), the sampled exchange students were asked to rate their interest in staying longer at their host University's country. Exchange students at UE in Katowice show a higher level of interest in staying in Poland with an average mean of 4.14, while respondents from Savonia UAS Varkaus are “not sure” whether they would remain in Finland.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked to explain why they have chosen a particular satisfactory level. Therefore, the responses received are as follows:

**a) Responses from exchange students at Savonia UAS Varkaus (n=11):**

- 1) "Because I like the place of the Campus. It was very green and peaceful area. The student dormitory and the school itself was surrounded by forests and lakes. Moreover, I felt safe there even walking down the street in the middle of the night."
- 2) "If the other students would you stay longer with me, of course."
- 3) "I would stay longer if other Erasmus students would have done the same."
- 4) "Like I mention before - it was great time with great people that is good reason to stay. And also to travel more - I did not see everything (especially aurora!!) - But it is good reason to go back to Finland to vacation :-)"
- 5) "Perfect time, people, students, lectors, events, experiences."
- 6) "It was really nice to stay there and to experience the different environment that I'm used to, but I'd rather choose my home country or try to experience the another one that would be absolutely new for me.. But you never know what life is going to bring."
- 7) "3 months are enough to experience everything and it is not better here than it is in Germany."
- 8) "I really like non-resident students, because they are really helpful and friendly. With Finnish students practically I didn't have contact at all."
- 9) "Because of the overall environment at the University as well as among other Erasmus and University students."
- 10) "It ever depends of the job u get offered. Varkaus is not my place to live, but there exist a lot of beautiful cities in Finland. I really love Finland and I am able to live here. Not in Varkaus abut I've seen a lot of cute cities with are worth to live in."
- 11) "Level of education is too low."

**b) Responses from exchange students at UE in Katowice (n=35):**

- 1) "Courses are English and grades are more efficient than in my country."
- 2) "I'm not really sure about it, but probably not because the level of some courses was not very high and I think I can learn more in my University. I guess by one hand maybe it was because we were on Erasmus and the teachers often didn't require us a very hard work because of the difficulties that we maybe had because of studying in another language. So by this way, I'm not really sure about the real level of the University. Anyway I was happy studying there and with the teachers."
- 3) "Because of all the ratings I gave 1 question ago and because it was a great experience that I'd wish to every student."
- 4) "Because I made a life in Katowice, I made friends, i knew places, i had my favourites, especially Mariacka Street."
- 5) "Found many things lacking and missed home anyway."
- 6) "I think 6 months isn't enough. I would like to stay longer, but it wasn't possible."
- 7) "This semester was the best time in my life."
- 8) "I have to come back ... I'm in love with Poland!"
- 9) "Maybe I can find some interesting options in my study!"
- 10) "I was feeling awesome there."
- 11) "It could become a reality to me, now it's something new, different and it should stay it in that way."
- 12) "Because the studying level of this University is not even comparable to the level in my home University."
- 13) "I miss everything - all of the exchange students, the dormitory, the parties, the lectures, lecturers. Everything :)"

- 14) "I enjoyed so much there, and I have the possibility to do some master degree it's an opportunity to come back."
- 15) "I loved Poland."
- 16) "I was there one academic year so at the time that I had to leave I felt it like the right think. But if you ask me now I prefer to stay there at least one semester now."
- 17) "I think it was one of the best times of my life in Poland but I spent one year there. I really I would love to go there again but maybe after few months I would be bored."
- 18) "It was a really nice experience and, as i marked above a lot of "good" and "very good", i wouldn't have any reason not to stay longer."
- 19) "It was a very good experience, and in my opinion, it was too short for me, only 5 months."
- 20) "Good job opportunities."
- 21) "Nice people, good prices, interesting events."
- 22) "It was a very good experience in my life. I think it has given me too much experience and good moments. Also the negative factors and experiences were totally independent from the normal environment and limited to the language barrier."
- 23) "The people that I knew made me have a great time. I still think that I have a lot to learn about Poland and its cities and culture."
- 24) "I think one year was enough for studying in another University. I didn't like that much the content of the courses and the teachers to want to stay more."
- 25) "Not sure- Poland offers less employment possibilities than Germany, on the other hand networking is easier in PL, it plays more important role, people are more open, social life is better, on academic point of view, and teachers in Germany seem to be more qualified."

- 26) "Because it was a well-organized country, with friendly people, a lot of work places and a fast growing economy, things that can make attractive to young people every country."
- 27) "Because I have planned other things in my life."
- 28) "I feel that way because it was nice!"
- 29) "I love the people in Poland, very warm, friendly and loyal. I think I would love the mountains, though I have seen only pictures so far. I love the culture and the lifestyle of the Polish young people. I love their music, their beer, and their clubs. I love Poland! :)"
- 30) "Because I liked my experience in UE."
- 31) "Very good discovery, I like the Erasmus environment."
- 32) "I met a lot of cool people there, people I still want to hang out with."
- 33) "I like it."
- 34) "Due to the subject. For my graduate I had to come back to my home University."
- 35) "In my opinion, 9 months were enough. It is good to change and see other countries, other Universities."

## Possible recommendation level of host University by respondents

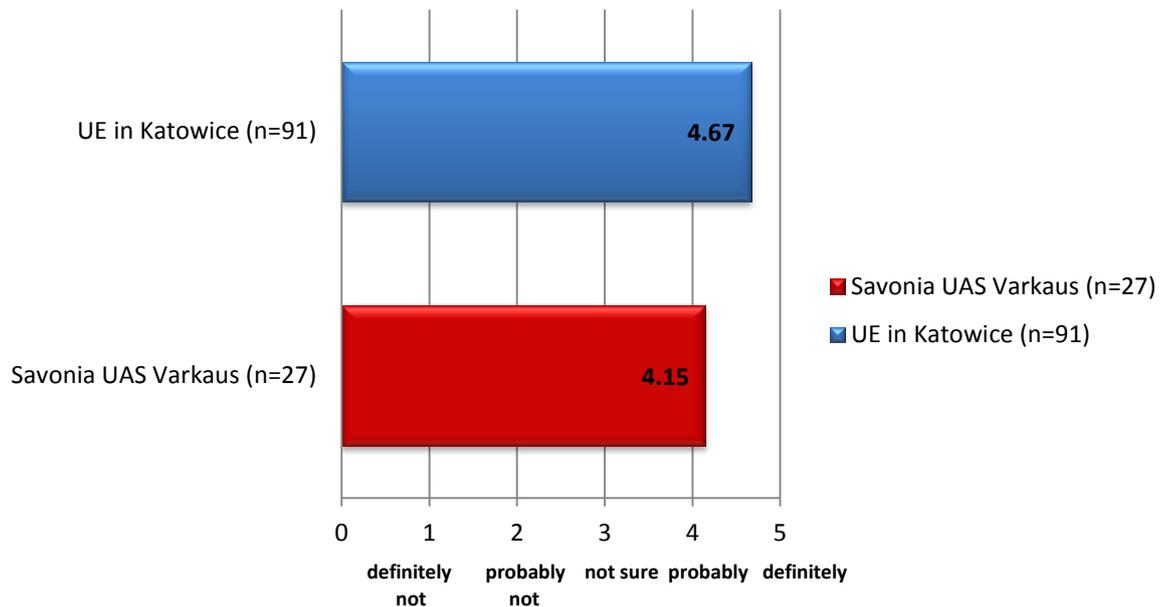


Figure 23. Respondents' willingness to recommend their host University to other students.

Using the scale 1 to 5 (1 = definitely not, 2 = probably not, 3 = not sure, 4 = probably, 5 = definitely) According to figure 22, the average mean of exchange students from both Universities would "probably" recommend their host institution to potential students.

In addition to question 19, the respondents stated their reasons to either recommend their host University or not. These reasons are as follows:

### a) Responses from exchange students at Savonia UAS Varkaus (n=12):

- 1) "Because I would like to share my experience with the new students and I would like to make them aware of the possibilities they have. Besides, I'm truly thankful for those people who provided me with the information about my host University, therefore, I would like to pay it forward."
- 2) "I had so much fun with all the people! So many memories in this country and this town and especially this University with all the students."

- 3) "I think that we were lucky to have a great Erasmus group if not I think that it would have been maybe boring."
- 4) "Because of the atmosphere of Erasmus program."
- 5) "Very nice school with good programme and friendly teachers. School equipment and canteen is new and good. Only handicap is that school is quite long way from the city (and small city) - but more close to nature :-)  
walking is healthy :-)"
- 6) "The University itself and community in it is really nice, though the town itself is a bit too small for my taste."
- 7) "It was great place for students. There were kind and helpful people. Their English was really good. Beautiful country. I already recommend host University to my schoolmates. One of them is studying in Varkaus and other in Kuopio right now :)"
- 8) "Yes, because I had good experience there and after Erasmus studies I got a job and that was one of points why I get it."
- 9) "Tutor system is really bad, not much to do here, no planned activities, very expensive."
- 10) "Small town, few activities, bad weather but nice education."
- 11) "The level is lower. I feel a bit bad because I 'get the same credits for much less efforts like my mates have to do in my home country."
- 12) "If you want to have a great time it's a good place to go. But if you want to learn a lot it isn't."

**b) Responses from exchange students at UE in Katowice (n=35):**

- 1) "First of all the University offers a wide range of subjects in English. Secondly, the infrastructure is very good - there is all the necessary equipment in each room; there a lot of computer rooms with Internet connection; Wi-Fi in every building of the University; clean toilets, and so on. I am really satisfied with all this. And third, the teachers are really nice,

patient and reliable. They try to be tolerant and to understand us all of the time. And their English is very good.”

- 2) “I've had a very good year, so I am sure I would be same for every student.”
- 3) “Because the teachers was very nice with us, understanding our difficulties for studying in a different language, and they gave us all the stuff we need to study. You have a lot of different subjects to choose. The buildings of the University are quite good and the people who work in administration stuff, they really help you with all. So I think is good idea to study in this University.”
- 4) “It's a great learning environment, with competent teachers and a lot of opportunities.”
- 5) “Because it was a good experience and people there were nice.”
- 6) “I already did that because I loved it.”
- 7) “I don't think that life in Katowice would be appealing to my peers. After all, we are used to a "big city" kind of life, where things move fast and there is diversity.”
- 8) “I already recommended.”
- 9) “There is a very good relationship between education level, international surrounding, traveling possibilities and entertaining options. A great place to spend at least one year.”
- 10) “I recommend the University for other students from my local University to apply there.”
- 11) “Because the experience was perfect, it was impossible to improve ... nothing else.”
- 12) “Because I think that all students should to have this experience and know, learn and practice new culture, skills, behaviour, etc.”
- 13) “Best year I ever lived.”
- 14) “They will probably feel awesome.”

- 15) "Because I experienced better exchange study in Ljubljana (CEEPUS)."
- 16) "It's great!"
- 17) "Because it was the best time in my student's life."
- 18) "Because I am sure they will like it, too."
- 19) "If you wanna improve your English language its good but only if you've a low level. Otherwise you don't really improve. Also, in few lectures/topic you don't really learn new or important things."
- 20) "It was well-organized, the teachers were really great and the ESN organization was great as well."
- 21) "They can discover new things."
- 22) "I think the quality of the University's lessons are not so "high level" because it was quite easy to pass all the courses."
- 23) "Because this is the best place to be Erasmus in."
- 24) "I enjoyed being there."
- 25) "Katowice and the University were very kind when I needed something, the facilities were perfect for the student life. Even if the night life and activities of big metropolis are not well developed in the city, I still think is worth to live the experience there."
- 26) "I think the social events and student life is great, but the quality of the education could be increased."
- 27) "Amazing experience- based on the contacts they will make, the new activities they will discover, and the possibility to see new world -eastern EU, and realize differences between their own world, and hopefully understand why those differences arise."
- 28) "Because it was a very high quality University."
- 29) "Because I thought it was a good University."
- 30) "I feel that way because the city was nice, as well as people."

- 31) "Good University, very good teachers, but the sport service is so bad!!!"
- 32) "The teachers are very smart."
- 33) "I like the teachers."
- 34) "Good location, many opportunities to meet many people and not expensive living fee."
- 35) "I won't recommend my host University for students who really want to study hard. :)"

### **Respondents' suggestions for improving their host University's Services**

In the last question of the on line survey, respondents were asked to suggest solutions to improve their host University's services. Therefore, the responses which were received will be presented according to their institution.

#### **a) Suggestions for Savonia UAS Varkaus service improvement (n=11):**

- 1) "The University (student's union and the teachers) should encourage the students more to take part in many activities and to be creative. Because especially at the beginning students are pretty shy in the new environment and they don't know what they can do. Sometimes they might think that it is better not to do anything because it may offend the local people if you do something wrong. The University should have more activities to integrate the Erasmus students with the local students."
- 2) "If you can develop the sport it would be perfect!"
- 3) "To have more social activities and more easy to travel into/inter the city."
- 4) "Better English speaking teachers (without a strong Finnish accent)."
- 5) "Attract more foreign student from Europe, not only China and Pakistan."
- 6) "I am not sure, I remember only good feelings. Just to keep friendly and professional attitude to students."
- 7) "Accommodation for exchange student in front of the University are dirty and do not follow norms."

- 8) "Please give more information about dormitory and maybe also dormitory room pictures and please at the beginning there is need for instruction on how to use system where students use to see they homework and teachers presentations, because not in all countries they use like that systems."
- 9) "I would recommend organizing more trips for exchange students as well as opening some sport activities for them ;)"
- 10) "More social activities, sport facilities."
- 11) "Level up the courses."

**b) Suggestions for UE in Katowice service improvement (n=29):**

- 1) "More English speaking personnel."
- 2) "The internet access should improve and the cafeteria should be modernized."
- 3) "The accommodation was a little bit far from the University and the centre."
- 4) "A lot of problems in the dormitory that was the only problem."
- 5) "The only problem which I experienced was in dormitory. In general receptionist there should speak at least a little bit of English, especially dorm manager. But more important thing was inappropriate behaviour of some of them. And the prices in dormitory where we were situated in Francizkanska Street were more expensive then dormitory for medical student."
- 6) "I think that the University just has to improve free Wi-Fi access to internet."
- 7) "Maybe the accessibility to Internet, like at Wi-Fi. Because is too important for each student and teachers."
- 8) "More trips, more inclusion of exchange student in associative life (sport, art ...)"
- 9) "It should be more activities all together; especially we couldn't see any polish family life. We just got all these information and i mean cultural things

from our polish friends. Maybe some dinner with polish families will be good for see the home culture.”

- 10) “English administration with student!! If you are with International offices or teachers is perfect, but outside that, impossible.”
- 11) “Better teachers - I mean the level of English of some of them and also their mind. They should be more opened with the foreign students.”
- 12) “I would suggest that my host University should really consider looking into its grading system.”
- 13) “More communication with students before they’re coming.”
- 14) “The accommodation is too expensive as the dormitory is so far away and in not such a safe neighbourhood. And the conditions were not the best ones.”
- 15) “More sport facilities.”
- 16) “Continue like this!”
- 17) “Every teacher should provide materials to learn from (power points, pdf, xerox, etc). Or at least he should tell us the name of one single book (the most important that would assure us to pass the exam) and where could we buy it from (and maybe propose us to make an order for all of us). I specified that it should be a single one because we can't afford to buy a long list of books; the teachers shouldn't rely on the library or on our notes (we prefer to listen and pay attention during courses than writing what they are saying, especially when it is a foreign language) because neither it has books for everyone, neither the library schedule is OK for everyone.”
- 18) “English in receptionists of the dormitories, Better conditions in the dormitories and more information before the arrival.”
- 19) “More qualified teachers for English courses. Changes in the curriculum for English courses.”
- 20) “Quality of lessons. Internet rooms should be more and all else is excellent.”
- 21) “More exchange between polish peoples and Erasmus. We make friends with Erasmus peoples and just a little bit with polish peoples.”

- 22)“Support information or assistance in English language, signs in the University in English, or could be possible few classes of the native language to understand the basics.”
- 23)“I need more sport facilities and sport courses, which are more easily available to foreign students.”
- 24)“Dormitory of Ligota is far away of UE so maybe you should put it closer to the University.”
- 25)“More communication about the time table (how the exam will be organized)”
- 26)“The rooms should be bigger and more modernized.”
- 27)“It would be better if the dormitory is closer to the University and if students ticket would be cheaper.”
- 28)“Provide higher course. And provide English books in University library.”
- 29)“I suggest improving sport activities for student. For example, I couldn't practise what I wanted the last year because sport teacher didn't have enough places for Erasmus. Every time, it was reserved for competition. In addition, they should make harder courses for Erasmus. Because it is nice to meet friend, make parties, travelling but it is also important to learn and improve our knowledge.”

## **5.2 Result of the Group Discussion**

The group discussion was held between the researcher and the exchange students present on Savonia UAS Varkaus during the autumn semester 2011. Out of 23 exchange students only 15 people were available for the meeting. With 65 % of the group present, the researcher was able to gather answers to why they have chosen to study in Savonia UAS Varkaus. Many of the responses received are very similar to the variables shown in figure 15. Reasons such as: “to develop language skills”, “to learn about different cultures”, “to have challenging education”, “for travelling experience” and many more. Nevertheless a few new details about why some

exchange students chose to study abroad were discovered during the group discussion.

For some of the international students, particularly some exchange students from Austria mentioned that studying abroad was a prerequisite for them before then can graduate their bachelor studies. In addition, they wished to study in one of the South American countries but due to higher competition, they were left with no other option but to choose Finland as there was little or no competition.

## 6 FINDINGS AND COMMUNICATION PLAN

By means of the research carried out, there are specific issues that have been identified which will be further explained in this chapter. These identified needs require adequate solution in a form of an International Marketing Communication Plan.



Figure 24. *Needs mind map.*

Figure 23 illustrates the importance of knowing the needs of customers and in this case study, it implies to knowing what the exchange students really expects from their host University. The needs are connected to most operations that are being run within and outside the institution. Thus, it creates either a negative or positive outcome to its customers and the general public. Based on the research as a

whole, the analysis reveals the current needs of the exchange students which can be categorised as internal and external needs.

### **6.1 Current Internal Needs**

Travelling experience has been a consistent need over years due to the effect of globalization. Many exchange students have utilized the most profitable opportunity to go abroad. These students find it reasonable to go abroad for global exposure and alongside have the chance to continue their studies. This can be seen has a very good deal since there is no tuition fee involved and also they get some financial grant to subsidise their living abroad for a limited period. Another internal need identified owned to the unstoppable wide spread of globalization is the development of language skills. A few students tend to develop a personal interest for learning new languages while other students learn new languages as a competitive edge in the challenging work force.

Nowadays exchange students tend to be more open minded in learning more about the reality of other cultures which is more preferable to what is been depicted by the media. More so, practical learning and experience is as valuable and appreciated as learning from a book. As it has been identified, multi-cultural experience is also an edge in the current challenging global work force. Nevertheless, the thirst for self-development; confidence, responsibility and independence are also some of the internal needs identified in this research.

Although high quality studies as a reason for going abroad to study has been around for many years, it has seen some sharp declining in its top positions of needs. This is because higher education institutions within the EU area have been closely monitored to meet a standard quality level. Thus, many exchange students do not really have “high quality education” as their top priority reason for going abroad to study since they expect their host University to have equal quality standard as that of their home University. In contrast to “high quality education”, “social life development” has seen a rise in its ranking of top reasons for going abroad to study. Many exchange students tend to seek for the need to have a

reasonable balance in their educational and social life. As a result of exchange programmes these students have built a network of friends around the globe.

The newest trend that prompts students to go abroad for either studies or work placement is because of their significant partner. Although it is yet to be a popular factor, this need has recently been strongly enhanced due to the wider range of exchange opportunities available for students. The length and breadth of how far students can travel has seen a limitless bound. Nowadays, students find it much easier to travel from the south to the north and vice versa. Thus, integration among students has enhanced a very cordial bond leading to a fearless challenge of entering into a multi-cultural relationship. Consequently, it further strengthens a more global world resulting in rapid migration. In addition, a few students are starting to develop the urge to study abroad in order to have an extensive perspective of their current relationship before leading into a life time commitment with their significant partner.

## **6.2 Current External Needs**

Nowadays, as easy as countries border control gets around the globe so it is for students to easily make a decision to go abroad based on the fact that they want to get away from their everyday life in order to have a change of environment. Thanks to free entry and exit within the EU member states, exchange students feel encouraged to go abroad to work or study since there are little or no risk involved.

The challenges and competition involved in the working field has seen a rise in higher qualification requirements when it comes to recruitment. As a result, many students tend to pursue programmes that will lead to having multiple degrees. In addition, many companies require from their employees to have at least a few international experience. Therefore, in order for students to make their CV's look more attractive for potential employers, going abroad for studies or work placement is one of the best decisions they can ever make.

Exchange student's willingness to go abroad to study beckons on self-discovery. These students feel the need to learn more about themselves. The urge to figure out where they belong in the society is very crucial at their current stage in life.

Consequently, a few students have taken up the need for having a global business exposure in order to be able to develop their own future business ideas. Therefore, going abroad from them gives them time to think and organise their future.

### **6.3 Marketing Communication Plan for Savonia UAS Varkaus**

The purpose of this communication plan is to support the planned objectives and provide action items for the organizational communication of Savonia UAS Varkaus for the next two years. This plan serves as a guiding map for all internal and external communication regarding its international mobility operations.

It consists of objectives, internal and external situation analysis, target audiences, Identification of information sources, key messages and tactics, budget, and development plan.

#### **6.3.1 Objectives**

The communication plan objective is to increase the visibility of Savonia UAS Varkaus Campus among the students of their partner Universities abroad that will result in 74 % increase in the amount of in-coming exchange students during the autumn semester of the 2011/2012 academic year by 2014. This percentage is achievable as there has been an increase in the amount of in-coming exchange students in the autumn semester of 2011/2012 after the sharp 50 % decrease in the academic year 2010/2011 from the previous year. (see table 3) Therefore, the total expected amount of in-coming exchange students by 2014 would be 40 students.

#### **6.3.2 Internal and External Situation Analysis**

##### **Missions and Strategies**

The mission of Savonia UAS Varkaus is to provide the students with good working skill, proffer well-structured and accepted higher education training. More so, aims

at exposing students to greater awareness and educational competence across the globe. Students at Savonia UAS Varkaus have the possibility to study abroad at some of their partner Universities within 3 to 12 months through different programmes.

### **SWOT Analysis**

It is imperative for Savonia Varkaus as an institution to conduct both internal and external analysis to obtain a clear picture regarding its strengths and weaknesses. Based on the responses received from the research part of this case study, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for Savonia Varkaus have been identified.

#### **Strengths:**

- Teachers at Savonia Varkaus Campus were highly rated. They hold the top spot for service ratings on Varkaus Campus.
- Teaching method which is the tool used by the teachers were considered to be highly efficient.
- Learning infrastructures on Savonia Varkaus Campus was also rated strongly by the sampled population.
- Multi-cultural student environment

#### **Weaknesses:**

- Accommodation was rated the weakest service area as the quality was low and little or no detailed information about the dormitory was made available before the arrival of the exchange students.
- Sporting facilities were thoroughly condemned by the sampled group making it one of the weakest areas.
- Social activities which is an important aspect of almost every student lives was poorly rated by the exchange students.
- Student canteen fared poorly according to the respondents.
- Integration event on Varkaus Campus also fared poorly in the service ratings by the sampled population.
- Low challenging courses was identified by some of the exchange students that responded to the open ended question of the on line questionnaire.

### Opportunities:

- Finland listed as one of the best countries in the world will give it an exposure and also create awareness in the minds of potential exchange students.
- Perceived high quality of education in the country.
- Fairy tales such as Santa Claus in Lapland and Moomin village in Turku which are connected to Finland also create an awareness and builds up inner passion in the minds of likely exchange students to use the opportunity of studying abroad to visit their historical places.

### Threats:

- City of Varkaus has been considered as a very small town which creates a notion of little or no interesting available activities.
- Cost of living in Finland is rated very expensive which brings financial security threat in the minds of prospective exchange students.

Therefore from all the identified strength and weaknesses of the internal and external environment of Savonia UAS Varkaus campus the need to devise suitable strategies to leverage its strengths and overcome its weaknesses is very essential to the success of the communication plan objective.

### 6.3.3 Target Audience

Major target groups:

- **Partner Universities** are a very crucial part to the realization of this communication plan. Savonia UAS Varkaus currently has partnership agreement with 73 foreign Universities in 28 different countries spread over 3 different continents. Having this large amount of partners abroad will make the visibility of Varkaus Campus achievable.
- **Students of partner Universities** are one of the core targets of this plan in order to increase the number of in-coming exchange students by 2014. Savonia UAS Varkaus has over 150 study places available for its Partner University's students over the period of an academic year.

- **Current exchange students of Savonia UAS Varkaus Campus** are among the major target group for this research as they play a vital role in representing Savonia UAS Varkaus when they return back to their various home institutions. The memories they will have from their experience in Varkaus will determine the success of this plan.

Minor target groups:

- **Teachers & Degree students of Savonia UAS Varkaus Campus** are chosen as a minor target group as they are the “image” of Savonia UAS Varkaus Campus. These stakeholders are not marketing tools but ambassadors of the University. They represent their institution in any formal or informal gathering, thus they have been selected as one of the primary target for this communication plan.

#### **6.3.4 Identification of Information Sources**

Although the name Savonia UAS Varkaus probably lie on the list of possible exchange Universities destination on the notice boards or websites of its partner Universities, this alone cannot influence the effective circulation of information about Savonia Campus in Varkaus. Therefore there is need to identify more active information channels to reach the major target audience. According to the responses established from the sampled population, the most effective communication channels are as follows:

- Partner University's website
- Teacher/tutor at partner Universities
- Savonia UAS website
- Internet surfing
- Local students at partner Universities
- Flyers/brochures/posters at partner Universities
- Exchange students at partner Universities
- Friends/Family

Other communication channels with low effect:

- Presentations
- International fairs and exhibition

Other communication channels with no effect:

- Social media network
- Television/Radio

Table 8. *Choice of media and method suitable to reach each target audience.*

<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Media</b>	<b>Method</b>
Partner Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internet.</li> <li>- International fairs and exhibition.</li> <li>- Savonia UAS website.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- E-mail.</li> <li>- Newsletters.</li> <li>- Staff &amp; Student exchange programme.</li> <li>- Promotional materials.</li> <li>- Video conferencing</li> </ul>
Students of partner Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partner University's website.</li> <li>- Savonia UAS website.</li> <li>- Notice boards.</li> <li>- Internet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flyers/brochures/posters.</li> <li>- News blogs</li> <li>- Video and photo slide show.</li> </ul>
Current exchange students of Savonia Varkaus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Notice boards.</li> <li>- Info-TV.</li> <li>- Social media network.</li> <li>- Savonia UAS website.</li> <li>- In person communication.</li> <li>- Internet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Well organised Integration events.</li> <li>- Promotional incentives.</li> <li>- Flyers/brochures/posters.</li> <li>- Presentations.</li> <li>- Social gatherings.</li> <li>- Organised trips.</li> <li>- Practical teaching.</li> <li>- Face-to-face meetings.</li> </ul>
Teachers & Degree students of Savonia Varkaus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Notice boards.</li> <li>- Info-TV.</li> <li>- Social media network.</li> <li>- Savonia UAS website.</li> <li>- Internet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flyers/brochures/posters.</li> <li>- Presentations on international mobility.</li> <li>- Social gatherings.</li> <li>- Promotional incentives</li> <li>- Organised trips.</li> <li>- Practical teaching.</li> <li>- E-mail.</li> <li>- News blogs.</li> </ul>

Table 8 indicates the different media and methods applicable to each group of audience. Some audiences will have both common and unique communication channel and method. Nevertheless, the messages that will be conveyed to the audience will be specified according to their group.

### **6.3.5 Key Messages and Tactics**

The world today is fast growing and people are getting bored of online pop-ups, banners, radio jingles, TV adverts, and so on. Consequently, trust is the key component for today's global marketing communication to be effective. Savonia UAS Varkaus can obtain trust through liable established forms of communication via regular news update, face-to-face meetings, e-mails, and social gatherings. It can also be enhanced through systematic coordination of administrative communications plan through a team of independent individuals representing Savonia UAS Varkaus Campus and whose primary duty is focused on the management and development of international communications.

The communication plan aims to increase the awareness about Savonia UAS Varkaus among its major target groups, this in turn will increase the number of incoming exchange students to 74 % on the autumn term in 2011 by 2014. The messages to be delivered will be shared according to the stakeholders involved.

#### **Partner Universities**

Savonia UAS Varkaus is very much interested in strengthening the bond with all its partner universities and thus the support and cooperation of the partner universities would be very much appreciated. Savonia UAS Varkaus has come up with this initiative to increase the awareness among its partner universities and to enhance international mobility among its students. The activities listed below will take effect as a result of the stated objective.

- Monthly electronic news letters will be sent to all partner Universities.
- Savonia UAS Varkaus will request for promotional materials (if available) to be sent to its campus during its annual international day event.
- A yearly organised video conferencing meeting with partner universities representatives.
- Savonia UAS Varkaus' willingness to participate in educational fairs organised by partner Universities once in every year by sending its promotional materials via post to its partner Universities.

## **Students of Partner Universities**

Savonia UAS Varkaus would like to stimulate more awareness about its Campus in the minds of its potential exchange students. In order to achieve this, the following activities will take place:

- Savonia UAS Varkaus needs to create a student friendly web page; easy navigation, clear and concise information, simple layout, fast loading graphics, easy access to student experience, regularly updated news page about student activities, previous exchange students blog, videos and photo slides from both educational and social activities of students.

## **Current Exchange Students of Savonia Varkaus**

Savonia UAS Varkaus wants to make the stay of its in-coming exchange student on its campus comfortable and memorable. Savonia Varkaus aims to improve the quality of its services. Therefore, the following activities would take place as a result of the proposed communication plan:

- Adequate information about academic calendar, accommodation, course registration, student cards, pick-up service, contacts for tutors, integration event, weather, Varkaus city, list of planned social activities for the semester, transportation, shopping, living cost per month, language and other useful information will be provided to exchange students in time prior to their arrival.
- Well organised integration event; exchange students will get to know more about their new environment, technology and the people surrounding them.
- Start-up kits such as; a guide to student life Varkaus, pens, USB stick, key rings, t-shirt, etc.
- Availability of efficient tutors at the disposal of the exchange students.
- Supervision of a standard living conditions in the student dormitory.
- Improved course work on Varkaus Campus; theoretical project, workshops, real life company as case study, etc.
- Sponsorship of some student's social activities.
- Specified social activities arranged for each semester to be organised by the tutors in conjunction with the international communication team;
  - o Autumn semester

1. Integration special weekend; city rally game, integration dinner, welcome party, etc. (To be organised on the weekend before course work starts in August/September)
  2. International mobility day (October)
  3. Boat cruise to Stockholm (November)
  4. Finnish evening at the summer cottage (November)
  5. Trip to Santa Claus village in Lapland (December)
  6. Christmas eve dinner (December)
- Winter semester
    1. Integration special weekend; city rally game, integration dinner, welcome party, etc. (To be organised in the first non-holiday weekend in January)
    2. Valentine's day bowling (February)
    3. Excursion to Sweden – Denmark – Germany (February)
    4. Winter festival (March)
    5. International Day (March)
    6. Boat cruise to Tallinn (April)
    7. Sports competition; football, table tennis, basketball, swimming (May)
- Monitoring of available international cuisines.
  - Improvement of the school gym and provision for accessible sporting facilities around the city.
  - Efficient and accessible feedback system.
  - Exchange students alumni database will be built for keeping contacts and maintaining relationships.

### **Teachers & Degree students of Savonia Varkaus**

Savonia Varkaus aims at improving its international mobility programmes by encouraging teachers & students to go abroad for exchange programmes. There is a need to improve Savonia Varkaus international operations. Thus, the following activities are designed to keep the teachers & students abreast of exchange programmes:

- Integration event will be organised among the in-coming exchange students, degree students and teachers of Savonia Varkaus Campus.
- International mobility day will be a special day set aside during each semester for teachers and students to listen to presentations about the home and university of current exchange students on Varkaus Campus.
- Also during the international mobility day, Savonia's international representative will provide information on available financial support when going abroad, application procedures, news updates for available teaching, study and internship places abroad for teachers and students.
- Sharing of exchange experience by teachers and students of Savonia UAS Varkaus who have been abroad. Such experience can be presented via blogs, videos, photo slides, posters around the Campus and Campus monthly news bulletin printed in both Finnish and English language.

### **6.3.6 Budget**

As already known, Savonia UAS Varkaus Campus is a small unit and thus have limited funds allocated to its unit. Nevertheless, throughout the communication plan process the researcher kept this fact in mind. In spite of that, it is impossible to have a successful communication campaign without any form of finances.

There are steps, several promotional materials and a few planned activities that the institution's administration will have to take responsibility for. They are:

- The first step is to employ a qualified person for the position of leading the team of an independent international marketing communication. The chosen leader will observe and look out for enthusiastic degree students who will be committed in joining his/her team. In reward for these students they can have their internship credits compensated and some form of remuneration. This team will take sole responsibility for keeping and maintaining the contacts with partner universities, continuous design and development of promotional materials, exchange students event planning and organizing, promoting Savonia UAS Varkaus at international educational fairs and exhibition.
- Second step will be to finance the development of promotional materials.

- Finances of some social activities such as; integration special weekend, international day, Finnish evening at the summer cottage, winter festival, Christmas eve dinner and Valentine's day bowling should be taken up by the institution's unit.

Most of these activities aims towards enhancing the community, because more freedom will be given to the local and foreign students to internationalized, it would reduce ignorance, increase international exposure, attract more students (local and foreign) and most importantly reduce miscreants in the society. Therefore, if only necessary Savonia UAS can seek for financial supports from both governmental and non-governmental organizations.

### **6.3.7 Evaluation**

It is imperative for Savonia UAS Varkaus Campus to devise the means of measuring the result of this campaign, since marketing communication is a continuous process. Therefore, at the end of each semester the use of performance indicators, like periodic scale measurements will be used to determine the level of the progress achieved in the communication plan. This will be an avenue to get feedbacks. In addition, the number of in-coming and out-going exchange students should be regularly monitored to be able to measure the effectiveness of this campaign. Therefore, after two years there will be a need for review and possible amendments of this communication plan to meet the desires and taste of the prospective exchange students.

## **7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION**

This case study aimed at discovering the current factors that encourage the new generation exchange students to study abroad in order to prepare a factual based international communication plan for Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Varkaus Campus. By considering one of Savonia UAS Varkaus partner University, the researcher is able to have more insight on how to develop the international mobility on Varkaus Campus.

### **7.1 Summary of Findings**

After several years, University marketing in Finland is still significantly low and it has affected its visibility on both local and international environment. The traditional focus of higher education institutions on building their academic standard has been no substantial influence on the decision making process of students about which University they wish to study at. (YLE 2011) Consequently, the institution's little or no concern about learning what their students need has led to poor awareness among potential students.

Based on the research conducted, exchange students require valuable information prior to arrival at their host University Campus. In today's competitive world, continuous information is a vital aspect of human existence. Accuracy and timeliness of any piece of information enhances trust in what is being conveyed. Prospective exchange students feel the need for detailed information about their study destination. These students require the knowledge about the people, language, life style, environment, living conditions and so on. The channel of information matters a lot to these audience as they require not just written words but also visual aids to help them have better comprehension of the message.

Furthermore, exchange students require financial security to help them sustain their stay abroad. In a research work done on obstacles to international mobility, the researcher described "financial situation" as the third most important reason not to go abroad. (Olkinuora 2006, 72) Insufficient funds or lack of funds to support exchange programme is detrimental to the satisfactory level of the students. Another identified expectation of these exchange students is the need for a proper

orientation and integration programme. It is challenging enough for these students to travel abroad and it could even be worse if they cannot fit into the society. In addition, these students require a conducive and an accessible environment.

Facts from this research have shown that these students have not only come abroad for social reasons but also to have their minds stimulated with various academic tasks. Nevertheless, there should be a balance between the provided academic and social programmes. Additionally, these exchange students have left their various homes hoping to build new relationships, to find liveliness, friendly and internationalized atmosphere at their host University. Therefore, they feel the need for a large and diverse group of exchange students.

## **7.2 Reliability and Validity**

Kirk & Miller (1986, 19) explains reliability as the extent to which a measurement procedure yields the same answer however and wherever it is repeated. Furthermore, Validity is illustrated as the extent to which the research gives the right answer. It is also noted that both reliability and validity are by no means symmetrical. It is easy to obtain perfect reliability with no validity at all, in contrast, perfect validity would assure perfect reliability, for every observation would yield the complete and exact truth. (Kirk & Miller 1986, 19)

The researcher constructed the research in a pattern to cross check the reliability of the responses received. There were similarities in the variables that were provided to the sample group in order to check and balance the consistency of their responses. In contrast, the variables seem too long and the average time to complete the questionnaire was 23 minutes. As a result, the respondents may have felt tired while fulfilling the questionnaire.

The target population for this research is very large and diverse. Therefore, in reference to this type of case study it would be invalid to generalize the results gotten as there are traces of cultural influence in some of the answers. For instance a Finn would really appreciate a quiet time while a Spaniard would find a quiet time very boring. It would be advisable for future researchers in this type of case study to narrow down the target group to a particular culture or to cultures that share similarities.

### 7.3 Recommendations

Based on the survey and observations the author of the thesis indicates that there are several steps that could be taken in achieving a successful visibility of the institution and improving the communication with other universities and students around the world. The research has shown that there are still areas where lack of information occurs. Therefore, Savonia UAS Varkaus can implement and take advantage of the following suggestions:

First of all, the cooperation with foreign Universities in the countries with the highest rate of out-going exchange student should be further strengthened. It has been identified that Spain, France, Germany, Italy and Poland are the countries with the highest rate of sending students abroad for Erasmus exchange programme. (Erasmus – Facts, Figures & Trends 2012, 4) Building more partnerships with the above mentioned countries will increase the chances of having more diverse group of exchange students on Varkaus Campus.

Secondly, an independent International Promotion Office (IPO) should be established solely for maintaining and developing relationships with institutions abroad. It would help reduce the workload of staff in the student office and thanks to qualified work force, will speed up the decision making process concerning international issues. It is worth mentioning here that a great enthusiasm for internationalization among other features of IPO staff will be an additional advantage.

Besides, the international promotion office representative should endeavour to participate in international education fairs, so as to have access to the current affairs worldwide and update the used methods to meet up with the new trends.

Apart from focusing on the excellent organisation of the internal processes within the IPO, the University should also take a proper care of its perceived image. One of the recommended ways to achieve this goal is by creating an online platform where exchange students can easily talk about their experiences on Savonia Varkaus and its environment. The creation of such an avenue will be very helpful from the perspective of potential exchange students, due to the wealth of information, tips and advice given by their peers. The original students' jargon

should be left untouched to additionally increase the reliability of the source. The researcher observed that there is no column of exchange students experiences shared on the website of the University and that is why it is highly recommended.

To ensure that the exchange students are not left to feel lost in the new multicultural environment, there is the need for efficient tutors who will oversee their exchange period and help them face difficulties and solve problems. It is important that the students will feel safe and supported at their host University. It is also advisable to assign each exchange student to the guidance of a particular tutor. This one-to-one situation will create a friendlier atmosphere, relieve the tension of being in new culture and expedite the integration process.

Moreover, for these students to get accustomed with the host country's university, campus, culture and people, there is the requirement for a stimulating integration period. A day or two would be too little for organising such an event, hence 3 or more would be efficient depending on the size of the group. In the past it has been observed that the larger the group, the more likely that some of the exchange students will feel excluded. Therefore, it is recommended that ice breaking techniques should be utilized to enhance the mingling process of all students. Besides familiarizing the students with values and rules respected in the host country, such integration is also an occasion to promote the Savo Region. In addition, these students are the fore runner for an effective marketing strategy on their return back to their home country, and this makes it significant for Savonia UAS Varkaus to create outstanding services that will encourage a high satisfactory level.

The final development area would be to create an online alumni database for exchange students according to their academic year. Apart from benefiting the students themselves by keeping all contacts at one place, it would be a useful tool to gather feedbacks and measure the number of students that have been hosted so far. As a result, the alumni database could also serve as a popularity ranking of the University for marketing purposes.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### *Published Sources*

Creswell, J. 2002

*Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research.*

Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. 1994

*Handbook of Qualitative Research.*

Engel, J., Blackwell, R. & Miniard, P. 1990

*Consumer Behaviour.*

Fill, C. 2009

*Marketing Communications.*

Fill, C. 1995

*Marketing Communications – Frameworks, Theories and Applications.*

Foxall, G., Goldsmith, R. & Brown, S. 1998

*Consumer Psychology for Marketing.*

Ghauri, P. & Cateora, P. 2010

*International Marketing.*

Kirk, J., & Miller, M. 1986

*Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research.*

Peter, P. & Olson J. 2005

*Consumer Behaviour & Marketing Strategy.*

Zeithaml, V., Bitner, M., & Gremler, D. 2009

*Services Marketing: Integrating customer focus across the firm.*

### ***Unpublished Sources***

Olkinuora, J. 2006

*Obstacles to International Mobility – Described by Finnish Students in Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Varkaus Campus. Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Varkaus. Thesis work.*

Savonia UAS Varkaus

*Erasmus Exchange Students on Walt – Campus, 2009 – 2010 autumn semester.*

Teivainen, J. 2010

*Guidebook for future Exchange Students.* Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Varkaus. Thesis work.

University of Economics in Katowice

*Student Hand Book 2011.*

### ***Internet Sources***

CEEPUS 2012 (on line)

*CEEPUS at a glance.*

<http://www.ceepus.info/default.aspx?CMSPage=65>

Retrieved 14 April 2012

CIMO 2012 (on line)

*Nationally funded programmes for higher education.*

[http://www.cimo.fi/programmes/national\\_programmes\\_for\\_higher%20education](http://www.cimo.fi/programmes/national_programmes_for_higher%20education)

Retrieved 14 April 2012

Development Goals (on line)

*The biggest threats to universal education in the third world.*

<http://www.developmentgoals.com/threats/universal-education.html>

Retrieved 1 December 2011

De Wit, H., Agarwal, P., Said, M., Sehoole, M. & Sirozi, M. 2008 (on line)

*The dynamics of international student circulation in a global context.*

<http://www.sensepublishers.com/catalog/files/9789087902582.pdf>

Retrieved 31 October 2011

Eucorem 2012 (on line)

*Consumer Relations Management Master's Program.*

<http://eucorem.pl/>

Retrieved 14 April 2012

European Commission – Education & Training 2012 (on line)

*Erasmus – Facts, Figures & Trends.*

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/higher/erasmus0910\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/higher/erasmus0910_en.pdf)

Retrieved 14 April 2012

European Commission – Education & Training 2011 (on line)

*Lifelong Learning Programme.*

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78_en.htm)

Retrieved 27 October 2011

European Commission – The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency  
2012 (on line)

*Tempus.*

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/programme/about\\_tempus\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/programme/about_tempus_en.php)

Retrieved 14 April 2012

Globalization101 2011 (on line)

*What is globalization?*

<http://www.globalization101.org/index.html>

Retrieved 24 October 2011

Gürüz, k. 2008 (on line)

*Higher Education and International Student Mobility in the Global Knowledge Economy.*

[http://books.google.com/books/about/Higher\\_education\\_and\\_international\\_stude.html?id=GAzq3VqRxucC](http://books.google.com/books/about/Higher_education_and_international_stude.html?id=GAzq3VqRxucC)

Retrieved 16 October 2011

Karl, J. 2009 (on line)

Customer Service - The Importance of Quality Service.

[http://ezinearticles.com/?expert=James\\_A\\_Karl](http://ezinearticles.com/?expert=James_A_Karl)

Retrieved 1 December 2011

Knight, J. & Teferra, D. 2008 (on line)

*Higher education in Africa: the international dimension.*

[http://books.google.com/books?id=biEHIxT4qIC&pg=PA390&dq=jane+knight+2004&hl=en&ei=-6lTuqaNo-WhQeutJWhDg&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=1&sqi=2&ved=0C DQQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=globalization&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=biEHIxT4qIC&pg=PA390&dq=jane+knight+2004&hl=en&ei=-6lTuqaNo-WhQeutJWhDg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&sqi=2&ved=0C DQQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=globalization&f=false)

Retrieved 25 October 2011

Maringe, F. & Foskett, N. 2010 (on line)

*Globalization and Internationalization in Higher Education: Theoretical, Strategic and Management Perspectives.*

[http://books.google.com/books?id=9IOB-4Zi\\_h8C&printsec=frontcover&dq=Globalization+and+Internationalization+in+Higher+Education:+Theoretical,+Strategic+and+Management+Perspective+s.&hl=en&ei=xciaToTAKdDPsgajsMGcBA&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CDYQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=9IOB-4Zi_h8C&printsec=frontcover&dq=Globalization+and+Internationalization+in+Higher+Education:+Theoretical,+Strategic+and+Management+Perspective+s.&hl=en&ei=xciaToTAKdDPsgajsMGcBA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CDYQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false)

Retrieved 16 October 2011

Perner, L. 2010 (on line)

*Consumer Behaviour: The Psychology of Marketing.*

<http://www.consumerpsychologist.com/index.html>

Retrieved 16 October 2011

Rodger, M 2004 (on line)

*The whole Art of Deduction - Research Skills for New Scientist.*

[http://www.sahs.utmb.edu/pellinore/intro\\_to\\_research/wad/bas\\_meas.htm](http://www.sahs.utmb.edu/pellinore/intro_to_research/wad/bas_meas.htm)

Retrieved 14 April 2012

Savonia UAS 2010 (on line)

*Guide for incoming Exchange Students.*

[http://portal.savonia.fi/img/amk/sisalto/\\_studies/vaihtariopas\\_2010.pdf](http://portal.savonia.fi/img/amk/sisalto/_studies/vaihtariopas_2010.pdf)

Retrieved 26 October 2011

The Chronicle of Higher Education 2011 (on line)

*University Mergers Sweep Across Europe.*

<http://chronicle.com/article/University-Mergers-Sweep/125781/>

Retrieved 25 October 2011

The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, March 2008 (on line)

*An inevitable consequence of the international market? Finland announces a University merger in the name of competitive innovation.*

[https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:dOZQrfcsyxYJ:www.obhe.ac.uk/documents/2008/Articles/An inevitable consequence of the international market Finland announces a University merger in the name of competitive innovation+&hl=en&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESi6dILSSpoe29Py-qXGPAheU1Y55ZuEILkzYpsJwElcjLcF5nt5kNAGzZvInUPIPopyiRqNjTCG3HdYYBDzrxoTUsDZlrmDpc8wd18RTHCa0LKHjKTuXPVvnkeBoxi0y8Ely-Pi&sig=AHIEtbTkg6o0fO9-f-JmQmMEI\\_q0vOUbTA](https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:dOZQrfcsyxYJ:www.obhe.ac.uk/documents/2008/Articles/An%20inevitable%20consequence%20of%20the%20international%20market%20Finland%20announces%20a%20University%20merger%20in%20the%20name%20of%20competitive%20innovation+&hl=en&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESi6dILSSpoe29Py-qXGPAheU1Y55ZuEILkzYpsJwElcjLcF5nt5kNAGzZvInUPIPopyiRqNjTCG3HdYYBDzrxoTUsDZlrmDpc8wd18RTHCa0LKHjKTuXPVvnkeBoxi0y8Ely-Pi&sig=AHIEtbTkg6o0fO9-f-JmQmMEI_q0vOUbTA)

Retrieved 25 October 2011

University of Economics in Katowice 2011 (on line)

*List of partner Universities.*

[http://english.ue.katowice.pl/d/all\\_partners](http://english.ue.katowice.pl/d/all_partners)

Retrieved 25 October 2011

University of Turku 2011 (on line)

*The new University legislation in Finland: towards a more competitive University?*

[http://www.utu.fi/faktat/organisaatio/rehtorin\\_puheet/tartto\\_conference\\_261109.html](http://www.utu.fi/faktat/organisaatio/rehtorin_puheet/tartto_conference_261109.html)

Retrieved 25 October 2011

YLE News 2011 (on line)

*What university to choose? Ask mom*

[http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2011/10/what\\_university\\_to\\_choose\\_ask\\_mom\\_2978442.html](http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2011/10/what_university_to_choose_ask_mom_2978442.html)

Retrieved 25 October 2011

## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1 Cover Letter for International Coordinators**

Dear International Coordinator,

I am a final year student of International business degree program at Savonia University of Applied Sciences Varkaus, Finland.

I am carrying out a research on “Factors that motivate the new generation students to study abroad” using exchange students as a case study. This is in partial fulfilment for the award of Bachelor of Business Administration in International Business.

I assure you that all information gathered from this survey will be treated with the highest standards of confidentiality. The answers that will be provided are very essential to the validity and reliability of this research which will be useful to higher educational institutions in meeting the demands of the new generation exchange students.

Your timely response in this regard will be highly appreciated, thank you for your anticipated co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

Olukayode Adebisi (Mr)

International business student

Savonia University of Applied Sciences

Varkaus, Finland.

Tel: +358 44 966 8270

## Appendix 2 Questionnaire for International Coordinators

Survey questions administered by: Olukayode Adebisi

Commissioned by: Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Varkaus

Case Study: Exchange Students

Participants: International Coordinators of;

- University of Economics in Katowice, Poland
- Savonia University of Applied Sciences Varkaus, Finland

Number of Participants: 2

Survey Channel: Online questionnaire

Administered: October 2011

(\*) Required

1. Which institution do you represent? \*

( ) Savonia University of Applied Sciences

( ) University of Economics in Katowice

2. What are the exchange study programmes you have? (*Please select all that is applicable to your institution.*) \*

( ) Erasmus

( ) Bilateral Agreement

( ) TEMPUS

( ) Other (Please specify).....

3. Do you have a limit to the total numbers of incoming exchange students per academic year? \*

Yes

No

If yes, please specify the numbers

1 - 25

26 - 50

51 - 100

Other (Please specify).....

4. Do you have a limit to the total numbers of outgoing exchange students per academic year? \*

Yes

No

If yes, please specify the numbers

1 - 25

26 - 50

51 - 100

Other (Please specify).....

5. What selection criteria do you have for outgoing students? \*

Language proficiency

- Specific amount of ECTS attained
- First-come, first served basis
- Grade Point Average
- All of the above
- None
- Other (Please specify).....

6. What selection criteria do you have for incoming students? \*

- Language proficiency
- Specific amount of ECTS attained
- First-come, first served basis
- Grade Point Average
- All of the above
- None
- Other (Please specify).....

7. Excluding grants from external organisations (e.g. ERASMUS), does your institution have its own grant for outgoing exchange students? \*

- Yes
- No

If yes, please select the range of amount given to a student per month.

- €100 – €200
- €200 – €300

€300 – €400

Other (Please specify).....

8. How do you award your own institution's grants to each student? \*

Equally, regardless of destination country

Varies, depending on destination country

Other (Please specify).....

9. Does your institution have a budgeted amount to sponsor integration events for incoming exchange students? \*

Yes

No

If yes, please select the range of amount.

€500 – €1000

€1000 – €1500

€1500 – €2000

Other (Please specify).....

10. Do you have an official complaint system for the exchange students during their stay at your University? \*

Yes

No

Thank you for your time and valuable input.

### **Appendix 3 Cover Letter for Exchange Students**

Dear Exchange Students :)

I am carrying out a research on “Factors that motivate the new generation students to study abroad” using exchange students as a case study. This is in partial fulfilment for the award of Bachelor of Business Administration in International Business.

I assure you that all information gathered from this survey will be treated with the highest standards of confidentiality. The answers that will be provided are very essential to the validity and reliability of this research which will be useful to higher educational institutions in meeting the demands of the new generation exchange students.

Your timely response in this regard will be highly appreciated, thank you for your anticipated co-operation. Would you be so kind as to fill in this questionnaire no later than 2.11.2011, it takes approximately 20 - 25 minutes: (link to survey).

Yours faithfully

Olukayode Adebisi

International Business Student

Savonia University of Applied Sciences

Varkaus, Finland.

Tel: +358449668270

## Appendix 4 Questionnaire for exchange students

Survey questions administered by: Olukayode Adebisi

Commissioned by: Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Varkaus

Case Study: Exchange students

Participants: Exchange students from year 2009 – 2011 studying/studied at

- University of Economics in Katowice, Poland
- Savonia University of Applied Sciences Varkaus, Finland

Number of Participants: 118

Survey Channel: Online Questionnaire

Administered: October 2011

(\*) Required

1. Which country are you from? \*

.....

2. What is your gender? \*

Male ( ) Female ( )

3. What is your age? \*

( ) Between 18 and 20

( ) Between 21 and 23

( ) Between 24 and 26

Between 27 and 29

30 and above

4. Which is/was your host University? \*

Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Varkaus

University of Economics in Katowice

other (Please specify).....

5. What is/was your exchange study programme? \*

Erasmus

Bilateral agreement between universities

TEMPUS

Other (Please specify).....

6. Which academic year are/were you an exchange student? \*

2009/2010

2010/2011

2011/2012

7. How long is/was your exchange study period? \*

One semester

Full academic year

8. Which subject area did you choose to study? \*

- Business Studies and Management Sciences
- Communication and Information Sciences
- Engineering and Technology
- Mathematics and Informatics
- Other (Please specify).....

9. What is/was your level of education at the time of exchange programme? \*

- Bachelor
- Master
- Doctoral

10. How did you get to know about your host University? (Please select all that is applicable to you.) \*

- Internet surfing
- Host university's website
- Information given by your home University
- Friends/Family
- Exchange students at your home University
- Local students at your home University
- Presentation(s)
- International fairs and exhibitions
- Other (Please specify).....

11. What motivated you to go for an exchange programme? (*Using the scale 1 - 5, please indicate how important these factors are to you.*) \*

- ( ) for travelling experience
- ( ) to expand friendship network
- ( ) for self-development
- ( ) for employability purposes
- ( ) to try out new things
- ( ) because of your girlfriend/boyfriend
- ( ) for career development
- ( ) for social life
- ( ) for a change in environment
- ( ) for a multi-cultural experience
- ( ) for sampling of food and cuisines
- ( ) to have a more global view of the world
- ( ) to develop leadership skills
- ( ) for talent development
- ( ) to develop self-responsibility
- ( ) to be independent
- ( ) to develop self confidence
- ( ) to generate ideas for future business purposes
- ( ) to enhance language skills
- ( ) to pursue high quality study
- ( ) for migration purposes

5 - Very high

4 - High

3 - Low

2 - Very low

1 - Not applicable

( ) for self-discovery

( ) to test the strength of your relationship with your partner

12. Do you have other motivational reasons apart from the above list? If yes, please specify in the text box below. Otherwise, please skip this question.

13. After deciding that you want to go for an exchange programme, what made you choose to study at your host university? (*Using the scale 1 - 5, please indicate how important these factors are to you.*) \*

( ) the country

( ) the distance

( ) the local people

( ) the city

( ) climate

( ) religion

( ) culture

( ) history

( ) location

( ) population

( ) language

( ) safety

( ) eco-friendly

( ) architecture

( ) cost of living

( ) the only option of study place

5 - Very high

4 - High

3 - Low

2 - Very low

1 - Not applicable

- institutional reputation
- mobility grant was very attractive
- less complicated application procedures
- attractive website
- recommendations
- suitable courses offered
- videos about the University on social networks
- blog review
- students social activities
- university's service quality
- quality of education
- Friends in this country or institution

14. What are the other reasons you considered before choosing your host University? If you have other reasons, please specify in the text box below. Otherwise, please skip this question.

15. Are you satisfied with your overall study exchange programme? \*
- 5 - Very satisfied
  - 4 - Somewhat satisfied
  - 3 - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
  - 2 - Somewhat dissatisfied

1 - Very dissatisfied

Why do you feel that way?

.....

16. Are you satisfied with your mobility grant? \*

5 - Very satisfied

4 - Somewhat satisfied

3 - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

2 - Somewhat dissatisfied

1 - Very dissatisfied

17. How would you rate the following services of your host University? (*Using the scale 1 - 5, please indicate how you feel about these services.*) \*

University's website

Enough information before arrival

Timing of email responses

Pick up service on arrival

Integration/Orientation event

Tutors

Teachers

Students

Learning Infrastructures

Teaching Method

5 - Very good

4 - Good

3 - Average

2 - Poor

1 - Not applicable

- ( ) Quality of courses
- ( ) Grading system
- ( ) Sport facilities
- ( ) Accommodation
- ( ) Student canteen
- ( ) Internet access
- ( ) Social activities

18. If you had a reason, would you stay longer in your host University's country?

\*

- ( ) Definitely
- ( ) Probably
- ( ) Not sure
- ( ) Probably not
- ( ) Definitely not

Why do you feel that way?

.....

19. Would you recommend your host University to other students? \*

- ( ) Definitely
- ( ) Probably
- ( ) Not sure
- ( ) Probably not

( ) Definitely not

Why do you feel that way?

.....

20. What suggestions do you have to improve your host university's services?

.....

Thank you for your time and valuable input.