Tampere University of Applied Sciences

Implementation of a partnership between a Finnish & a Mexican Institute

A Higher Education perspective

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BACHELOR'S THESIS
May 2021

Bachelor's Degree Programme in International Business

ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tampere University of Applied Sciences
Bachelor's Degree Programme in International Business

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Bachelor's thesis 65 pages, appendices 1 page
May 2021

This study was done because the Mexican education sector is an important market for TAMK Edu, the extension courses department of TAMK (Tampere University of Applied Sciences). However, making cooperation or partnership between TAMK Edu with Mexican higher education institutions (HEIs) has been difficult in the past years; this has been due to funding complex issues within the Mexican education sector, many HEIs lack the funding for 'Extracurricular activities', TAMK Edu's services fall under these types of funds. Furthermore, Mexico's Higher Education Act does not comprehensively determine the relationship between educational institutions and public authorities. In addition, Mexico's complex higher education system that lacks a well-defined legal division of responsibilities is mirrored in a complex funding system for HEIs.

Part of the study was done to understand the market; The author made a PESTLE and SWOT analysis of the Mexican education sector (including the education sector's environment and the financial mechanisms of government and HEIs). The study was also made to understand how to make a partnership between TAMK Edu and Mexican HEIs. Most of the study was carried out using secondary data from experts, with some primary data (interviews and empirical research). Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used. This type of partnership is different from others. Therefore, the theoretical framework includes data from marketing, internationalisation of HEIs, and finance: entry methods such as strategic alliances and cooperation between companies, the internationalisation of HEIs, which discusses cooperation between HEIs, Knowledge transfer activities and education export. Furthermore, it discusses financial mechanisms and funding instruments since they are all interdependent to make this type of partnership successful.

The findings conclude that the partnerships between TAMK Edu and the Mexican HEIs are possible, especially when acknowledging that outside participants such as competitors, other organisations, or governmental institutions involved in the education industry are as important as the targeted HEIs. Also, funding instruments facilitate cooperation with all types of HEIs. However, only specific funding instruments can benefit the partnership.

Key words: internationalisation, strategic alliances & cooperation, education export, financial mechanisms & funding instruments

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CONACYT	National Council for Science & Technology
CURP	The Unique Population Registry Code
EFIDT	Tax Incentive for Research & Technology Development
GERD	Gross Domestic Expenditure on Research & Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IEA	Aguascalientes Education Institute
IP	Intellectual Property
INEGI	The National Institute of Statistics and Geography
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
KT	Knowledge Transfer
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation & Development
PENTA	The National Strategic Program for Technology & Open Innovation
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PNPC	National Quality Postgraduate Program
PRODEP	Program for Teacher Professional Development
RENIECYT	National Registry of Scientific and Technological Institutes & Companies
RFC	Federal Taxpayers Registry
R&D	Research & Development
SEP	The Mexican Secretariat of Public Education
TAMK	Tampere University of Applied Sciences
TAMK Edu	TAMK Global Education
UNAM	National Autonomous University of Mexico
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization

1 INTRODUCTION

An investment in knowledge pays the best interest. (Franklin 1791).

Part of internationalisation is the complexity of entering a new environment; Companies face different factors that they are not familiarised with within their country of origin. One of those significant problems is the lack of knowledge from the foreign market, which slows down any companies' operations process. The Mexican education sector is complicated. The education sector operates under the federal authority branch titled Secretaría de Educación Pública or, in English, "The Mexican Secretariat of Public Education" (SEP). It is made up of many bureaucracy levels, and it is decentralised that the money goes to distinct regions. There are secondary ministries of education in those different regions responsible for allocating the funds. Additionally, due to transparency issues in allocating funds, many Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and universities lack the resources to invest in extraordinary activities. (Ornelas 2000, 4, 11; Heinonen, Interview, October 2020).

Because the environment is complex, a market plan with a market overview is necessary for TAMK Global Education (TAMK Edu). TAMK Edu provides innovative courses or training to other HEIs. Hence, it is challenging for TAMK Edu to cooperate with Mexican HEIs since most of them lack extraordinary funds. Therefore, it is necessary to understand how the system is established, and it is essential to understand the available funding instruments available for Mexican HEIs. With this know-how information, it will be easier to approach possible partners to inform them that they have more options for accessing other funds and scholarships since many HEIs are unaware of this information. Apart from that, some HEIs are circumscribed by the SEP when making decisions about the allocation (Heinonen, Interview, October 2020). Therefore, when TAMK Edu provides services to a Mexican HEI, Institution or university, the funding instrument acts as the transaction's resources. With these funds' knowledge, the partnership between TAMK Edu and a Mexican institute is smoother and possible.

1.1 The commissioner

The commissioner for the thesis is TAMK Edu, and it is an extension studies department at Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK). The department is in-between domestic and global teams. Its functions consist of courses in the following areas: Open University (Avoin AMK), Specialisations (Erikoistumiskoulutukset), Continuation studies (Täydennyskoulutukset) and, finally, TAMK Edu. The author of this thesis did a three-month internship at TAMK Edu. The commissioners of this thesis are Dr. Carita Prokki and Virpi Heinonen. Dr. Prokki is the leader of this department, and she is in charge of overseeing the growing demand for courses and workshops for international students (Brito, 2019). Under TAMK Edu, there are different regions. Under the Latin America and Europe department, Virpi Heinonen oversees the relations between TAMK Edu and other universities. She is in charge of supervising this thesis since she oversees the Mexican market.

1.2 Objectives

This thesis aims to inform the reader about: how the environment of the market of Mexico is, which entry modes to use for this type of partnership, how to make a partnership between TAMK Edu and Mexican HEIs, and how to apply for the available funds and scholarships for higher education at national, state, and municipal levels. Thus, the thesis is a market plan for TAMK Edu when entering the Mexican market; plus, the thesis also acts as a guide for external funding since both are important when making successful partnerships with Mexican HEIs, institutes and Universities.

The market overview will inform TAMK Edu of the threats and opportunities in the Mexican market. Furthermore, the entry mode will give theoretical clarification for making a cooperation strategy. Finally, the funds that aid and facilitate the partnership will be disclosed; the know-how of funds will give a general understanding of how the financial mechanisms in the Mexican education sector work and provide an overview of the funding instruments available for public and private institutions. This marketing and financial information are essential to TAMK Edu since

Mexico is an important market with many potential exporting education opportunities.

1.3 Research questions

Two questions guided the author to obtain the information needed to complete this thesis's objectives.

The first question “How to make a partnership between TAMK Edu and a Mexican HEI”? This questioned provides information on market entry modes, strategic alliances, and cooperation between companies and HEIs.

The second question informs the reader, “Which funding instruments can aid HEIs, institutions, and universities in Mexico when making cooperation with TAMK Edu?” This question denotes the funding instruments to make the partnership possible, what kind of funds work and why they work since not all funds help with the partnership. There are only specific funds that help with the collaboration between TAMK Edu and Mexican HEIs. It also informs the reader of the process of these funds.

1.4 The structure of the thesis

The thesis uses material from both marketing and finance. Both are important to make successful partnerships with Mexican institutes. The thesis is divided into four parts: the theoretical framework, research, research methodology, and conclusion. The theoretical framework is made up of expert’s views on globalisation, internationalisation, entry methods such as strategic alliances and cooperation between companies (governmental or international institution projects), the network interaction theory, internationalisation of HEIS, cooperation between HEIs, knowledge transfer (KT) activities and education export, and financial mechanisms and funding instruments.

The research part is based on the author’s findings. It provides information on how the higher education environment of Mexico currently is. It gives a market research overview of Mexico’s higher education sector with a PESTLE Analysis; Within the PESTLE, it provides information on how the federal government allocates its funds and how the Mexican HEIs receive funds from federal or non-federal funding, and how they can allocate it. Understanding the education sector and the government is essential when partnering with Mexican HEIs, institutes and universities since they are interconnected. Also, the PESTLE will demonstrate factors such as the GDP, Gross Domestic Expenditure on Research & Development (GERD), unemployment rate, numbers of HEIs, percentage of tertiary rate and graduates by field of tertiary education.

Also included in the research part are the economically stronger Mexican states; this informs TAMK Edu which states to focus on and target. The research part also provides information on the most used funding instruments methods in Mexico’s higher education sector. This part focuses briefly on all the different fund and scholarship trusts, such as domestic funds, funds for studying abroad, innovation programs, funds that have to do with credit and loans, and bilateral cooperation; it is an up-to-date overview of funding instruments available in the education sector for public and private institutions and students. Lastly, a brief SWOT analysis is demonstrated. Following that, the research methodology explains how the research was carried out, including the interviews. The conclusion is the last part, which will combine the theoretical framework and research part to give the findings and results and a synopsis. In addition, it will provide TAMK Edu with subjective suggestions and methods on how to make the partnerships.

This thesis will not cover the organisational cultural aspect of the Mexican market, nor will it dive deeply into the impacts of education and education as a public good or a commodity. This thesis will not discuss thoroughly all the entry modes, only the crucial ones to make a successful partnership.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this thesis puts together concepts of marketing, internationalisation of HEIs, and finance. The marketing aspect discusses globalisation, internationalisation, and entry methods such as strategic alliances and cooperation between companies. The internationalisation of HEIS discusses cooperation between HEIs, KT activities and education export. Furthermore, the finance will discuss financial mechanisms and funding instruments. Thus, they are all interdependent to make a successful partnership.

2.1 Globalisation

According to the International Monetary Fund (2008), economic **globalisation** refers to the increasing integration of economies worldwide, specifically through the movement of services, people (labour), goods, knowledge (technology), and capital across international borders. Trade barriers and national borders once limited the interaction of forming economic integration between nations; However, in the current business world, even with the Covid-19 pandemic in the equation, the relationships between people, companies, and countries have overcome these limitations. Due to the surplus in volume, variety of cross-border transactions in services and goods, rapid international capital flows and diffusion of technology, globalisation has become a growing economic interdependence of a group of countries. Globalisation has made it possible for companies and business to access global markets without trade barrier limitations. (International Monetary Fund 2008).

According to Taskoh's findings, globalisation emphasises the efficiency of private enterprises and open markets, which leads to a neoliberalist market-driven economy. Neoliberalism combines free-market ideology with the privatisation of public wealth, eliminating the social state and social protections, and the deregulation of economic activity. (Moore, 2011; Peck & Tickell, 2002 cited in Taskoh 2014).

As a social phenomenon, globalisation is shaking every aspect of our public and private lives. Globalisation is typically used to define a set of empirical events and conditions. However, it is also used to prescribe desired interpretations of and responses to economic, social, and cultural changes (Held & McGrew, 1999; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002; Giddens, 1999; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, cited in Taskoh 2014).

2.2 Internationalisation

Even though there is no standard classification or agreement on the meaning of the word **internationalisation**, in economics, it is the method of increasing companies' involvement in international markets. Therefore, according to Adel, Zeinhom, & Mahrous (2018), internationalisation strategy is crucial for companies that seek to expand their horizons globally and for countries that adopt the sustainability of its expansion in different manufacturing and service sectors (Adel et al. 2018). Furthermore, internationalisation can be described as how the company generates profitable and financial flows and transfers knowledge between countries through its activities in an international environment. Therefore, a company's participation in an international setting leads to globalisation (Johanson & Vahlne, 1990).

As mentioned, the globalisation of markets and business is demonstrated through the economic free-market and neoliberalism ideologies that many nations share; This allows many countries to expand into new foreign markets. According to Mikkonen's findings, Melin (1992) states that internationalisation is no longer a simple option that companies make in a globalised economic environment. Instead, internationalisation is a segment of everyday business. Many companies' goals are not to internationalise; however, due to the growth of competition, they may not have an option but to seek out new markets to increase the market share and profit to avoid stagnancy. (Mikkonen 2020, 8).

Buckley (1993) states that two dimensions represent the fundamentals of strategic decisions regarding the internationalisation of a company. Those two dynamic dimensions are the strategy of entry modes and the selection of international markets. In addition to that, Cavusgil (1980) states that two specific situations are needed, the trade flows, which involves **exports** and **imports** of goods and services and how the company's internationalisation affects the direct investment flows from a country to another (Mikkonen 2020, 8).

Part of internationalisation is the complexity of entering a new environment; companies face different factors that they are not accustomed to in their country of origin. Therefore, the lack of knowledge is attributed as a significant problem that slows down the operations process. Thus, when starting the process of expanding, companies prefer to start their international activity with low-level commitment entry methods, then when the experience and knowledge increases and perceived risk decreases, they can add higher-level commitment methods. (Johanson & Vahlne 1997, Luostarinen 1979, Juul and Walters 1987, Welch and Luostarinen 1988, cited in Mikkonen 2020, 9).

2.3 Analysis tools

A series of benefits and risks, and difficulties come when internationalising. To establish the viability of the new market, companies carry out an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis). According to Helms & Nixon (2010, cited in Ng and Bloemraad 2015), a SWOT analysis is used to assess a product, plan or strategy of individuals, firms, industries, governments, and countries. Companies additionally analyse these decisions: what and how many markets to enter, how to enter the market, and the type of organisation they want to establish. These rigorous analyses provide the incremental decisions of the strategy. (Buckley 1993, cited in Mikkonen 2020, 9).

Another example of an analysis tool would be the PESTLE analysis used to analyse the current Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental factors of private and public organisations, industries, markets, governments, and countries. (Sample Essays Papers 2016). For example, a PESTLE Analysis of the education industry is used to analyse the education environment and the circumstances that can impact the future. The staff, management, policymakers, and governors involved in the Education industry use this tool to help plan, finance, administration decisions and check the market's viability. (Sample Essays Papers 2016).

Four categories of study divide the internationalisation of companies: the economics perspective, the process perspective, the network theory, and the companies' perspective of rapid internationalisation. (Mikkonen 2020, 9). From these four categories of studies, numerous theories exist.

2.4 The network model of interaction theory

Although most internationalisation theories use economic theories of monopolistic competition and transactions cost, studies on behavioural approaches such as **the network model of interaction theory** are essential.

According to Ratajczak-Mrozek's findings (2012), the development of company internationalisation is defined as establishing, maintaining, and developing relations with network participants in foreign markets. The model stresses the significance of developing long-term collaborations with entities from the foreign market. It also describes the internationalisation process by establishing formal and informal contacts with the entities (Ratajczak-Mrozek 2012, 30-36).

The process of the company's internationalisation is reflected by the degree to which it occupies certain positions in national and foreign networks. The position in the network defines the relations with other network participants and mainly results from previous interactions. Usually, when a company has a high degree of internationalisation, it has strong networks with entities from many nations. Depending on the situation and position that a company has, it will decide on either international extension, international penetration, or international integration. (Ratajczak-Mrozek 2012, 30-36).

- International extension: a company creates new relationships in foreign markets.
- International penetration: improves its current network situation in countries where it already operates.

- International integration: involves the enhanced coordination of positions done by the company within various foreign networks (Ratajczak-Mrozek 2012, 30-36).

Whitelock's findings (2002) state that long-lasting business relationships are established, developed and maintained from a network of firms engaged in the production, distribution and use of goods and services. Moreover, all relationships are meaningful since each firm has relationships with customers, distributors, suppliers, and competitors.

There exist four variables that influence the network interaction: the processes of interaction; the personalities of the parties involved (buyers/suppliers); the atmosphere encompassing the interaction; and the environment where the interaction takes place. Understanding this environment is essential to the company's executives that want to expand its market since it will inform them about which countries to enter and which customers to supply; this will define the organisation structure for the market entry. Therefore, firms should consider and evaluate their position, their customers, and the market environment. (Whitelock 2002, 342-346).

According to Ratajzak-Mrozek, the network model of internationalisation is based on the idea that its strength lies in its interactions and relationships with other market participants. Compared to the other internationalisation's traditional theories and models, which constrain the company's focus on itself. They do not examine networks or value chains, which leads to overlooking collaboration in the internationalisation process. However, in contemporary economic reality, alliances and partnerships are gaining importance (Ratajczak-Mrozek 2012, 30-36).

Internationalisation is manifested in several different ways. Through mechanisms known as **market entry methods**, companies can internationalise. A company can enter a foreign market by shipping products or services to other countries in various ways, such as exporting or establishing firms in the foreign market. The most used are the establishment of foreign subsidiaries, direct exporting, indirect exporting, in licensing agreements, in strategic alliances and cooperation between companies, in international advertising, campaigns, in international joint ventures, in international trade, exhibitions and various other events and activities (Johanson & Vahlne 1990, 11).

One entry mode is **the strategic alliances and cooperation between companies**. According to Child, Faulkner & Tallman (2005) in Mikkonen's findings (2020), the definition of an alliance is an agreement concerning two or more independent companies that share segments of their capacities or resources to increase their competitive advantages. In addition, the companies establish a certain degree of interrelation. Cooperative agreements between possible or existing competitors are what strategic alliances is all about. (Mikkonen 2020, 29).

According to Albaum, Strandskov, & Duerr (2002), alliances are created for various reasons, for example, to accelerate the international process; to penetrate many markets; to increase the competitive position and recuperate the lost position in the markets; to acquire missing resources and to exploit competitive synergies; and lastly, to share the risk or to meet specific objectives. Alliances are complicated, problems of opportunism behaviour can emerge. Therefore, complex decisions are required. For the alliance to work appropriately, the following suggestions must be considered. (Albaum et al. 2002, cited in Mikkonen 2020, 29-30).

- The choice of the partner: A company must choose the right ally or partner carefully. The company and partner must share the vision simultaneously to help achieve each other's objectives and not just use them to exploit them through the alliance. Therefore, an extensive analysis must be done when choosing a partner (Albaum et al. 2002, cited in Mikkonen 2020, 30).
- The alliance structure: First, a balanced structure is necessary to avoid the risks of leaning too much load to either the partner or company. The transfer of technology must be circumvented to avoid opportunism. Third, contractual safeguards should be created to act as legal protection. The agreement of how much skills and technology are transferred to create an equitable profit; And lastly, a genuine understanding and commitment is required. (Albaum et al. 2002, cited in Mikkonen 2020, 30).

- The administration of the alliance: After carefully choosing the partner, the goal is to increase benefits for both parties, which means building trust is required from both parties. Thus, understanding cultural differences is required to build interpersonal relationships that facilitate harmony and trust between both companies. (Albaum et al. 2002, cited in Mikkonen 2020, 30).

One of the different types of alliances and cooperation between companies is the **governmental or international institution projects:** Governments supports and promotes research or technology aid to organisations or institutions (Cavusgil & Hollensen 2008, cited in Mikkonen 2020, 30-32).

Cooperation is a partnership for companies that pursue to carry out a specific activity or project. They cooperate by uniting or sharing part of their activities and resources to improve their competitive advantage. There are two motives to make cooperation: **Economic motive** and **strategic reasons**. First, the economic motive allows companies to take advantage of each partner's better effectiveness and reduce the transaction cost. Second, the strategic reasons are used to take advantage of economies of scale and obtain experience, decrease risk, uncertainty, and costs, develop the competitive position, and gain adequate size for competing. Furthermore, it is possible to access resources and know-how that the company lacks; also, the risk is shared when following a joint project (Webster 1999, cited in Mikkonen 2020, 32-33).

2.5 Internationalisation of Higher Education

The higher education sector is a critical context that needs internationalisation to foster the gap between different cultures and countries (Adel et al. 2018). Knight (2003) states that internationalisation as a policy priority gained popularity and soared in the early 1980s. As a result, many related studies, policy statements, and administrative rhetoric evolve around the internationalisation of higher education. However, the concept of internationalisation has very different meanings depending on who is defining it and in what context it is applied (Knight, 2008; Powell, 2004, cited in Taskoh 2014).

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the popularity of studying abroad has grown over the past years due to internationalisation; it has resulted in the increment of movement of students, academics, teachers, and organisations due to newer delivery methods, such as online courses and campuses abroad (OECD 2015).

According to Taskoh's findings (2014), Larsen (2013) states that internationalisation in higher education can be categorised in three main frameworks: **motivations** (rationales for internationalising in higher education); **strategies** (types of strategies, activities, and initiatives); and **locations** (where internationalisation takes place, if at home or abroad) (Taskoh 2014).

Concerning the 'motivations' framework, different studies explained these rationales and motives regarding the advantages of implementing internationalisation. The benefits were placed into four distinctive categories: (1) sociocultural gains about understanding diversity and endorsing intercultural communication; (2) political benefits in respect of building a peaceful environment for shared understanding and respect among citizens of various nationalities; (3) economic growth and positive financial outcomes resulting from expanding the market to reach international learners; and finally the (4) academic/learning advances that can be achieved after positioning the quality enhancement processes of teaching, learning and research using the widely recognised international standards and frameworks (Knight 1994; Qiang 2003; Maringe 2009; Svetlik and Bracˇek Lalic' 2016; Larbi and Fu 2017, cited in Adel et al. 2018).

When it comes to ‘strategies’, Macdonald and Piekkari (2005) state that research cooperation among universities success is determined by the relationships of individuals in the inter-organisations, Hagerdoorn (2002) concludes that the success of Research and Development (R&D) partnership among inter-firms is the flexibility through short-term joint projects with a variation of partners (Macdonald & Piekkari 2005; Hagerdoorn 2002; Van der Heide et al. 2010, 19).

According to Van der Heide et al. (2010), various ways exist to make cooperation between HEIs; The ten most-cited activities (strategies) of KT are Spin-off and enterprise creation; Patents and licensing; University-industry networks; Continuous professional development (CPD); International cooperation; European affairs; Grants; National subsidies; Regional subsidies; and Alumni affairs (Van der Heide et al. 2010, 19). The activities and their description are demonstrated in Table 1.

For this thesis, the term of KT is used to encompasses the transfer of expertise, skills, know-how and knowledge from one party to another, leading to innovative, profitable, or economic improvements to support mutually beneficial collaborations among universities, businesses, and the public sector on the broader community (PhilipsKPA 2006, 5-47; University of Cambridge 2009).

TABLE 1. The ten most-cited international activities (strategies) of KT (Groen and Van der Sijde 2002; Fink, Van Tongeren, Simak, Nemeth, Mazet, & Ramos 1999; Marra 2004; Bennett & Sargeant 2005; Vogel & Kaghan 2001; Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff 2000; Etzkowitz & Klofsten 2005, cited in Van der Heide et al. 2010, 19)

KT activity	Description
Spin-off and enterprise creation	'University spin-off refers to creating a new company established to exploit research knowledge created by university researchers' commercially; spin-off is the entrepreneurial route to commercialising knowledge from public research, both intellectual property (IP) and non-IP based.
Patents and licensing	Involve the exploitation of IP. 'Through patents, an institute for higher education can protect its IP, and if a patent is approved, it can be marketed through sales of the patent or a license.'
University-industry networks	The dynamic 'two-way interaction between "the actor" university and "the actor" industry' in collaborative networks.

CPD	CPD focuses on the post-initial education programmes targeting the improvement of the capabilities, realising the full potential of professionals at work.
International Co-operation	International cooperation refers to the public and private organisations cooperating with universities beyond national borders.
European affairs	Management, acquisition and observing of European projects and European funding
Grants	Government or other non-profit organisations provide a grant or fund to encourage (individual) increment or development in a particular place or area.
National subsidies	Research programmes and other specific university activities are incentives encouraged by national government programs and policies.
Regional subsidies	Research programmes and other specific university activities are incentives encouraged by regional government programs and policies.
Alumni affairs	Management of alumni contacts

Many business terminologies and practices are incorporated with modern education, thus, linking modern education with marketisation. The combination of business terms and modern education are results from either the demand for education from the result of increasing international competition supported by the results of standardised tests like PISA or the increasing commodification of anything that brings value. (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Ball 2008; Burde 2004; Jones 2004; Sahlerg 2011b; Spring 2009; cited in Brito 2019, 29).

The concept of **education export** has different perspectives. Additionally, it can be discussed from various viewpoints. Therefore, it needs to be recognised that Education export can have different meanings and interpretations. Education export refers to exporting knowledge, programs, people, curriculums within national or regional jurisdictional borders, and it has the element of commodity initiatives

(Knight 2006, 18). The simplest definition of education export is the selling of educational products paid for by a foreign customer. The Finnish Ministry defines education export as all business activities based on education; the foreign party pays for the education system that transfers knowledge and creates products or services. (Brito 2019, 30).

Education can go under the category of professional services. Because the primary assets are intangible, the delivered service is intangible, and the service providers are highly skilled people, these are characteristics that define professional services. (Delong & Nanda 2003, cited in Brito 2019, 26).

Finnish education export leans more towards exporting other education products or services such as training, consulting services, technological solutions for simplifying learning processes, and know-how deals. The term "export of education expertise" would be more accurate to describe the activities of Finnish education exporters since it focuses more on services than just education products, which offers relies primarily on ordinary lectures. (Cheikh 2015, Juntunen 2014, cited in Brito 2019, 31). The word "expertise" should be emphasised when categorising the Finnish offering. Educators globally are interested in the Finnish education system because of its uniqueness; their assets lie in their innovation in pedagogics and teacher training. Furthermore, the target customers are educators and policymakers, instead of students themselves, since expertise teaching is the main product that Finland offers. After OECD's PISA results, Finland gained a lot of attention and interest; With thousands of teachers and leaders touring the country and its school, Finland has turned into an attractive destination for the so-called "educational tourism" (Sahlberg 2015, cited in Brito 2019, 32).

Knowledge is a valuable resource to most organisations since economies are becoming more knowledge-intensive; this is specifically true among academic institutes such as TAMK, generating and disseminating knowledge as their primary objective. (Howell & Annansingh 2013, cited in Brito 2019, 27).

According to Brito (2019, 33), most of TAMK Edu’s international courses consist of postgraduate training for education professionals. TAMK is a non-profit and publicly funded university; therefore, TAMK Edu is the department within the organisation that offers the products such as training, courses, key speakers, seminars, and others, at marginally above cost-price (Brito 2019, 33).

TAMK Edu's clients are also academic organisations capable of producing knowledge among themselves. Therefore, the leaders at TAMK Edu needs to offer their clients something that cannot be found from their client's competencies, such as innovative courses or training. Offering something new is fundamental when selling educational services since TAMK Edu and the client falls under the same service providers' industry. Hence, providing education to foreign customers must be met with a differential component, for example, an experience. In Finland, the education export falls under knowledge-based knowledge since the experience economy principles support services; this adds a holistic value that attracts clients from everywhere. Not only do they visit Finland for obtaining the knowledge (in many cases, they are already acquainted with it), but to understand how that knowledge is applied in the Finnish culture and society. (Brito 2019, 28). For a profound understanding of education as a product and Finnish education export, check out the studies by Renata Brito, *"A Program of Hope: Finnish in-service teacher training impact in the Brazilian education system"* (2019). And Monika Schatz, *"EDUCATION AS FINLAND'S HOTTEST EXPORT? A Multi-Faceted Case Study on Finnish National Education Export Policies"* (2016).

2.6 Financial framework

The financial mechanisms and funding instruments are essential for this thesis; they are part of the ‘motives’ of internationalising HEIs since economic growth and positive financial outcomes are essential factors when making partnerships.

The **finance mechanism** terminology demonstrates how an organisation, program or business receives the funding necessary to remain operational. The financial mechanism for governments derives from taxes or other means of acquiring funds from the public, which is then used to fund various programs and agencies. Other organisations such as HEIs obtain funding from various means, such as funds or endowments. (Wiesen 2021). Later, the research part of this thesis will demonstrate the financial mechanisms in the Mexican government, education sector and public and private institutions.

According to Jacob, research **funding instruments** are strategic topics in innovation, technology, and science policy. In addition, the emergence of knowledge society as the essential subject of economic development and welfare has increased the focus on the organisations that produce and fund research. From this impact, there has been an increase of proportion funds competitively allocated to block grant funding. Another impact is the move towards increased research collaboration and internationalisation. (Jacob n.d., 4).

'Funding instrument' refers to an arrangement for financing or disbursing money to students, educators, and research performers such as an individual or organisations. Disbursing the money to individuals or organisations can be done through the most common study-funding instruments: federal, national, or regional grants, scholarships or subsidies, block grants, stipends, loans, tax incentives, bilateral cooperation, direct funding, projects, and programs funding. (Jacob n.d., 13).

Funding instruments are often not limited, with the same instrument being used for several purposes. Also, a conglomeration of different purposes may be possible. For example, grants and stipends or projects help achieve internationalisation. The heightened importance of international collaboration is one of the significant developments in research funding. The international collaboration went from being an optimal issue to an imperative for accomplishing national innovation, science, and technology policy goals (Jacob n.d., 13).

Apart from internationalisation, there are other purposes for which instruments may be employed: advancement and renewal in career, capacity building, strategic priorities, collaboration with industry and commercialisation of academic research. (Jacob n.d., 11-12).

3 RESEARCH

The research puts the authors' work together: The PESTLE Analysis, Funding instruments used in Mexico's higher education sector, and the SWOT analysis.

3.1 PESTLE Analysis of Mexico's Higher Education sector

Below is a PESTLE Analysis of the education sector, focusing primarily on the Political, Economic, Social, and Legal factors while also showing a brief analysis of the Technological and Environmental factors. The PESTLE Analysis is focused on the Mexican Higher Education sector; however, a brief coverage of the government and country, primary and upper secondary education are included since they are holistically conjointly. It also demonstrates how the finance mechanisms work within the governments, SEP, and HEIs.

3.1.1 Political

As mentioned earlier, the federal authority that firmly directs the education system is called the SEP. The minister of education is Esteban Moctezuma. Mexico has thirty-two federal entities and state ministers. Therefore, Mexican education is not uniform throughout its states. (Bishop n.d.; Business Finland 2020, 3, 17). The SEP is systematised into four main undersecretaries: Basic Education, Upper Secondary Education, Higher Education, and Educational Policy Planning and Evaluation. (OECD 2013, 15). As mentioned previously, this will focus primarily on Higher Education.

Like many other countries, Mexico has universities that are older than the states in which they were established; these older institutes have developed substantial institutional autonomy. Thus, even though the universities are public institutions, they carry greater independence than most public sector organisations (OECD 2019a, 68).

According to the OECD (2019a) study, internationally, the HEIs' legal status, rights and obligations, and how they undertake their work are affected by how they operate within a particular legal, administrative and procedural environment (OECD 2019a, 69).

Mexico's higher education system is a complex and fluctuating federalism system that lacks a well-defined legal division of responsibilities. It is characterised by a legal and doctrinal idea of autonomy that has sharply circumscribed the SEP's authority with the oldest and largest HEIs. (OECD 2019a, 69-72). The SEP establishes the education standards at all levels except in government-chartered "autonomous" universities and a few specific institutions. A recognisable example is the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) (Bishop n.d.).

The majority of Mexican institutions (autonomous, public) were created and directed by national authorities. Additionally, national authorities' direct private institutes since the government established a centralised licensing process for those institutions. (OECD 2019a, 69-72). Therefore, for private schools to get accredited, they must get approved and registered by the SEP (Bishop n.d.). However, private schools subsequently function with a high level of autonomy, with the ability to make their own choices about internal governance and organisation, resource allocation, academic decisions, and staffing (OECD 2019a, 76).

A Higher Education Act that comprehensively determines the relationship between educational institutions and public authorities is elusive and inexistent in Mexico. In contrasts to many Ibero-American countries such as Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Peru, and others. (OECD 2019a, 72). Despite the imprecise legal framework governing the HEIs and national authorities, the SEP are de facto responsible for some major decisions:

- Creating a development plan of the higher education system that is contained in the six-year Sectoral Education programme
- Recommending federal budgets for public HEIs and programmes within a budget framework
- Managing and launching federal higher programmes (extraordinary funding)

- Establishing governance rules and providing a strategic plan to non-autonomous federal HEIs
- Coordinating with states ministers on the governance rules and funding levels for non-autonomous state HEIs
- It is partially implementing and coordinating the regulation of private HEIs (OECD 2019a, 72).

In Mexico, there co-exist three different patterns between institutional autonomy and public authority:

1. **Autonomous universities** (federal universities and state public universities)
2. **Non-autonomous public HEIs**
3. **Private HEIs** (OECD 2019a, 75).

According to the international standards such as those defined by the European University Association (2018 cited in OECD 2019a),

> Autonomous universities in Mexico continue to exercise wide control over key decisions about internal organisation and governance; the allocation and management of their budgets; human resources (recruitment, salaries, dismissals, and promotions); and especially academic autonomy (including decisions about student admissions, academic content, and the introduction of degree programmes) (OECD 2019a, 76).

Intercultural Universities, Technological and Polytechnic Universities, State Public Universities, decentralised and Federal Institutes of Technology, and other forms of institutions such as music academies do not operate in the same way as autonomous institutions. Federal non-autonomous institutions function below the supervision of SEP. In contrast, non-autonomous state institutions function below both the state ministers of education and SEP. The supervision from SEP or simultaneously state ministers of education authorities and SEP includes exercising control of funding levels, curriculum, staffing levels, and infrastructures improvements. An example of this is during the selection of rectors and top officials. Notionally, it is the universities' responsibility; however, the state ministers of education or SEP can intervene. (OECD 2019a, 76).

From all the non-autonomous public HEIs, The Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, The Universidad Abierta y a Distancia de México, and the tecnológico Nacional de México are the only ones that work semi-autonomously. (OECD 2019a, 77).

3.1.2 Economic

On the 2020 OECD report, Mexico's gross domestic product (GDP) had a sharp decline of -9.2%. Additionally, according to a National Employment Survey, the unemployment rate was 5.3% in 2020. COVID-19 took a significant toll in Mexico, placing it on the list of the OECD with the highest human toll. In spring 2020, the mobility restrictions started to be relaxed so, essential economic activities were allowed, such sectors in the automotive, construction and mining reopened. Social activities remained restricted in most states. (OECD 2020a). In some states, the open public space is opened regularly, and the closed public spaces are opened with reduced capacity (Gobierno de México 2021a).

Despite all of these significant tolls in Mexico, the GDP is forecasted to increase by 3.6% in 2021 and 3.4% in 2022. Moreover, the unemployment rate is to decrease to 5% in 2021 and 4.8% in 2022. The growth is due to the exports, particularly from international manufacturing companies, and higher job creations (OECD 2020a). According to the revenues per service index by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), the professional and governmental services, education and health care services have been the most resilient. The harshest drop in this service sector's revenues was 1.7% (Zaga, Ortiz & Leal Trujillo 2020).

When it comes to funds, state governments in Mexico possess modest fiscal and administrative capacities. States have a restricted tax-raising capacity of 10%; therefore, 90% of their revenue come from the federal government. (OECD 2019a, 74).

The 90% of the federal transfers received by states go under three categories:

1. **Participations** - core funding of allocated federal budget; states have discretion in allocating.
2. **Federal contributions** - Earmarked funding for specific purposes, including aspects of education, especially states with high economic disadvantage.
3. **Agreements** – the federal government provides a grant to a specific institution. (OECD 2019a, 74).

The amount states receive of the ‘Participation’ funds depends on their contribution to national economic output. The quantity of ‘Federal contributions’ is calculated to compensate states with economic needs. Therefore, the ‘Federal contributions’ and quantities available for earmarked or discretionary spending vary between states. The funds available for ‘Agreements’ depends on the negotiations between the state and the federal governments; this includes State Public Universities. (OECD 2019a, 74),

The majority of the federal transfers of revenues that the state receives are earmarked for existing fixed costs such as staff salaries and running costs or tied to agreements with specific institutions. Therefore, the state governments have small resources that they can discretionarily spend on higher education. Economically stronger states receive higher amounts of funds on ‘Participations’ and have higher revenues from state taxes. Theoretically, the stronger states have a more significant sum of resources that, if they choose, it could be allocated to higher education. Within limits imposed by the federal government, some state governments have made more outstanding efforts than others to develop cohesive higher education policies and send resources directly to these initiatives. Stakeholders argued that the political will and the competence of state administrations of individual governors and state governments varied vastly between each state in Mexico. Therefore, the investment of efforts in developing state higher education systems varies individually. (OECD 2019a, 74).

Mexico’s higher education sector's challenge is the lack of transparent, consolidated public and spending data. It appears that many HEIs do not have in order the internal accounting and cost allocation systems to be able to report accurate spending on education activities. Also, it is difficult to differentiate staff costs associated with education and research (a common challenge that higher education's systems globally face). (OECD 2019a, 90-91). The lack of a transparent mechanism for allocating resources to public HEIs is a significant problem for underfunded institutions. (OECD 2019a, 100-101). Moreover, it contributes to a wide-ranging and unexplained gap in public funding per student between HEIs. Currently, Mexico spends the same proportion of its GDP on funding public HEIs as some leading OECD economies. Meanwhile, the expenditure per student is comparative low. (OECD 2019a, 108).

There are two types of funding that HEIs receive, **Ordinary funding** and **Extraordinary funding**. 'Ordinary funding' is a core funding used to cover operating and staff costs. 'Extraordinary funding' is particularly for state public HEIs, and some autonomous State Public Universities may receive this funding. Extraordinary funding is awarded to institutions through competitive calls for proposals, or in some cases, they use an allocation formula. (OECD 2019a, 98). Federal public institutions generally are not eligible to obtain these funds under Extraordinary funding (OECD 2019a, 104).

The Extraordinary funds have been focused on promoting improvements in infrastructure and development of the higher education system. Additionally, it promotes the development of full-time academic staff qualification levels and supports the institutional projects that increase the quality of learning and teaching, including projects through external accreditation programmes. An example of an Extraordinary funding program is The Program for Teacher Professional Development (PRODEP). (OECD 2019a, 104). For more detailed information about PRODEP (see the following chapter 3.3).

Unfortunately, a proportion of the Extraordinary funds are not being used for "extraordinary" purposes but instead for Ordinary funds for everyday operations such as pension and staff payments; This has been an issue for the past ten years; this suggests that the allocation of ordinary funds is not providing the exact coverage for operational costs. However, the resources for staff cost and basic operating expenses in the ordinary funds are already significant. (OECD 2019a, 106).

Mexico’s complex higher education system that lacks a well-defined legal division of responsibilities is mirrored in a complex funding system for HEIs. Federal HEIs receive 100% of their Ordinary funding directly from the federal government. The amount depends on the yearly budget. The institutions choose where they prefer to allocate these funds. They can choose to allocate the budget in either institutional management (public management and good government), higher education and postgraduate services, scientific research and technological growth. The total of these sum amounts makes up the total of the ordinary funding. A specific formula to guide the allocation of resources to different areas does not exist. (OECD 2019a, 98-99).

Autonomous State Public universities and non-autonomous public HEIs are below the responsibility of the state (Intercultural Universities, Polytechnic Universities, Technological Universities, decentralised Institutes of Technology and other types of state HEIs such as music or art school) receive their share of Ordinary funding from the federal government and a fragment from the state government. (OECD 2019a, 99).

For autonomous State Public Universities outside the capital, the allocation is more complex. As mentioned above, the state and federal government provide Ordinary funding. However, the share of the total Ordinary funding is subject to individual negotiations per each autonomous institution. Therefore, the share of funding varies across Mexico. As, institutions such as the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán and the Universidad Autónoma de Tlaxcala receive less than 15% of Ordinary funding from state governments. Furthermore, for the non-autonomous public HEIs, the Ordinary funding is divided 50:50 from state and federal governments. (OECD 2019a, 99).

The GERD of Mexico has decreased from 50% to 30% in the past decade. GERD represents the expenditure or funding that goes into science, technology and innovation. Additionally, the percentage of GERD by sector performance has shifted from business (35.4%) and government (34.33%) having the highest expenditures in 2010, to Higher education leading in 2019 with 50.56% of GERD. (UIS 2021b). The definition of “GERD by sector of performance” refers to the entire internal expenditure performed during an exact period, divided by institutions corresponding to each sector (business, government, higher education, and private non-profit) independent of the source of funds (UIS 2021c). Table 2 demonstrates the yearly decline in the GERD percentage and how the GERD by sector of performance has shifted drastically towards Higher Education.

TABLE 2. Mexico's expenditure on R&D (UIS 2021b)

GERD									
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
GERD as a percentage of GDP	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3
GERD by sector of performance (%)									
Business enterprise	35.04	34.9	26.77	25.45	17.85	18.6	22.22	22.49	22.11
Government	34.33	32.76	38.47	41.8	32.33	30.12	26.38	26.18	26.19
Higher education	29.35	30.9	33.75	31.77	48.82	50.34	50.41	50.26	50.56
Private non-profit	1.28	1.44	1.01	0.97	1	0.93	0.99	1.07	1.15

The government is the primary fund source of the GERD, with 76.85%, secondly is the business enterprise with 18.59%. The rest of the GERD is financed by different economic sectors (Higher education, private non-profit, and abroad). The sequence of the funding sources over the previous years is demonstrated in Table 3.

TABLE 3. Mexico's source of funds on R&D (UIS 2021b)

GERD by the source of funds (%)									
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Business enterprise	33.02	32.88	24.66	20.55	15.71	17.38	18.78	19.05	18.58
Government	63.97	63.88	72.99	76.81	81.3	79.7	77.6	76.84	76.85

Higher education	2.03	1.98	1.37	1.52	1.97	1.74	2.23	2.54	2.83
Private non-profit	0.48	0.64	0.58	0.68	0.52	0.55	0.66	0.75	0.84
Funds from abroad	0.5	0.62	0.4	0.44	0.5	0.63	0.72	0.82	0.91

3.1.3 Social

According to SEP Bulletin no.38 (2021), the opening of public and private educational establishments will be subject to current health requirements. Moreover, the return to face-to-face classes will be safe, orderly, measured and careful, as long as the epidemiological traffic light is in the category green and as determined by local authorities (SEP 2021). Furthermore, according to the General Direction of the School Administration of the UNAM (2021), UNAM had to postpone the February 2021 admission exam; at the moment, the dates are not confirmed. UNAM currently has an open call for applicants interested in pursuing a degree in the open university and distance education system (DGAE 2021a, 2021b). As stated by the Mexican governmental COVID-19 site (2021), only two out of the thirty-two federal entities are in the green traffic light: Chiapas and Campeche (Gobierno de México 2021a).

According to the INEGI (2020), Mexico has 126 million people (INEGI 2020). The language of instruction is Spanish. (Business Finland 2020, 3). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, 10,986,234 Mexicans (ages 18-22 years old) study tertiary (UIS 2021a). The rates of tertiary (no specific age) education attainment increased from 23% in 2013 to 28% in 2019; meanwhile, they remained lower than the OECD average of 39% in 2013 and 45% in 2019 (OECD 2013, 4; OECD 2020b). In Mexico, the higher the level of education means, the higher the salary. (Andere 2004, 60).

In 2018, Mexico's highest tertiary graduates' fields were business, administration, and law with 33.6%; Engineering, manufacturing, and construction with 18.3%;

health and welfare with 11.5%; and Education with 11.2%. Table 4 demonstrates Finland's and Mexico's percentage of graduates by field of tertiary education. Finland is demonstrated to compare with Mexico since the commissioner provides Finnish education.

TABLE 4. Graduates by field (%) of total tertiary education (ISCED levels 5 to 8) in (OECD 2018)

	Country	
Field	Finland	Mexico
Education	6.8	11.2
Arts and humanities	10.5	3.4
Social sciences, journalism, and information	7.1	9.1
Business, administration and law	18.9	33.6
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	4.6	2.5
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)	7.0	5.1
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	16.5	18.3
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	2.1	2.0
Health and welfare	21.9	11.5
Services	4.6	3.3

3.1.4 Technological

In ICT, Mexico's percentage of graduates is among the highest among OECD and partner countries; it is ranked ten out of the forty-two OECD partners. As demonstrated above in Table 4, Mexico has a percentage of 5.1 in ICT graduates (OECD 2018).

3.1.5 Legal

In 2019, new significant changes to the education system were introduced in Mexico's new education reform. According to the 3rd article in the Official Journal of the Federation (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019a), everyone has the right to education. The State -Federation, States, Mexico City and Municipalities- will impart and guarantee initial preschool, primary, secondary, upper secondary and higher education. Initial, preschool, primary and secondary education make up basic education; this and the upper average will be mandatory, higher education will be in terms of section X of this article. (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019a, 1).[1]

Section X. of the 2019 reform states that the compulsory nature of higher education corresponds to the state. The federal and local authorities will establish policies to promote inclusion, permanence and continuity, in terms that the law indicates. Likewise, they will provide means of access to this type of education for people who meet the requirements established by public institutions (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019a, 3).[2]

The 2019 reform also states that teachers are fundamental agents of the educational process and, therefore, their involvement in social development is recognised. They will have the right to access a comprehensive system of education,

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[1] "Artículo 3o. Toda persona tiene derecho a la educación. El Estado -Federación, Estados, Ciudad de México y Municipios- impartirá y garantizará la educación inicial, preescolar, primaria, secundaria, media superior y superior. La educación inicial, preescolar, primaria y secundaria conforman la educación básica; ésta y la media superior serán obligatorias, la educación superior lo será en términos de la fracción X del presente artículo." (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019a, 1).

[2] "Fracción X. La obligatoriedad de la educación superior corresponde al Estado. Las autoridades federales y locales establecerán políticas para fomentar la inclusión, permanencia y continuidad, en términos que la ley señale. Asimismo, proporcionarán medios de acceso a este tipo educativo para las personas que cumplan con los requisitos dispuestos por las instituciones públicas" (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019a, 3).

preparation and updating, feedback by diagnostic evaluations to meet the objectives and purposes of the National Educational System. (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019a, 1).

In 2017 SEP held an evaluation (cited in OECD 2019b) on upper secondary and higher education programmes. The evaluation found a need to update the diagnostic document that specifies the funding that each educational institution receives, the total tuition fees, and the type of authority. In addition, the SEP recommended implementing a scheme, which outlines the measures through which educational institutes have access to the programme benefits. (OECD 2019b).

3.1.6 Environmental

Mexico has 3,186 HEIs, of which 2,218 are private and 986 are public. Furthermore, the new government in 2019 announced that 100 new universities would be installed (Business Finland 2020). Lastly, the new study plans and programs from the 2019 reform will have a perspective and a comprehensive orientation to educate the students about appreciation and respect for nature and caring for the environment (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019a, 2).

3.2 The objective states

Aguascalientes is one of the economically stronger states (Mexico Alliance System n.d.). Apart from Aguascalientes, other stronger states are the states of the Central Bajío-Occidente Alliance: Jalisco, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, Querétaro, and Aguascalientes. These states are essential because they are the five states with the highest economic growth in Mexico. The Central Bajío-Occidente Alliance aims to become the region with the highest Human Development Index in Latin America. Furthermore, to position itself as one of the more significant social welfare competitors globally (Mexico Alliance System n.d.). Also, the states Queretaro and San Luis Potosi will have new governors on the 6th of June 2021, which means the administration and funds will be new (El Financiero 2021). If TAMK Edu negotiates with them, they can make direct cooperation through them.

The capital Mexico City could also be a vital place to cooperate. However, according to commissioner Virpi Heinonen (Interview, October 2020), the capital is very conglomerated with competition, and it is not uncomplicated to make arrangements there (Heinonen 2020).

For example, the Municipal Presidency of Aguascalientes has many funds and priorities to promote education, especially support for higher education, and they always offer many courses for docents. They currently have no agreements with SEP or the National Council for Science and Technology (CONACYT); however, they seek to establish them. The Municipal Presidency of Aguascalientes through the Municipal Institute of Youth of Aguascalientes has awarded in the last two years 9080 scholarships at the undergraduate level to pay the degree process, which contributes to their early incorporation into the labour market. Additionally, the International Mobility Scholarship Program facilitates their participation in training stays abroad, strengthening the quality and relevance of education and contributing to better coverage, inclusion, and educational equity to construct a more developed society. For the fourth repeated year, in 2020, the Aguascalientes City Council awarded 500 international mobility scholarships through the "World Class Youth" program for young residents of the capital city between 18 and 35. Thus, when prioritizing the funding of fields of degrees (careers), they all have the same opportunity to participate in career support and international mobility support calls. (de la Torre de la Paz 2021).

Another vital organisation is the Aguascalientes Education Institute (IEA), a decentralized body of the State Government, with its own legal personality and assets, with responsibility for all types, levels and educational modalities taught, offered, or promoted in the entity. IEA wants to achieve educational municipalization, recognising and strengthening the municipality as a sovereign entity that can take charge of its educational system. (IEA 2021).

3.3 Funding instruments used in Mexico's Higher Education

Based on Eduardo Andere's research (2004, 64), students, educators, and organisations are supported by private and public scholarships and credit loan programs, either applying for support from a governmental or a non-profit organisation in Mexico. As mentioned in the economic outlook Table 3. (See 3.1.2), most of the scholarships and loans programs are governmentally funded. In Mexico, the most significant public financing source for HEIs is the CONACYT (Andere 2004, 64).

The funding instruments work in various ways, the majority of the funds are supervised by CONACYT, and some are not.

CONACYT is the Mexican governmental agency for science and technology support; it is a decentralised public branch of the state, un-sectorised, with legal personality, and has private assets. It possesses operational, administrative, and technical autonomy. The objective of CONACYT is to be the Federal Executive's advisory entity and specialised in articulating the federal government's public policies and promoting scientific research, technological growth, and innovation to encourage the technological modernisation of the country (CONACYT 2019a). The CONACYT funds act as a multiplier effect in human resources training and the generation of knowledge, technological, and innovation development. CONACYT provides many funding instruments. CONACYT restructures its budget programs to meet the financing needs that allow full compliance with its objectives that the country requires. To support and link the science, technology, and innovation sector, CONACYT has budgetary funding instruments destined to support growth. Those programs are classified as:

- Sector funds
- Mixed funds
- Institutional funds
- Institutional supports
- Innovation Stimulus Programs
- Tax Incentive for Research and Technology Development (EFIDT) (CONACYT 2019b).

The CONACYT funds are aimed at public and private HEI, universities, laboratories, centres, public and private companies. Moreover, its aims are directed to technologists, businesspeople, researchers, academics, and other people registered in the National Registry of Scientific and Technological Institutes and Companies (RENIECYT). (CONACYT 2019b).

Institutions applying for governmental funds (CONACYT) must be registered in the RENIECYT. Furthermore, for HEIs to apply for funding, they must be established in Mexico. Therefore, it is necessary to have the Federal Taxpayers Registry (RFC) for the legibility of registration. Additionally, the Unique Population Registry Code (CURP) is needed to obtain the RFC. Therefore, the person or entity applying for the RFC must be a citizen or resident of Mexico. Another requirement, the institutions need to be enrolled in The National Quality Postgraduate Program (PNPC). The PNPC is part of the public policy to promote the quality of the national postgraduate program that the CONACYT and the Undersecretariat of Higher Education of the SEP have promoted continuously since 1991. (Gobierno de México n.d.). Therefore, the funds cannot go directly to an institution outside of Mexico. Thus, it is difficult for TAMK Edu to apply for these grants or funds to provide services to Mexico.

Receiving a **grant** or **scholarship** refers to financial aid received by a student, a researcher or a teaching or research centre. An evident example from Mexico would be COMEXUS; through the Fulbright-García Robles scholarships, COMEXUS supports students, researchers and teachers - Mexicans and Americans - to accomplish postgraduate studies professionalisation programs, research stays in the United States and Mexico. The programs are financed by both countries' governments and, a small percentage, with resources from companies and donations from private foundations (COMEXUS 2013).

Another grant, according to the communications secretary of the municipal presidency of Aguascalientes, Enrique de la Torre de la Paz (Interview, February 2021), is the Yo Decido Seguir scholarship, which is intended for upper, higher and postgraduate students, provided by the Instituto Municipal de la Juventud de Aguascalientes (IMJUVA) and the executive office (de la Torre de la Paz 2021). Another grant is the International Mobility Scholarship Program to encourage young residents of Aguascalientes to acquire international, intercultural skills (High Order Skills HOS), which is funded by the Municipal Presidency of Aguascalientes (de la Torre de la Paz 2021).

The Beca Nacional (National scholarship) from CONACYT is another grant. According to CONACYT (email, February 2021), the national Scholarships for studying in Mexico are aimed at students who wish to pursue postgraduate studies (speciality, Master's or Doctorate) in a (postgraduate) program registered in the PNPC. The program must be taught in person and commit to being a "Full Time" student; therefore, people should not be working during the studies. (CONACYT 2021).

Other grant examples are Programa Jóvenes Escribiendo el Futuro, Becas para el Bienestar Benito Juárez, Becas UNAM, FAIMER, Becas al extranjero (Abroad scholarships), and many others.

Tax incentives are meant for large companies that already have resources for innovation, and it is a tax credit (Busom, Corchuelo, Martínez Ros 2011, 1). For example, EFIDT is an incentive granted through a tax credit to the taxpayer who makes expenses and investments in Research and Development Technology and is creditable against the taxpayers' income tax. The tax credit is equal to 30% of expenses and incremental investments in Research and Development Technology, compared to the average amount of expenses and investments in the three years before the year it is requested or a maximum amount of 50 million pesos. (Gobierno de México 2020, 2).

Direct funding is another funding instrument. The funding goes straight from a government entity into a small or medium-sized company. (Busom et al. 2011, 1). An example of this would be The National Strategic Program for Technology and Open Innovation (PENTA). However, PENTA is not limited to companies. PENTA is aimed at nano, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, HEIs, research centres, technological institutes, rural production companies and individuals with business activities dedicated to technological development and innovation within the Penta helix articulation model considering the environment as a relevant element of the scheme, and lastly who are registered in RENIECYT.

(Gobierno de México 2019). Another example of direct funding is the Programa de Innovación en Jalisco (PROINNJAL).

Project funding is also a well-known instrument, seen generally for all competitive fixed-term resource allocation types. They have specific target groups and usually want that the recipient gives a detailed account of objectives, possible results, and beneficiaries and a time frame (Jacob n.d., 13). An example of this would be the extraordinary fund programme PRODEP; it is an extraordinary fund and significant funds since it is extensive (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019b). PRODEP is part of CONACYT; however, the requirements for applying for these funds are different. In addition, it has a different legal doctrine.

The main objective of that fund is to professionalize full-time teachers in higher education to achieve research-teaching, technological development, and innovation capacities and, with social responsibility, articulate and consolidate in academic organisations and generate a new academic community proficient in transforming their environment. (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019b, 81) Also, it is aimed at degrees, projects, continuous training, soft skills, masters, doctorates and others. Foreign institutes can apply if they meet the required criteria. The good thing about this fund is that most universities can request financing for their professors and professors (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019b).

The institutions applying for the funds are responsible for disseminating and promoting the call. Also, they are responsible for the application dates of the call. The positive mechanism about PRODEP is that the number of professors who can receive funding is not limited. Also, PRODEP funds are granted to the following modalities: a) Doctorates and conventional master's degrees. b) Programs with a reduced stay for a doctorate or master's degree. c) Funding for writing a doctoral or master's thesis. d) Medical specialities with clinical emphasis in the health area. And e) Technological specialities (Only Technological Universities) (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019b, 82).

The beneficiaries receive a minimum monthly compensatory grant for conventional, reduced-stay or thesis writing programs abroad or domestic. Furthermore, the Mexican institution receives the amount for enrolment, tuition, and graduation fees, which goes according to the official documentation issued by the HEI that grants the degree, according to the required teaching periods and amounts. (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019b, 25-27). For more information about the fund's distinct types and amounts (See the Diario Oficial de la Federación: Rules of Operation of PRODEP chapter 3.4 and 3.6).

Taking out a **credit** or **loan** is also another instrument that is used in Mexico. The Fund for Human Resources Development (FIDERH) is a significant loan source to finance the postgraduate studies of Mexican students. It is a federal trust controlled by the bank of Mexico for over 40 years, and it is part of the CONACYT. The student must maintain a minimum GPA of 8 in order to receive the payments. Students receive the payments directly to their accounts to pay their tuition, maintenance or medical insurance. Students do not make payments for their credit during the studying phase and 12 months after graduating, nor do they generate interest. Instead, the payments are made in Mexican pesos in 40 quarterly payments (10 years). The Banco de México publishes the interest monthly. The interest rate is 0.75 of the Average Percentage Cost. (Gobierno de México 2021b).

Bilateral and **unilateral contracts** are other necessary funding instruments. Bilateral refers to the agreement in which two students are exchanged, and it is not required the students go at the same time and university. The student leaving on exchange pays the bilateral fees to his student institution, who then uses that money to receive the student from another country with no charge and vice-versa. Bilateral cooperation ensures that students are not limited by their financial resources to have international exchange opportunities worldwide. Moreover, in a unilateral contract, an institution sends or hosts a student without reciprocity from the other institution. The student is in charge of paying all fees to the host institution. (IFMSA n.d.).

3.4 SWOT Analysis

For the **Strengths** part, in Mexico, the professional and governmental services, education and health care services have been the most resilient. The harshest drop in this service sector's revenues was 1.7% (Zaga, Ortiz & Leal Trujillo 2020). In 2019, Higher education led to GERD with 50.56% (UIS 2021b); This is important for TAMK Edu because it means that the education sector is resilient even amid a pandemic.

According to the 2019 reform, everyone has the right to education. The State - Federation, States, Mexico City and Municipalities- will impart and guarantee initial preschool, primary, secondary, upper secondary and higher education. The reform also states that female and male teachers will have the right to access a comprehensive system of education, training and updating, feedback by diagnostic evaluations to meet the objectives and purposes of the National Educational System. (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019a, 1). These strengths are essential since there is a market for TAMK Edu’s teacher education services in Mexico.

In the **Weaknesses** part, unfortunately, a proportion of the Extraordinary funds are not being used for “extraordinary” purposes but instead for Ordinary funds for everyday operations such as pension and staff payments; This has been an issue for the past ten years; this suggests that the allocation of ordinary funds is not providing the exact coverage for operational costs. Additionally, the resources for staff cost and basic operating expenses in the ordinary funds are already hefty. (OECD 2019a, 106). An additional weakness is a decline in the GERD of Mexico; it has declined from 50% to 30% in the past decade (UIS 2021b).

For **Opportunities**, the private HEIs are an excellent prospect for TAMK Edu; private schools subsequently function with a high level of autonomy and make their own choices about internal governance and organisation, resource allocation, academic decisions, and staffing (OECD 2019a, 76). Therefore, when making cooperation, it is far easier than non-autonomous institutions. Furthermore, there are 2,218 private HEIs in Mexico, which means that the market is vast. Other opportunities are the 100 new universities that will be installed (Business Finland 2020, 8).

The amount states receive of the Participations funds depends on their contribution to national economic output; Therefore, the economically stronger states are great opportunities since they receive higher amounts of Participations funds and have higher revenues from state taxes. The stronger states theoretically have a greater sum of resources that could be allocated to higher education. (OECD 2019a, 74). These states are essential for TAMK Edu when deciding where to focus.

Other occasions are the predicted growth in GDP, which is forecasted to increase by 3.6% in 2021 and 3.4% in 2022. Moreover, the unemployment rate is to decrease to 5% in 2021 and 4.8% in 2022. (OECD 2020a). The rates of tertiary (no specific age) education attainment increased from 23% in 2013 to 28% in 2019 (OECD 2020b).

The **Threats** lack transparent, consolidated public and spending data in Mexico's higher education sector since many HEIs do not have in order the internal accounting. Moreover, the cost allocation systems do not report real spending on education activities. (OECD 2019a, 90-91).

Other threats are the postponement of education activities, such as UNAM postponing the February 2021 admission exam. (DGAE 2021a, 2021b). Moreover, only two out of the thirty-two federal entities are in the green traffic light: Chiapas and Campeche (Gobierno de México 2021a).

3.5 Research methodology

The author used the Research Onion to compose the thesis since the research was done with a **multi-method** strategy. It provides a detailed description of the research progress' phases. It gives an effective progression through the research methodology. (Thesismind 2019). The Research Onion is demonstrated below (Figure 1.)

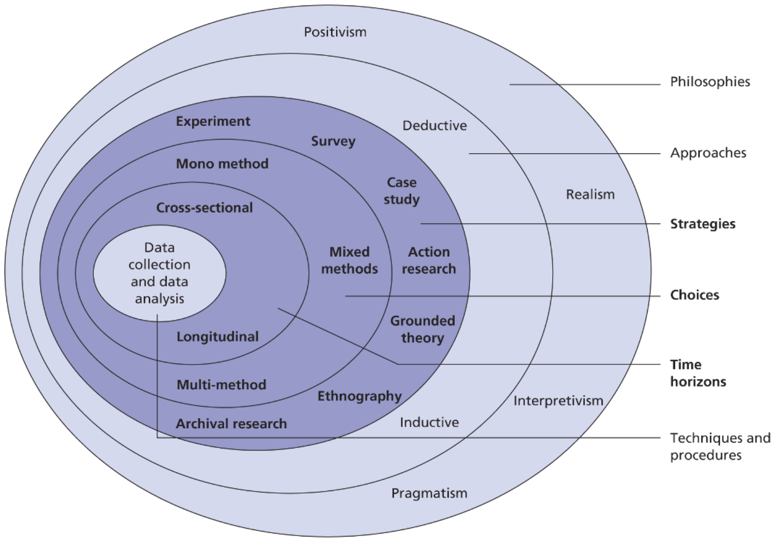

FIGURE 1. Research Onion (Saunders et al. 2007, cited in Thesismind 2019).

From the philosophies step, the research took a **positivism** approach, since the studies are based purely on facts, the research is purely objective, and the author is independent of the research (Business Research Methodology n.d. a).

From the Approaches step, the author used an **inductive** approach since the theories are the results of empirical research. Research advances from empirical research to theoretical results (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, cited in Soini 2007, 7). The interviews acted as empirical research, and through them, the rest of the data was gathered (research and theoretical data).

Action research was used for the strategies step since the study assumes that the social world is constantly changing, research being part of that change. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (2000, cited in Business Research Methodology n.d. b), they acknowledge that individual phases specified in the Action Research may overlap; and an initial plan developed for the research may become outdated in a short duration of time due to a range of factors. (Business Research Methodology n.d. b). During this thesis, the initial plan for the research became outdated in a short duration of time, as explained further below.

For the choices section of the research onion, the research was done with a multi-method approach. Both **qualitative** and **quantitative** were used. For the quantitative data, existing statistics about the Mexican GDP, GERD, unemployment rate, numbers of HEIs, percentage of tertiary rate and graduates by field of tertiary education were used. The current statistics were gathered from sources such as the OECD, UNESCO and INEGI.

For the qualitative data, systematic observation and written materials were used. The theories used were written material from universities and institutes with experience with funding instruments and financial mechanisms in Mexico, A study from Eduardo Andere, The International Higher Education market: Mexico's case (Andere 2004); A study of the stakeholder map of the Mexican education system (Business Finland 2020); Governmental blogs and webpages; Mexico's economic outlook done by the OECD (OECD 2020a); Research papers and articles about internationalisation, Internationalisation of HEIs, entry modes and strategic alliances and cooperation between companies. Theses, literature, internet sources, electronic databases on this specific subject were used for the research. Education policies and articles about how the education system works had great content that helped create the PESTLE analysis. The commissioner shared various articles and information about the overview of the Mexican market. Some empirical research was done, such as open-ended interviews with people who have ties to the Mexican education sector and know about funding instruments and financial mechanisms. Some of the articles, interviews, and contents were in Spanish; therefore, they were translated into English.

For the **data collection and data analysis**, most of the thesis was carried out using secondary data from experts, with some primary data (interviews and empirical research).

During the initial stages of the thesis, the author did part of the thesis while being in Mexico. Doing part of the thesis in Mexico was highly beneficial because it allowed the author to acquire fundamental data from friends, family, and local people through everyday conversation. Then the author would confirm this information by researching it thoroughly with official sources. Also, being in Mexico during the initial parts of the thesis helped the author coordinate better the interview times since there is an eight-hour difference from Mexico to Finland. Finally, the rest of the thesis was completed in Finland.

For the primary data, the author did **interviews**, personalised questions were planned for each interviewee; the reason for that was because standardized questions do not apply to every interviewee since they have different professional backgrounds. Thus, for example, the interviewees were a rector from a university in Aguascalientes, the Communications Secretary of the Municipal Presidency of Aguascalientes, and Governmental institutions associated with financing instruments PRODEP, PENTA, and CONACYT.

A video call interview was held with the rector Emmanuel Carillo Martinez of El Retoño Technological University (UTR), a decentralized public institution. From this interview, the author acquired information on the funding instruments from a rector's perspective. According to the rector, most students (approximately 60%) receive internal scholarships at UTR for tuition, transport and mobility funds. The rest of the students receive external funding, either from a public or private organisation. For external scholarships, the students have to apply individually. In addition, some funds exist and provide funds for groups of students to study abroad; however, the rector could not disclose the information of those funds due to a confidentiality agreement. The rector suggests that for TAMK Edu and a Mexican institute to cooperate, the negotiation should be done directly with the federal government organisation, like CONACYT. Alternatively, to make a bilateral contract. (Carillo Martinez, interview, February 2021).

The interview with the Communications Secretary of the Municipal Presidency of Aguascalientes, Enrique de la Torre de la Paz, was very beneficial to this thesis since it informed the author of the available funds the Municipality of Aguascalientes has to support students (in postgraduate degrees and continuous education). Furthermore, the interview provided the author with new fund institutions that have been mentioned in the funding instruments in Mexico (see 3.3). Also, from this interview, the idea of TAMK Edu making direct cooperation with the state or municipality government emerged. (De la Torre de la Paz, interview, February 2021).

The interview through emails with CONACYT's National Scholarships Allocation Staff was also beneficial. From this interview, CONACYT informed the author which funds are currently available. Moreover, the author discovered the funding instrument aimed at teachers ‘PRODEP’. Also, CONACYT provided general knowledge about the National Scholarships. (CONACYT, Email message, February 6th, 2021).

The email from Rohkus Innovation about PENTA informed the author that the PENTA funds are frozen. In case PENTA is reactivated, they will inform the author. The author planned to make a method guide to apply for this fund to help with TAMK Edu. However, the author did not continue making an application method guide for this fund since the funds are frozen. (Rohkus Innovation, email message, March 2021).

The emails from PRODEP’s support staff provided the author with the list of all foreign institutions eligible for the PRODEP program. Since TAMK was not on that list, PRODEP cited the information required for unknown foreign institutions, referred to in the Operating Rules of the year 2020, "Annex 3d Beneficiaries, requirements and selection processes for the calls...”. Annex 3d is mentioned later in PRODEP’s second method in the recommendations (See 4.2). The author had already this information before PRODEP’s staff provided it; therefore, this interview confirmed that PRODEP is a fund with high probabilities of working for TAMK Edu.

For the secondary data, the theoretical framework provided the author with expert’s views and data on how to make a partnership possible. It provided information on globalisation, internationalisation, internationalisation of HEIs, entry modes, strategic alliances, and cooperation between companies, KT transfer activities, education export, financial mechanisms and instruments theory.

The PESTLE analysis helped the reader understand how the institutions are set up and how the financial mechanisms in Mexico’s higher education sector work. It also provides TAMK Edu the market research information to help them when entering the market.

The author found various information on funds available for all sorts of degrees (Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Doctorates) and various fields (healthcare, nursing, engineering, pedagogy, entrepreneurship, and many others). However, with the pandemic, a lot of the funds started to get cancelled. Several times when searching for funding instruments, the webpage platform would show that the fund is operational. Afterwards, after checking that same webpage after a couple of days, the webpage was not found; this happened many times with the governmental funds from CONACYT. The message "Not Found. The requested URL was not found on this server" would show up; That code means that the websites were being taken off by the persons in charge of the funds. Therefore, it is the liability of the owner's website that it is not working, which means that many funds were frozen due to Covid-19 or just federal government justifications. The missing web pages slowed the thesis process since time and effort were spent researching those various funds, only to be taken down a couple of weeks after.

Following those unfortunate events, the author decided to look for funds that could work currently during the global pandemic, but most notably after the global pandemic declines. The author looked and focused on long-term funding instruments for this thesis. To find funds that can work in the present and the future after Covid-19.

The author also decided to narrow the focus down to only postgraduates (Master's and Doctorates) degrees and docents and educators, and this was because this is a bachelor's thesis, and there is not enough space to write about all degrees and fields. Also, it got narrowed because it facilitated the research process by having a reduced criterion of funds available. Moreover, the last reason was that Andere (2010, 65) assumes that it is more beneficial to fund postgraduate education.

> I will assume next that the grants given by such universities will go to students pursuing graduate education rather than undergraduate. This is a plausible assumption because public universities have a lower risk in financing graduate students rather than undergraduate students. The probability of a university's already financing their undergraduate students, graduates, or faculty to pursue graduate work is higher than financing undergraduate students to pursue undergraduate studies. By financing the former, the university invests in human capital that will most probably return as professors to develop new fields of study for the same university, whereas an investment in undergraduate students is less safe in that same perspective. (Andere 2010, 65)

The author also realised that HEIs are not the only institutions TAMK Edu can target, but they could also make partnerships directly with municipal and state governments. Since governments are also important factors, they can accelerate the partnership; meanwhile, TAMK Edu still provides services to teachers and Mexican HEIs. Therefore, the author focused on the states that elected new governors in 2018 since they were recent. These were going to be the targeted states for TAMK Edu when collaborating with governments. However, it became more evident and pragmatic after time to focus on the stronger economic states and the states with new governors. For example, the states Queretaro and San Luis Potosi will have new governors on the 6th of June 2021, which means the administration and funds will be new (El Financiero 2021). Apart from that, they are part of the economically stronger states. Therefore, the author decided to make this thesis guide for long-term goals; this thesis information can help TAMK Edu in the future.

For the conclusion, the author combines the expert's knowledge from the theoretical framework with the author's research and gives advice and recommendations to TAMK Edu from the data collection.

4 CONCLUSION

To conclude, this thesis was done to understand how to make a partnership between a Finnish institute (TAMK Edu) and a Mexican institute. The environment is complex; a market plan with a market overview is necessary for TAMK Edu since they provide innovative courses or training to other HEIs. On the other hand, the majority of the Mexican HEIs lack extraordinary funding. Therefore, for the partnership to work, it is essential to understand the environment and funding know-how.

The thesis questions were: “How to make a partnership between TAMK Edu and a Mexican HEI, institution, and university”? and “Which funding instruments can aid the HEIs, institutions, and universities in Mexico when making cooperation with TAMK Edu?” To answer those questions, below is the data analysis answering both questions.

4.1 Findings & Results

The thesis used both marketing, internationalisation of HEIs, and financial material and data to help make the partnership plan possible amongst Mexican and Finnish institutes.

For TAMK Edu to successfully enter Mexico, they must acknowledge various factors. According to Taskoh's findings (2014), Larsen (2013) states that internationalisation in higher education can be categorised in three main frameworks: motivations (rationales for internationalising in higher education); strategies (types of strategies, activities, and initiatives); and locations (where internationalisation takes place, if at home or abroad) (Taskoh 2014). All three of these factors are essential to make a partnership between TAMK Edu and Mexican institutions. The reason for that is because the ‘motives’ are the economic growth and positive financial outcomes for TAMK Edu, the ‘strategies’ are the types of market-entry methods and activities that TAMK Edu will use when internationalising, and the ‘location’ helps TAMK Edu decide if they should internationalise and with who from Mexico’s analysis about environment and choice of partners.

Offering something new is fundamental when selling educational services since TAMK Edu and the client falls under the same service providers' industry. Moreover, TAMK Edu’s clients are also academic organisations capable of producing knowledge among themselves. Therefore, TAMK Edu must offer their clients something that cannot be found from their client's competencies, such as innovative courses or training.

In Finland, the education export falls under knowledge-based knowledge since the experience economy principles support services; this adds a holistic value that attracts clients from everywhere. Because not only do they visit Finland for obtaining the knowledge (in many cases, they are already acquainted with it), but to understand how that knowledge is applied in the Finnish culture and society. (Brito 2019, 28)

The entry mode that TAMK Edu should focus on for the partnership with a Mexican institution is ‘the strategic alliances and cooperation between companies.’ Cooperation is a partnership for companies that pursue to carry out a specific activity or project. They cooperate by uniting or sharing part of their activities and resources to improve their competitive advantage. (Webster 1999, cited in Mikkonen 2020, 32-33). However, instead of companies, it will be between HEIs. This alliance is a bit different from other entry modes, and it is different because for it to work, there needs to be a third variable, external funding.

According to Wiesen, a financial mechanism reveals how an organisation, program or business receives the funding necessary to remain operational. Organisations such as HEIs obtain funding from various means, such as funds or grants. (Wiesen 2021).

Funding is essential for any partnership to work. When a company provides services to another company, payment of services is made during the transaction. The simplest definition of education export is the selling of educational products paid for by a foreign customer. Therefore, the alliance is like exporting education, but the only difference is that it must include the third variable of the external funding; For this case, it will be a transaction between TAMK Edu and Mexican HEIs or governmental institutions.

Unfortunately, most of the Extraordinary funds in Mexican HEIs are not being used for “extraordinary” purposes but instead for Ordinary funds for ordinary operations such as pension and staff payments; This has been an issue for the past ten years; this implies that the allocation of ordinary funds is not providing the exact coverage for operational costs.

Extraordinary funds have been focused on supporting improvements in infrastructure and the development of the higher education system. Also, it promotes the development of full-time academic staff qualification levels and supports the institutional projects that increase the quality of learning and teaching, including projects through external accreditation programmes. In this case, the extraordinary funds would be used for TAMK Edu’s services.

Because of these unfortunate activities, there needs to be a third variable, external funding. Therefore, the funding will come from an outside factor, either a governmental or non-governmental institution that provides funding instruments to institutions for innovative courses and training. In this case, TAMK Edu will provide the Mexican HEIs with educational services.

‘Funding instrument’ refers to an arrangement for financing money to students, educators, and research performers such as an individual or organisations. (Jacob n.d., 13).

Because there needs to be the third variable (Funding), the alliance is different from the usual type. This type of alliance is called ‘governmental or international institution projects.’ As mentioned in the theoretical framework of the thesis, it means that governments or non-governmental institution support and promotes research or technology aid to organisations or institutions. Therefore, it takes three parties to make the partnership successful: TAMK Edu, The Mexican HEI, and the institution providing the funding.

There are many types of funding instruments available, as evident in funding instruments methods in Mexico (See 3.3). However, for TAMK Edu and Mexican institutes to make the partnership possible, there needs to be a criterion of specific funding instruments; TAMK Edu needs to receive the overall expenses. However, one thing to consider is that it is not ideal for TAMK Edu to receive students individually since the time and human resources required is greater than the profit. Thus, it needs to be a minimum of five participants who apply for TAMK Edu services and apply together. (Heinonen, Interview, October 2020). Because the target customers for TAMK Edu are educators and policymakers, and HEIs instead of students themselves. The five-participant rule means that students receiving individual grants (such as CONACYT, Becas para el Bienestar Benito Juárez, Becas UNAM, Abroad scholarships, National scholarships, and other similar grants) and individual students' loans are not ideal funding instruments to use to apply for TAMK Edu's services since the students must apply individually for scholarships. (Carillo Martinez, interview, February 2021).

When it comes to bilateral contract and tax incentives, they do not generate a profit. For example, in a bilateral contract in Finland, a Finnish student does not pay tuition. Moreover, tax incentive just allows certain taxpayers to deduct the amount of the credit they have accrued from the total they owe to taxing authorities.

Among the requirements mentioned in the funding instruments, something to consider is that the HEIs need to be enrolled in the PNPC to get governmental funding (Gobierno de México n.d.). In addition, the funds cannot go directly to an institution outside of Mexico. Thus, it is more difficult for TAMK Edu to apply for some grants or funds to provide services to Mexico.

Therefore, those funding instruments will not be taken into consideration for the cooperation. However, there are occasional cases and some loopholes that help make cooperation possible. The funding instruments that could work for the cooperation are a) students receiving a grant or loan (minimum of 5 participants), b) Project funding, and c) direct funding. The methods of how to apply will be demonstrated in the recommendations for TAMK Edu (See 4.2)

Some of the ten most-cited international activities (strategies) of KT could help when making the partnership between TAMK EDU; however, only a few can be considered due to the limitation of the SEP and other factors.

Spin-off and enterprise creation require a considerable investment since it means creating a new company overseas for research purposes. Moreover, patents and licensing have a high risk since the expertise can be stolen easily. However, University-industry networks, CPD, International cooperation; Grants; National subsidies; Regional subsidies are like ‘the strategic alliances and cooperation between companies.’ Grants, national and regional subsidies act as both KT activities and as funding instruments.

European affairs and Alumni affairs do not work since European affairs are only involved inside European projects. Moreover, Alumni affairs do no help when making a partnership since it only manages alumni’s contacts.

TAMK Edu has some networks in Mexico; therefore, they should consider international extension and penetration since they will create new relationships in foreign networks and improve the current relationships.

When making the new networks, TAMK Edu needs to create long-lasting business meaningful relationships. All relationships are meaningful since all companies have relationships with customers, distributors, suppliers, and competitors. (Whitelock 2002, 342-346). The network model of internationalisation is based on the idea that its strength lies in its interactions and relationships with other market participants. Compared to the other internationalisation's traditional theories and models, which constrain the company's focus on itself. They do not examine networks or value chains, which leads to overlooking collaboration in the internationalisation process. In contemporary economic reality, alliances and partnerships are gaining importance (Ratajczak-Mrozek 2012, 30-36).

Therefore, not only should TAMK Edu make meaningful relationships with the institutions that it wants to make partnerships with, but also with the outside factors such as competitors, governmental institutions, or other organisations that are involved in the education industry. In addition, Carillo Martinez suggests that for TAMK Edu and a Mexican institute to make a partnership, the negotiation should be done directly with the federal government organisation, like CONACYT. (Carillo Martinez, interview, February 2021).

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, alliances are complicated, problems of opportunism behaviour can emerge. Therefore, complex decisions are required. For the alliance to work appropriately, the following suggestions must be considered: (1) the choice of the partner, (2) the alliance structure, and (3) the administration of the alliance (Albaum et al. 2002, cited in Mikkonen 2020, 30).

TAMK Edu should choose the right ally or partner carefully. The company and partner must share the vision simultaneously to help achieve each other's objectives and not just use them to exploit them through the alliance. Therefore, an extensive analysis must be done when choosing a partner.

A contractual safeguard should be created to act as legal protection. First, TAMK Edu should circumvent the knowledge that it transfers to avoid opportunism. Second, TAMK Edu, at all times, should avoid providing the Mexican institution with the official name of the funding instrument. Third, both institutes should make a contract with a requirement; for example, The Mexican HEI will only receive the funds from the funding instruments when making a partnership with TAMK Edu; this will prevent institutions from just receiving the funds and excluding TAMK Edu out of the agreement. Lastly, a genuine understanding and commitment are required.

After carefully choosing the partner, the goal is to increase benefits for both parties, which means building trust is required from both parties. Thus, understanding cultural differences is required to build interpersonal relationships that facilitate harmony and trust between both companies.

According to the theoretical framework, part of internationalisation is the complexity of entering a new environment; companies face different factors that they are not accustomed to in their country of origin. One of those significant problems is the lack of knowledge that slows down companies' operations process. Therefore, to understand the viability of a new market, companies carry out an extensive market analysis. From the research part, it is clear that it is difficult to enter any new market without a market analysis of the environment, especially the Mexican market since it is very complex.

Understanding this environment is essential to the company's executives that want to expand its market since it will inform them about which countries to enter and which customers to supply; this will define the organisation structure for the market entry. Therefore, firms should consider and evaluate their position, their customers, and the market environment. (Whitelock 2002, 342-346).

According to the PESTLE analysis, in Mexico, there co-exist three different patterns between institutional autonomy and public authority: (1) Autonomous universities (federal universities and State Public Universities), (2) Non-autonomous public HEIs, and (3) Private HEIs (OECD 2019a, 75).

Autonomous universities in Mexico have comprehensive control over key decisions about internal organisation and governance; the allocation and management of their funds; human resources (recruitment, incomes, dismissals, and promotions); and especially academic autonomy (including decisions about student admissions, academic content, and the introduction of degree programmes) (OECD 2019a, 76).

Federal non-autonomous institutions function below the supervision of SEP. In contrast, non-autonomous state institutions function below state education authorities' supervision (state ministers of education) and SEP. The supervision from SEP or simultaneously state ministers of education authorities and SEP includes exercising control of funding levels, curriculum, staffing levels, and infrastructures improvements. (OECD 2019a, 76).

Private schools subsequently function with a high level of autonomy, with the ability to make their own choices about internal governance and organisation, resource allocation, academic decisions, and staffing. Nevertheless, for private schools to get accredited, they must get approved and registered by the SEP

(Bishop n.d.). Therefore, private institutions can make their own decisions if they get the accreditation.

According to the SWOT analysis, in the ‘Strengths’ part, the professional and governmental services, education and health care services have been the most resilient during the Covid-19. The harshest drop in this service sector's revenues was 1.7% (Zaga, Ortiz & Leal Trujillo 2020); This means that Mexico is still a great market even during the pandemic. For the ‘Weakness’, Mexico’s GERD has declined from 50% to 30% in the past decade (UIS 2021b). The drop in GERD means that fewer funds are going into Research & Development.

For the ‘opportunities’, the amount states receive of the Participations funds depends on their contribution to national economic output; Therefore, the economically stronger states are great opportunities since they receive higher amounts of Participations funds and have higher revenues from state taxes. The stronger states theoretically have a greater sum of resources that could be allocated to higher education. (OECD 2019a, 74). Therefore, TAMK Edu should focus on economically stronger states such as the Central Bajío-Occidente Alliance when targeting a specific area. The ‘Threats’ in Mexico are the lack of transparent, consolidated public and spending data in Mexico’s higher education sector since many HEIs do not have in order the internal accounting. Moreover, the cost allocation systems do not report real spending on education activities. (OECD 2019a, 90-91). Other threats are postponements of education activities, such as UNAM postponing the February 2021 admission exam due to COVID-19. (DGAE 2021a, 2021b).

4.2 Recommendations

Based on this research, TAMK Edu should focus on Autonomous universities and Private institutions since they have fund allocation autonomy, and they are not circumscribed by the federal government SEP. However, if TAMK Edu decides to partner with non-autonomous public HEIs, they need to consider the funding instruments to facilitate the negotiation. Furthermore, even with Autonomous universities and private institutions, having the funding instruments data will increase the chances of making the partnership possible since they can also apply.

As mentioned, only specific funds help with the collaboration between TAMK Edu and Mexican institutes. There are two methods in which TAMK Edu can make partnerships with Mexican HEIs through these PRODEP funds. For the **first method** to work, TAMK Edu needs to negotiate with a Mexican Institute enrolled in the PNPC. An agreement of terms needs to be clarified, such as the number of professors and other important factors. Once an agreement of partnership is settled between the Mexican institute and TAMK Edu, the Mexican institute will apply for PRODEP (mentioned previously See 3.3). After that, the Mexican Institute will disseminate and promote the call for professors to apply for participation in this programme. The Mexican institute will also oversee the professors chosen for the programme and administrate the funds. Once the Mexican institute receives the funds, they pay the receiving HEI (TAMK Edu) immediately for the tuition fees and other expenses (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019b, 43). Lastly, TAMK Edu provides services to the professors; this completes the partnerships.

The **second method** works if a foreign HEI is not listed in the PNPC; they can apply through a different process. According to the rules of operation of PRODEP and an email from PRODEP (email, February 2021), Annex 3d states that, in the case of high-quality postgraduate programs abroad, whose country of delivery does not make public its classification, the documents indicated must be submitted:

1. The official name of the special doctorate or master's program and level (master's or doctorate).
2. Curriculum that includes:
    a) The objectives of the program.
    b) The Lines of Generation and Innovative Application of Knowledge (LGAC) that are developed.
    c) The entry and exit mechanisms.
    d) The minimum and maximum time to complete the studies, including the completion of the thesis.

3. The basic academic core taught by the program must be made up of a minimum of 12 teachers with a doctorate.
4. The academic training and demonstrable experience of the research teaching staff. Evidence recognized (original research articles, scientific and textbooks, patents, etcetera.).
5. The research development of the teaching staff in an area of program speciality.
6. From one to two articles on average in indexed journals per teacher, per year in the last two years.
7. More than 80% of the teachers must have published in the last two years.
8. The ratio of students should be two to four per teacher.
9. The applicant selection and evaluation mechanisms.
10. The terminal efficiency.
11. The linkage agreements with organizations in the disciplinary field and joint results.
12. The available infrastructure of the PE (bibliographic collection, classrooms, laboratories, etcetera.) (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019b, 117). [3]

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[3]

1. “Nombre oficial del PE y nivel (maestría o doctorado).
2. Plan de estudios que incluya:
    a) Objetivos del PE.
    b) LGAC que se cultivan.
    c) Mecanismos de ingreso y egreso.
    d) Tiempo mínimo y máximo para concluir los estudios incluyendo la realización de la tesis.
3. El núcleo académico básico que imparta el PE que debe estar formado por un mínimo de 12 profesores/as con grado de doctor.
4. Formación académica y experiencia demostrable de la planta docente en investigación. Evidencias reconocidas (artículos de investigación original, libros científicos y de texto, patentes, etc.).
5. Desarrollo de investigación de la planta docente en un área de la especialidad del PE.
6. De uno a dos artículos en promedio en revistas indizadas por profesor/ra, por año en los últimos dos años.
7. Más de 80% de los/as profesores/ras deberán haber realizado publicaciones en los últimos dos años.
8. La proporción de alumnos/as debe ser de dos a cuatro por profesor/ra.
9. Mecanismos de selección de aspirantes y de evaluación.
10. Eficiencia terminal.
11. Convenios de vinculación con organizaciones en el ámbito disciplinar y resultados conjuntos.

In addition, other essential documents must be submitted, documents indicated in subsection i. to x. (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019b, 116; Appendix 1.).

Therefore, foreign universities are exempted from being registered at the PNPC (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019b, 117). Furthermore, since TAMK acts as a foreign university, TAMK Edu could get the fund directly if a group of professors (minimum of 5) apply to study at TAMK. For this, TAMK Edu would be responsible for promoting a call in Mexico. Additionally, in case TAMK needs more requirements, they should collaborate with the University of Tampere to get all the requirements needed.

Both methods to apply can be taxing but not unmanageable. The first method helps make a partnership with Mexican institutions and the second method allows TAMK Edu to export their services directly.

Another way to collaborate is to cooperate directly with a governmental state or municipality. Especially the stronger states from the Central Bajío-Occidente Alliance: Jalisco, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, Querétaro, and Aguascalientes. These states are essential because they are the five states with the highest economic growth in Mexico. (Mexico Alliance System n.d.). Moreover, as mentioned in the research part, economically stronger states receive higher amounts of Participations funds and have higher revenues from state taxes. Therefore, theoretically, these states have more resources, and if they choose, they can be allocated to education. Therefore, the three funding instruments that could be used are students (group more than 5) receiving a grant or loan, project funding, and direct funding since the governments can deliver them.

With the current pandemic and the future requirements of remote work and school, TAMK Edu can provide knowledge about online education because it is an advantage that Finland has. Finland has many years of experience in remote education, and they have suitable methods to retain the student and make the classes more interesting (Finnish National Agency... 2020). Therefore, TAMK

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12. Infraestructura disponible del PE (acervo bibliográfico, aulas, laboratorios, etc.)."
(Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019b, 117).

Edu can provide services to the professors or those municipalities. Furthermore, the cooperation also works after the pandemic; the cooperation between TAMK Edu and either government would mean that teachers will come to Finland to receive the services. Therefore, the strategies are long-term goal oriented.

The plan would be for TAMK Edu to consult with either state or municipal government. Next, the state or municipal government chooses which funding instrument to use for this collaboration. The state or municipal government then holds a call inviting professors to apply for an education development program. Finally, the state or municipal government funds TAMK Edu for its services, and TAMK Edu provides services to the professors. As a result, the professors are better equipped; thus, better professors that understand well pedagogy have a better chance of retaining students during lectures, and if students do better in school, the chances of them dropping out of school are lower. Therefore, in the long term, this is beneficial for the government to improve their teaching capacities.

These methods could provide TAMK Edu with many new relationships with institutions to make partnerships. However, TAMK Edu needs to frequently check for updates in the funds because, as seen in the research process, the social world is constantly changing, research (funds) being part of that change. Many times, the initial plan for the research became outdated in a short duration of time.

With all the imperfect flaws, Mexico is still an excellent market for exporting education. As demonstrated in the PESTLE analysis, Mexico’s GDP is forecasted to increase and the unemployment rate to decrease. Yes, the government and education sector has a complex system of allocating funds. However, various ways and activities exist in which TAMK Edu can partner with Mexican public or private HEIs, institutions and universities. Moreover, despite the complex system of the education system, as mentioned, there are some funding instruments that TAMK Edu can use to its advantage with Mexican HEIs. If TAMK Edu wants to export its services to Mexico to make partnerships, they need to consider the specific funding instruments and carefully analyse the environment. Lastly, they need to work on making long-term relationships with other market participants.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Documents indicated in subsection i. to x.

Other required documents stated in the Rules of Operation for PRODEP 2020:

i. Reception form (original) duly signed by the teacher and the Institutional Representative of the Program (RIP).
ii. Support request duly signed by the teacher and by the RIP (original).
iii. Proof of appointment issued by the competent authority.
iv. Unique Code of the Population Registry (CURP), it should not be presented; only have it.
v. Final acceptance letter to the graduate or failing record, proof of the process must be recorded: name, type, start date and end of the PE (duration). Proof of permission, license or 100% academic discharge.
vii. Official information about fees (Annual registration cost, annual tuition cost and graduation costs).
viii. Minutes of the exam or the title of the final academic grade.
ix. Commitment letter for support requests for high-quality postgraduate studies signed by the Rector of the Institution, Unit or Campus and by the professor (original), which must be downloaded from the Program's website (Annex 3b).
x. Information from ESDEPED or its equivalent (type, period and monthly amount in pesos).[4] ESDEPED is an economic stimulus independent of salary granted to teachers or staff of Higher Education due to a favourable evaluation of their academic performance. (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019b, 116).

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[4] "i. Ficha de recepción debidamente firmada por el profesor/a y por el RIP (original).
ii. Solicitud de apoyo debidamente firmada por el profesor/a y por el RIP (original).
iii. Constancia de nombramiento expedida por la instancia competente.
iv. Clave Única del Registro de Población (CURP), no se debe presentar, solo contar con esta.
v. Carta de aceptación definitiva al posgrado o en su defecto constancia del trámite, la cual deberá registrar: nombre, tipo, fecha de inicio y término del PE (duración).
vi. Constancia de permiso, licencia y/o descarga académica al 100%.
vii. Información oficial sobre cuotas (Costo anual de inscripción, costo anual de colegiaturas y costos de graduación).
viii. Acta del examen o título del último grado académico.
ix. Carta compromiso para las solicitudes de apoyo para estudios de posgrado de alta calidad firmada por el/la Rector/a de la Institución, Unidad o Campus y por el profesor/a (original), la cual se deberá descargar de la página electrónica del Programa (anexo 3b).
x. Información del ESDEPED o su equivalente (tipo, periodo y monto mensual en pesos)." (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2019b, 116).