

TAMPERE POLYTECHNIC

BUSINESS SCHOOL

FINAL THESIS REPORT

**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY
FOR OVV-TAMPERE**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is customer satisfaction survey for an apartment rental service Opiskelijoiden Vuokravälitys. Opiskelijoiden Vuokravälitys is a nationwide franchise chain that has local offices in eleven cities in Finland. The offices provide their customers various services in the field of apartment rental business.

On the thesis the focus is on finding out what Opiskelijoiden Vuokravälitys – customers think about the service and the image of Opiskelijoiden Vuokravälitys (OVV) as well as whether there is a significant need for an apartment rental services among private apartment owners.

Results indicate that OVV customers are satisfied with the level of service OVV offers and the image they have about OVV is pretty much the intended one by OVV. The survey revealed that many of the potential customers do not know what benefits apartment rental agencies could offer and they are not familiar with current pricing policies of OVV.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, Image, Marketing Research

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1.0 Introduction

Opiskelijoiden Vuokravälitys (OVV) is franchise based apartment rental agency. They have currently franchise office in eleven cities in Finland. OVV was established in 1994 in Turku where the first office also opened. OVV focuses its operations on the main cities and largest student towns. The firm serves two different parties, tenants who lease an apartment from its owner, and landlords, the party that owns an apartment and leases it.

The franchise group can offer the local offices an IT-system, Intranet and a very top of art internet pages. These pages are constantly improved as members of OVV franchise need new features. Also, the possibility of working together with other offices of the franchise lowers the costs and OVV can have very competitive prices compared to smaller local apartment rental agencies.

1.1 Services offered by OVV

Opiskelijoiden Vuokravälitys (OVV) offers wide variety of service to both landlords and potential tenants. The name, Opiskelijoiden Vuokravälitys, would indicate that OVV is purely segmented to student, which it is not. Thought, the prices are cheaper for students the prices for non-student are also very competitive. For example, the commission fee when dealing with non-student is 95 percent of monthly rent including VAT, most apartment rental agencies take 100 percent plus VAT or something similar.

The following list describes the entire range of services provided by OVV:

- Dealing of rental apartments
- Announcing of apartments
- Preparation of rental contract
- Preparation of rental contract as a notary service
- Collecting rent
- Handling legal issues
- Inspection of the tenant's credit information
- Showing and renting units to prospective tenants
- Handing on the keys when tenants change
- Preparation of notices, such: rent increase notice, notice to quit, lease termination notice
- Signing the electricity contract over to tenant

1.2 Research purpose and problem

This study is both a Customer Satisfaction Survey for OVV customers and at the same time the purpose is to find out what is the demand for apartment rental services and where do potential landlords look for apartment rental services.

The research part is executed by telephone interviews and in the end of interviews the services of OVV are marketed to all non-OVV customers. This way the research acts also as a marketing campaign.

Questions to find out are:

- Is there a demand for apartment rental services?
- Where do the potential landlords look for information?
- What do the OVV customers think about OVV?

2.0 Customers

2.1 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is essential as they judge the product and make decisions to buy or not to buy the service or product. If they are not satisfied the first time they are in contact with the organization it is rather expected that they won't come back to do business again with the same organization (assuming there are options).

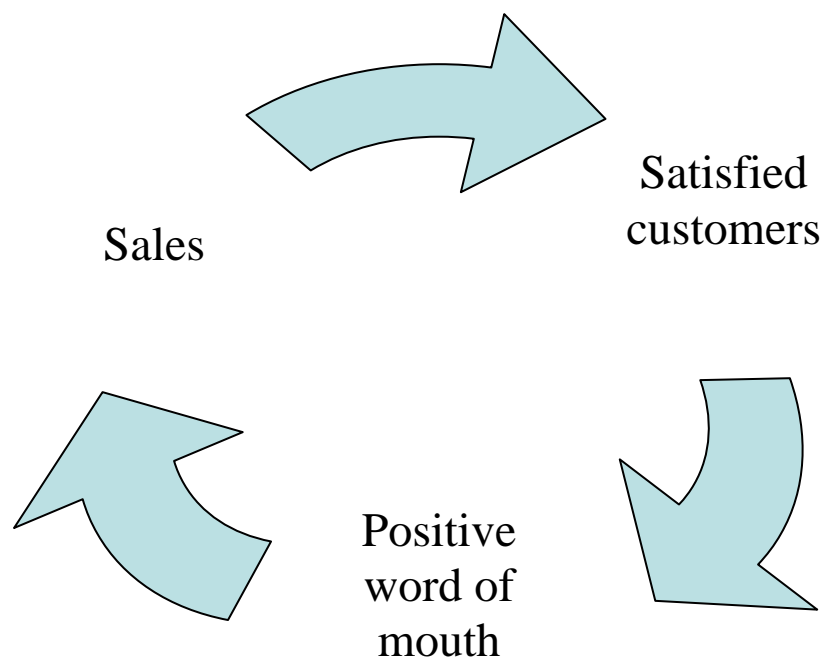


Figure 1. Reinforced sales process due to customer communication
(From Senge 1990), (Bergman & Klefsjö 1994)

From the figure above the benefit from satisfied customers can be seen. Not only they probably will be using the same service again or buy the

same product (or another product from the same manufacturer), they also spread word to potential customers.

Key issue in modern business is not only to gain new customers but to keep all the old ones. Later on in Customer Loyalty section this will be explained in more detail.

Bergman & Klefsjö mention Noriaki Kano's model for customer satisfaction, where customer satisfaction is divided into three groups: Basic needs, expected needs and exciting experiences.
(Bergman & Klefsjö, 1994)

Basic needs are type of needs that most customers won't even think of, they just expect to have those needs fulfilled. For example; when buying a car, you expect that the car has seats and you don't have to pay any extra to have ones. Expected needs are quite similar to basic needs, but the customer is aware of them and they are not always absolutely necessary. The exiting experiences are services or products that are unknown to the customer. Many times those are new technology and they fulfill needs that the customer did not even consider possible to be fulfilled.
(Bergman & Klefsjö, 1994)

Customer requirements change as time passes. "A car was exiting experience in the twenties, an expected need in the forties but very basic today" (Bergman & Klefsjö)

2.2 Customer Loyalty

For any business the customers are important and especially loyal customers are an important asset to a company. It is said that 80% of the company business comes from 20% of its customers. This is because the loyal customers usually choose to use particular company's products or services, even though some other might offer the same services for lower price. Reasons for this behavior are numerous, but most important ones are competitive price, location of the shop, level of customer service and old habits.

Because of these reasons mentioned, all companies should consider how to increase the number of loyal customers and how to keep the current ones. It is said that it costs five times more to gain a new customer than keep an old one.

The main benefits from loyal customers are: repeat sales, 80/20 rule, word of mouth and costs. Repeat sales meant that loyal customer tend to come back to make sale and depending on the product or service it can make a big amount. 80/20 rule was already mentioned, it means that 80% of the company business comes from 20% of its customers. Word of mouth is important when trying to acquire new customers. Customers often tell their friends and relatives about their good/bad experiences and as loyal customers are well satisfied they can help the company get new customers. The cost factor was also mentioned. Keeping an old customer is five times cheaper than getting a new one. Usually acquiring a new customer requires extra advertising, sales/marketing people, time etc. Old customers know the service of product and advertising expenditures can be lower than when trying to make a service or product known by a new customer.

2.3 Consumer decision making process

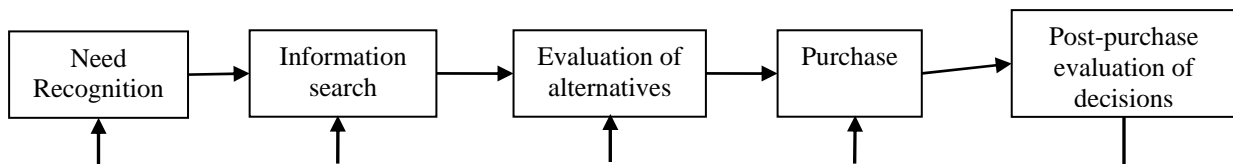


Figure 2. Consumer decision-making process (Jobber 1998)

Even though sometimes the whole buying process is done in minutes, the Consumer decision making process with its five steps is anyway there. Sometimes it might take weeks to complete a single step, sometimes just a few seconds.

Basically the people tend to go through these steps every time they are buying or planning to buy something.

Need Recognition

The first, and obviously the most important step in Consumer decision making process is Need Recognition. Without it the customer would not start the second or latter phases of the process. Once the customer has recognized a need for something he or she starts to consider how to satisfy that need.

The need for something may take place over a period of time, for example need for food comes time to time. Another way is when something is broken and the need to replace it is immediate. Also, when new product

emerge the customer might feel need to have it to make his or her life easier, funnier etc. just to satisfy any need he or she might have.

(Jobber 1998)

Information Search

The second step in Consumer decision making process is the Information Search. Now, when the consumer has recognized the need for something he or she starts gathering information about where, when, how to satisfy this need. What are the alternatives, and what do they cost?

If the consumer has fulfilled the same need before he or she may consider how satisfied he or she was then and possibly, to make the life easier, use the same way to satisfy the need.

They may search newspapers, internet, magazines, ask from friends or any other source of information to get to know the alternatives.

(Jobber 1998)

Evaluation of Alternatives

Evaluation of alternatives is the third step in the process. The consumer has gathered the alternatives and now is considering the good and bad sides of each of them.

In this step, issues like; loyalty, cultural behavior, price, location of the service/shop and image have a huge affect to the decision making.

(Jobber 1998)

Purchase Decision

When the evaluation is made and the chosen alternative is available and affordable, the consumer will make the purchase.

If no proper alternative is found the consumer may decide to wait a good alternative or then buy the best possible one. This depends how great the need is.

(Jobber 1998)

Post-purchase Evaluation

This is a crucial part of the process in the side of the service/product provider. If the consumer is satisfied, he or she might purchase the service or product again later on and maybe even become a loyal customer.

The consumer is now considering the pros and cons of the purchase. They will compare the service or product to the alternatives emerging in the future, other similar product bought by their friends or family. Satisfied consumer might recommend the service or product to their friends and family, dissatisfied consumers might warn their friends and family not to buy that particular service or product.

(Jobber 1998)

3.0 Service

Service characteristics that differentiates services from goods

- Services are intangible and sometimes hard to specify and explain
- The customer often takes part directly in the production of a service
- Services are usually consumed as they are produced, they cannot be stored or transported
- The customer has not become owner of something when buying a service
- Services cannot be tested by the customer before they are bought because they are activities and processes
- Services often consist of a system of subservices

(Bergman & Klefsjö 1994)

3.1 Service Quality

The seven criterion of good perceived service quality (Christian Grönroos 2001)

1. Professionalism and Skill

It's important that customer feel that provider of the service or the product, and its employees are experts with the service/product and have the knowledge and skills to solve possible problems concerning the service/product.

2. Attitudes and Behavior

The attitude of the service personnel must be professional and friendly. The personnel should appear to be interested in solving the problems of the customer.

3. Accessibility and Flexibility

Customer wants to have an easy access to shops or other premises, web pages etc. of the organization. Customers should feel that operating hours, employees' attitudes and operational systems are flexible and designed to fulfill their needs.

4. Reliability and Trustworthiness

The reliability of the organization is extremely important as failing to be reliable leads soon to trouble. Customers expect that organization will fulfill its duties and promises and perform all activities with the best interest of customers.

5. Service Recovery

When something goes wrong or something unpredictable occurs, the service provider should be active and contact the customer to find out a suitable solution to the situation. This ensures that the customer is not lost and might use the services of the organization in the future and even spread good word about the organization.

6. Serviscape

This means that customers are left with a good, positive feeling about the physical surroundings and other aspects of the service environment.

7. Reputation and Credibility

Customer believes that organization can be trusted and the service/product is worth the money spent and its services/products are of a good quality. This affect directly to the image the customer gets from the organization.

3.2 Image

Image is important to the organization because it of the following reasons (Grönroos 2001):

- Image communicates expectations
- Image is a filter influencing perceptions
- Image is a function of expectations as well as of experiences
- Image has an internal impact on employees as well as external impact on customers

First of these, “Image communicates expectations” refers to the fact that the Image has a strong influence on the behaviour of people. With certain image people expect certain things. This can have a positive or negative affect to the organization.

The second, “Image is a filter influencing perceptions” tells us how image affects people minds. A good image can reduce the effects of failures in business, for example, severe problems with technical products can be somewhat ignored by public if the image of the organization producing them is good. The public will still think the products must be a good quality if “this” organization is producing them. Grönroos calls this “the sheltering effect” (page 294). Anyway, if the problems occur often the shelter weakens and finally collapses causing serious damage to the company image and therefore to the whole business of the organization.

The third, “Image is a function of expectations as well as of experiences” means that customer that already have experiences about the service or the products of the organization can reinforce, or even improve the image. This happens when the expectations of the customer are met or exceed, and the customer will then practice “word-of-mouth” -marketing for the organization.

The fourth effect of the image, “Image has an internal impact on employees as well as external impact on customers”, indicate the importance of image to the employees of the organization as well as to the customers. A good morale and motivation of the employees is crucial for any company and a bad image really hinder reaching this goal. On the other hand, a good image can boost the motivation and morale of the employees and also give that something extra that is needed that the customer will choose the product of service of the organization instead of competitors.

Developing the Image

The whole process of developing image must be based on the saying “image is reality” (Grönroos p. 295). Advertising campaigns can make a short-term effect, but if the customer doesn’t receive the service or product that they are expecting (because of the image) the final outcome might just be harmful for the organization. For example, if the advertising campaign is launched to market the new more customer oriented image of the organization and in reality nothing has changed, customers expecting better service will be dissatisfied and probably “word-of-mouth” –marketing will this time work against the organization.

First step when developing the image is to analyze the current state of the image. Where is the problem? Usually, according to Grönroos, there are two types of problems with the Image: The organization is known but it has a bad image or the organization is not known and the image is unsolved.

As hinted in the first paragraph of “developing the image” section, only real actions can improve the image. Bad image can only be altered to a good image by finding out what makes the image bad in the eye of public, and then changing them.

4.0 Marketing Research

4.1 What is a Marketing Research?

“The function that links the consumer, customer, and public to the marketer through information – information used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems; to generate, refine and evaluate marketing actions; to monitor marketing performance; and to improve understanding of the marketing process”

(Kotler 1999)

To have a profitable business the organization must know who are their customers and what kind of people are they? With a great product portfolio an organization can surely be profitable but it can be much more if it knows who the customers are and who the potential customers are.

Marketing research can give an answer to questions about the customers like:

- Where do they live
- Are they interested in the new products of the organization
- What do they think about the quality of the products/services
- What do they think about the price of the products/services
- Who are the competitors
- Are my promotional programs working?

Business.gov website states “Marketing research is not a perfect science” mentioning that because it deals with people, feeling and behaviors, it is impossible to have a scientifically accurate results.

“To conduct marketing research you must gather facts and opinions in an orderly, objective way to find out what people want to buy, not just what you want to sell them.” (www.business.gov)

4.2 Marketing Research Process

Business.gov –website divides Marketing Research Process to seven phases:

1. Define Marketing Problems and Opportunities
2. Set Objectives, Budget, and Timetables
3. Select Research Types, Methods, and Techniques
4. Design Research Instruments
5. Collect Data
6. Organize and Analyze the Data
7. Present and Use Market Research Findings

(www.business.gov)

Step one: Define Marketing Problems and Opportunities

This phase of the Marketing Research Process identifies why is the Marketing Research needed? The problems and opportunities are listed and considered. An organization might be launching a new product or service, or the organization might be concerned about what is their image in minds of consumers. Or organization might just want to be updated constantly about their situation in the business environment.

Step Two: Set Objectives, Budget, and Timetables

Objective: The first thing to set in this second phase is objectives.

Research problems are defined, problems and opportunities listed. Now the thing to decide is what exactly should be researched? For what questions do we want to have an answer?

Budget: To execute a research, money is needed. It depends what type of research is to be done but they all take some amount.

Timetables: Then to be set is the timetable for the research. It should be realistic and planned for the needs of the particular business. Too old information is not useful for any company, what is too old depends on the business.

Step Three: Select Research Types, Methods, and Techniques

Research types are divided to two types: primary and secondary. Primary research is conducted from a scratch as secondary is based on other research results or literature. Executing a secondary research can be easier and cheaper than primary research, and not necessary any inferior.

Step Four: Design Research Instruments

“The most common research instrument is the questionnaire”

Important for a questionnaire is to keep it simple so there is no possibility for misunderstandings. It is good to have general questions and questions

that will categorize the people answering the questionnaire and place the more specific questions to the latter part of the questionnaire.

Step Five: Collect Data

Step five is to collect the data. This is done according to research type selected before. It can be executed by personal interview, telephone interviews, posting a questionnaire in mail or any other way marketing researched can be conducted.

Step Six: Organize and Analyze the Data

When data is collected it needs to be cleaned and organized before the analyzing can begin. Cleaning involves editing, coding, and tabulating results.

Step Seven: Present and Use Market Research Findings

After the analyzing the research is formatted to a form where it can be presented to the decision makers of the business. The results can be used when planning the future marketing campaigns or other processes of the organization.

5.0 Implementing the Research

The Research was decided to be executed as a telephone interview to ensure enough responses to the questionnaire. The initial goal was to get around sixty to seventy responses and if the questionnaires would have been sent by mail this would have been quite difficult.

Secondly, as we wanted to study also others than old OVV customers we used local newspaper Aamulehti to gather contact information of potential customers. The ads of these apartment owners usually contained only the telephone number and this made sure that the research was to be made by telephone interviews.

Original questionnaire had twenty-six questions, but later on after considering the importance of the questions we dropped some of them. Finally the questionnaire had twenty questions divided to two parts; part of the questionnaire was only to old OVV customers (customer satisfaction section) and part for all interviewed.

After calling to 145 telephone numbers, I received the total number of 56 acceptable interviews. Most of the people who answered the telephone gave an interview, only nineteen refused. The final response rate was 75 percent. Despite of calling some number several times over 60 potential customers remained unreachable.

Thirty percent of the interviewed were old customers of OVV and the rest seventy percent potential customers from Aamulehti.

6.0 Results of the survey

6.01 The first question

“Have you used an apartment rental agency when trying to find a new tenant?”

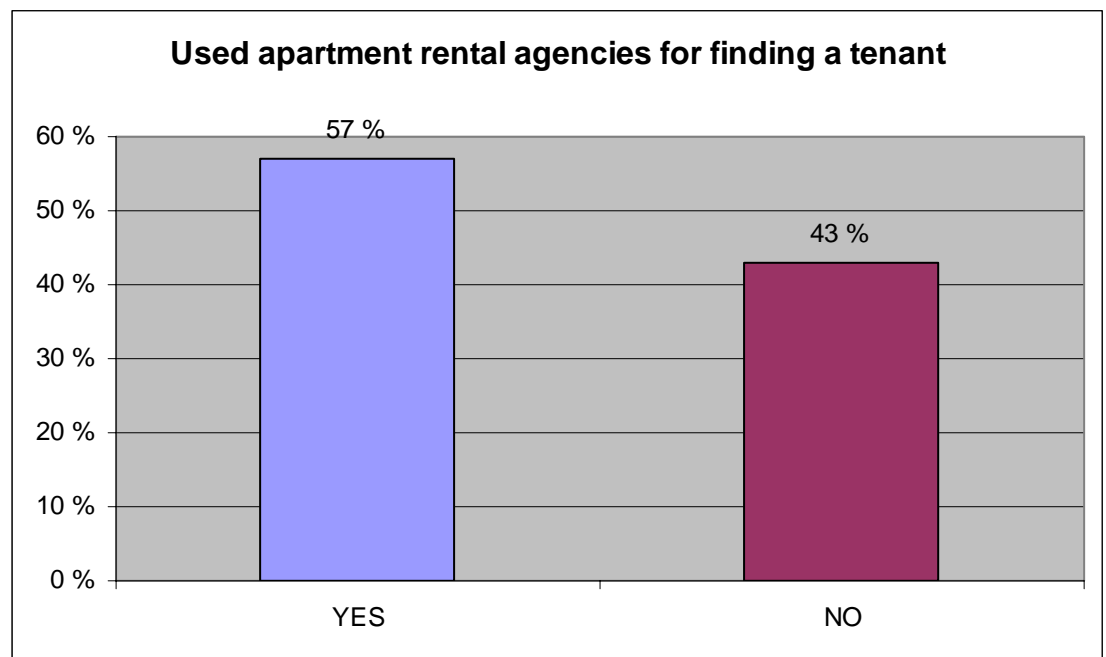


Figure 3. Used apartment rental agencies for finding a tenant

As the figure shows, 57 percent of the interviewed had used some apartment rental agency. From the whole sample 30 percent were old customers of OVV.

From “non-OVV” customers only 38 percent had used apartment rental agencies services. As a part of OVVs services are free of charge there is a big potential market.

6.02 The second question

“Have you looked for information about apartment rental agencies?”

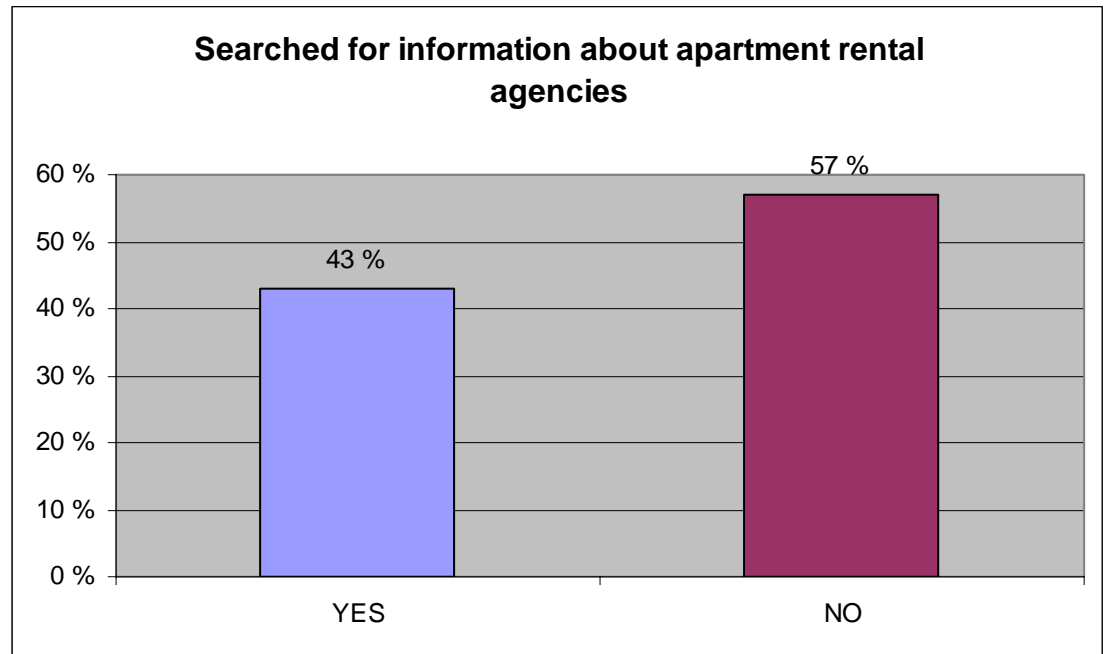


Figure 4. Searched for information about apartment rental agencies

The results of this question were quite surprising as only 43 percent of the interviewed said that they had actively looked for information about apartment rental agencies. Still, as the figure 1 shows, 57 percent of them have used apartment rental agencies.

Possible explanations are few: most apartment rental agencies offer free services for apartment owners and make the future tenant pay the commission fee. When this is combined with the fact that most apartment rental agencies do not expect exclusive right for renting the apartment, the apartment owner may use many different agencies at the same time to ensure the apartment will be rented. Then it's only matter of who's the fastest.

Another explanation might be customer loyalty, where the owner of the apartment always uses the same apartment rental agency and doesn't even consider options.

6.03 The third question

"What sources of information you used to find information about apartment rental agencies?"

This question was presented to only those who answered "yes" to the second question.

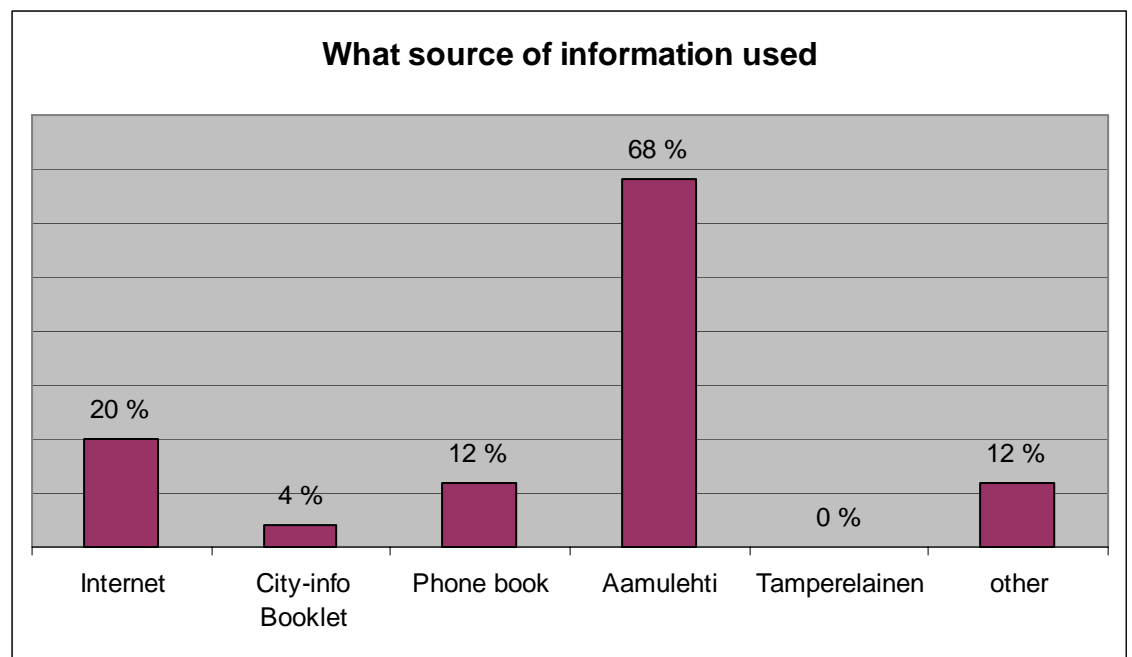


Figure 5. What source of information used

The most important source of information was the local newspaper Aamulehti. 68 percent of the interviewed mentioned it, which was not surprising as the contact information of most of the non-OVV customers were picked from Aamulehti.

Second most used source of information was internet. Twenty percent of the interviewed said they used internet to find information about different apartment rental agencies in Tampere region.

The 12 percent mentioned as the “other” were usually friends and relatives.

6.04 The fourth question

“What were the most important factors for you when selecting the apartment rental agency?”

Again, this question was presented only to those who had used services of apartment rental agencies.

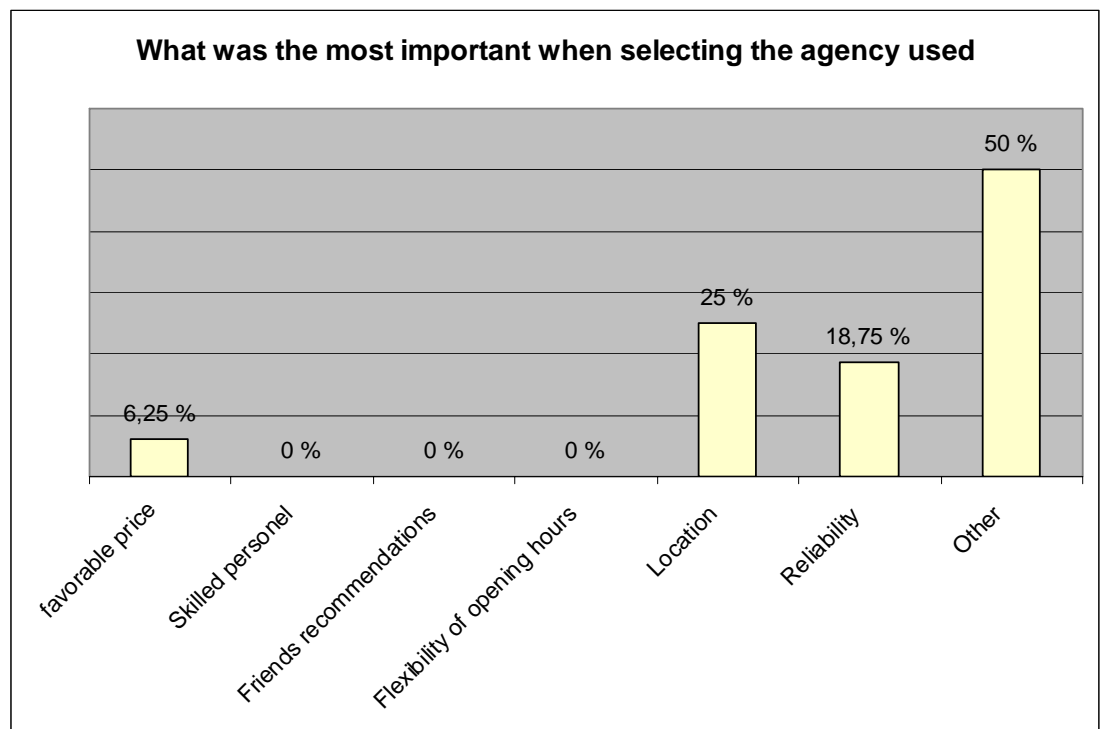


Figure 6. What was the most important when selecting the agency used

The most common answer to this question was “other” usually was the customer loyalty. Most of the interviewed were well satisfied with the

service they had received and didn't look for another option. Every fourth (25 percent) told that the location of the agency was an important factor and 18,75 percent mentioned reliability.

6.05 The fifth question

“How did you try to rent the apartment?”

In more detail, which ways did you use to market the apartment?

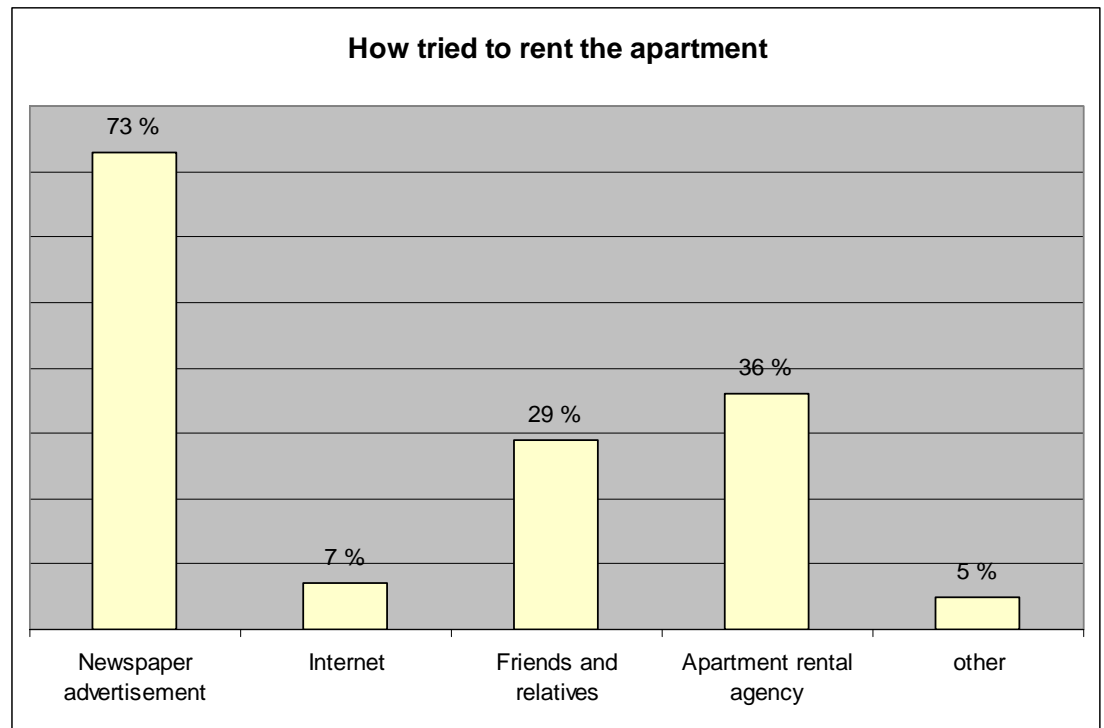


Figure 7. How tried to rent the apartment

73 percent marketed their apartment in a newspaper, without exception in Aamulehti. 36 percent of the interviewed also used apartment rental agencies and 29 percent used the circle of friends and relatives to market the apartment.

This shows the fact I noticed at work myself. Most apartment owner use several of there ways to get the apartment rented, the difference is that apartment rental agencies can check the background of the potential tenant and minimize the risk of getting a bad tenant.

6.06 The sixth question

“Which of the following apartment rental agency –service providers do you know at least by name?”

The apartment rental agencies mentioned were: Takuuvälitys LVV, Talasmäki LKV, Opiskelijoiden Vuokravälitys (OVV), Asuntovuokraamo Marita Vanamo, Asuntoympyrä LKV and Huoneistokeskus.

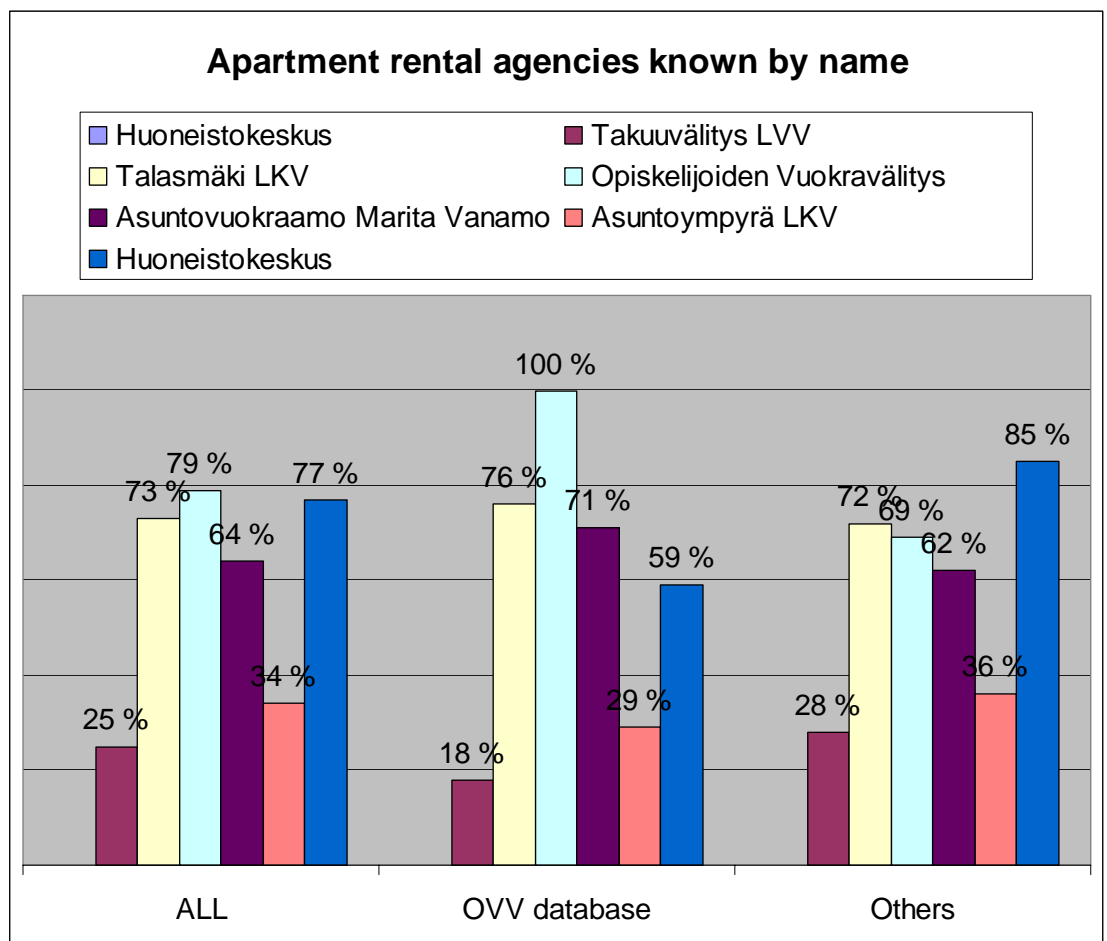


Figure 8. Apartment rental agencies known by name

From the overall sample the most known was OVV with 79 percent recognition. That was obvious as 30 percent of the interviewed were from OVV database. When looking at the “others” (whole sample minus OVV database) we can see the real situation.

The best known by name is Huoneistokeskus with 85 percent. However, it must be mentioned that most of the interviewed said that they didn't know that Huoneistokeskus was renting apartments at all; they knew Huoneistokeskus only as organization that sold apartment.

Second best known Apartment rental agency by name was Talasmäki LKV with 72 percent and the third was OVV with 69 percent.

As overall, OVV seems to be well known by potential landlords. The next step would be to get them to realize the benefits they could get from OVVs services.

6.07 The seventh question

“Has the apartment you have tried to rent ever been empty for more than two week because you didn’t find a tenant for it?”

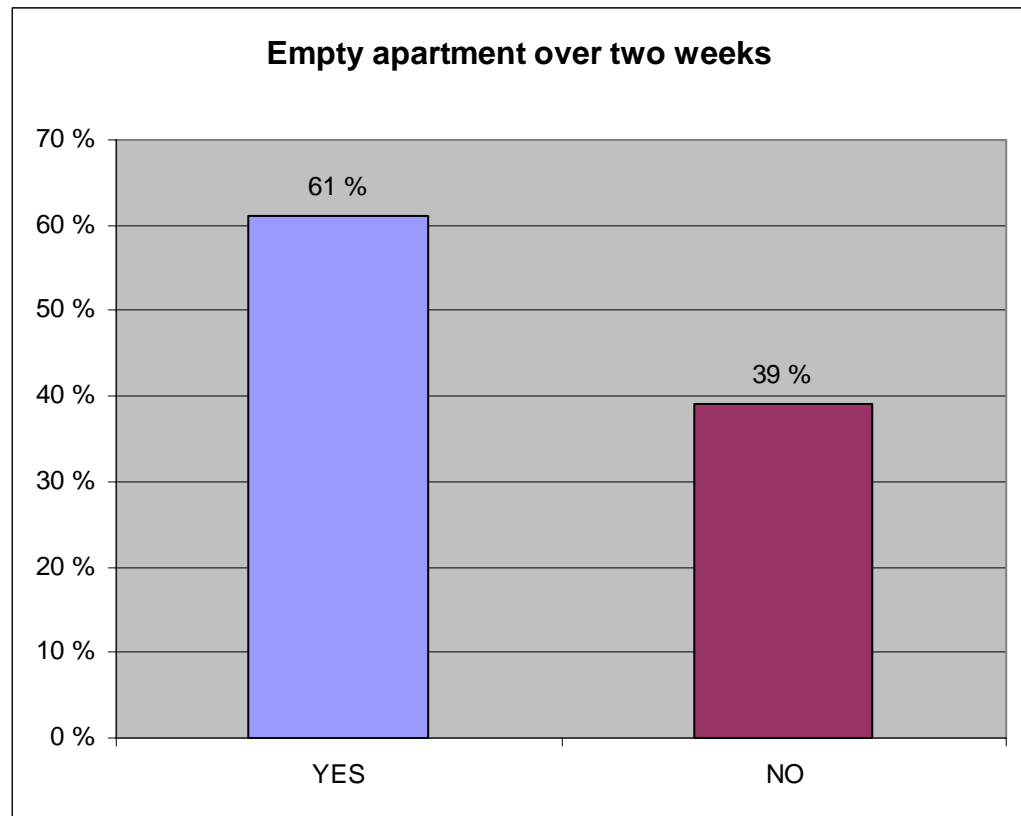


Figure 9. Empty apartment over two weeks

Amazing 61 percent answered “yes” to this question. What makes it amazing is that most Apartment rental agencies have lots of potential tenants and the commission fee for apartment owners varies from 75% to 122% (roughly) from the monthly rent. Also, if a tenant is not found there is no need to pay the commission fee.

This all means that, at least in OVV, having the apartment empty for three weeks costs as much as paying the commission fee as a landlord. Paying the commission fee as a landlord gives significant benefits as OVV will market the apartment publicly. As an example, private persons can’t

market their apartments in the popular internet service Etuovi.com, but OVV Tampere has the access to this site and can effectively market the apartments there.

6.08 The eight question

“How reliable do you consider students (university, polytechnic) in a scale from 1 to 5? One is the worst and five is the best”.

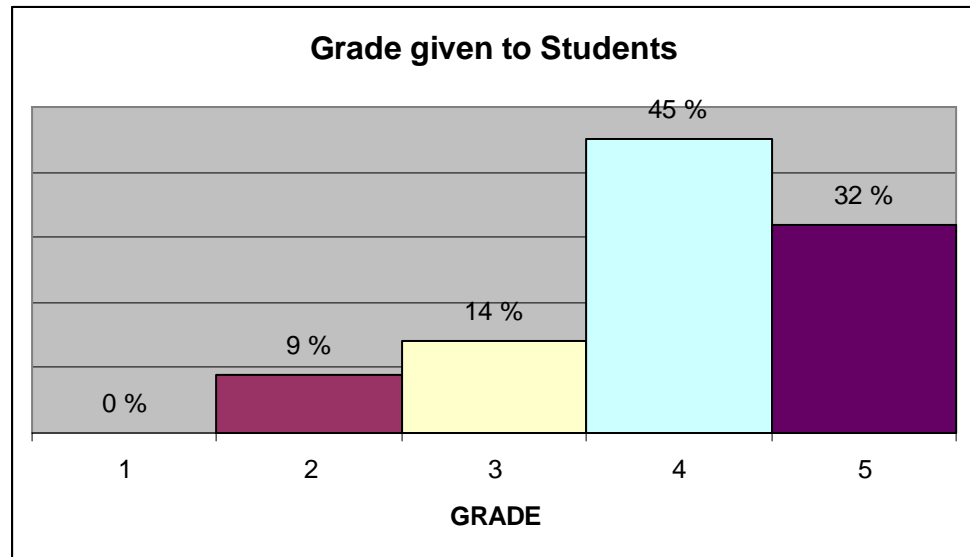


Figure 10. Grade given to Students

None of the interviewed gave grade one and only 9 percent gave grade two. 77 percent of the interviewed gave a grade four of five and the total average value to this question was 4.0.

Reasons for this high grade were numerous:

- Usually a stable income (student aid)
- Many times parents do help if in trouble
- Stay only short times
- Reliable

Few disadvantages were also mentioned:

- Sometimes not responsible (especially if first apartment)
- May stay only for one academic year
- Change apartment quite often

6.09 The ninth question

“How willing you would be to rent you apartment to a foreigner student or worker?”

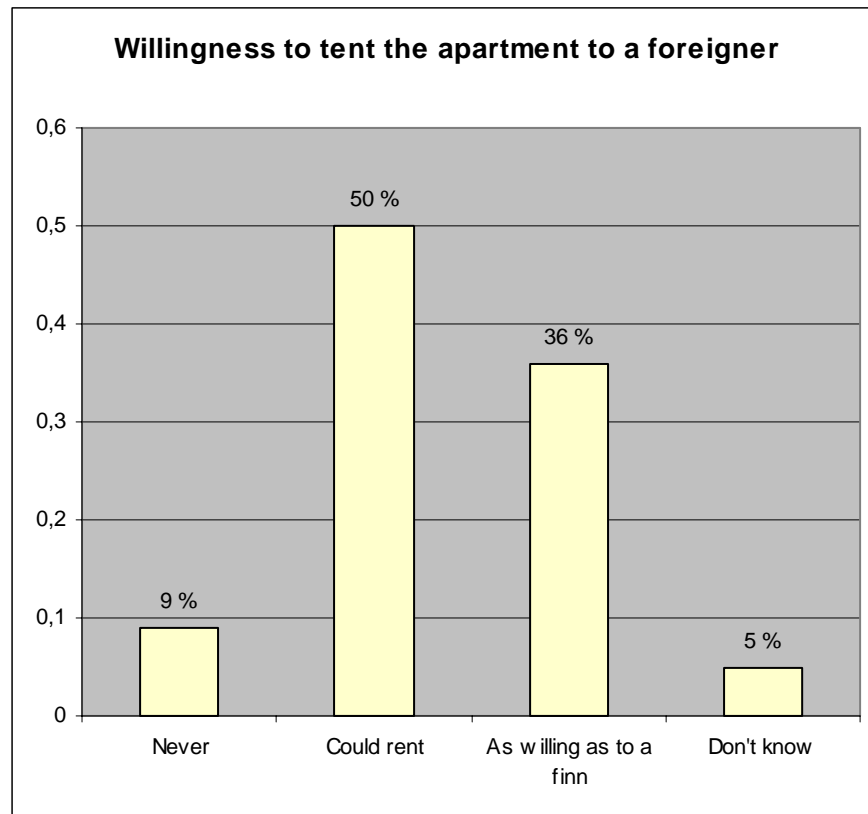


Figure 11. Willingness to rent the apartment to a foreigner

The options were:

1. I would never rent my apartment to a foreigner
2. I could rent my apartment to a foreigner
3. I'm as willing to rent my apartment to a foreigner as to Finn
4. I don't know

Half (50 percent) of the interviewed answered number two: “I could rent my apartment to a foreigner”. Reasons given were: increased possibility to be misunderstood, harder to check the background of the potential tenant, maybe not that long-term tenants. Anyway, majority are either willing or

willing to consider renting their apartment to a foreigner if some terms are first agreed (money guarantee for example).

6.10 The tenth question

“How many rental apartments do you own?”

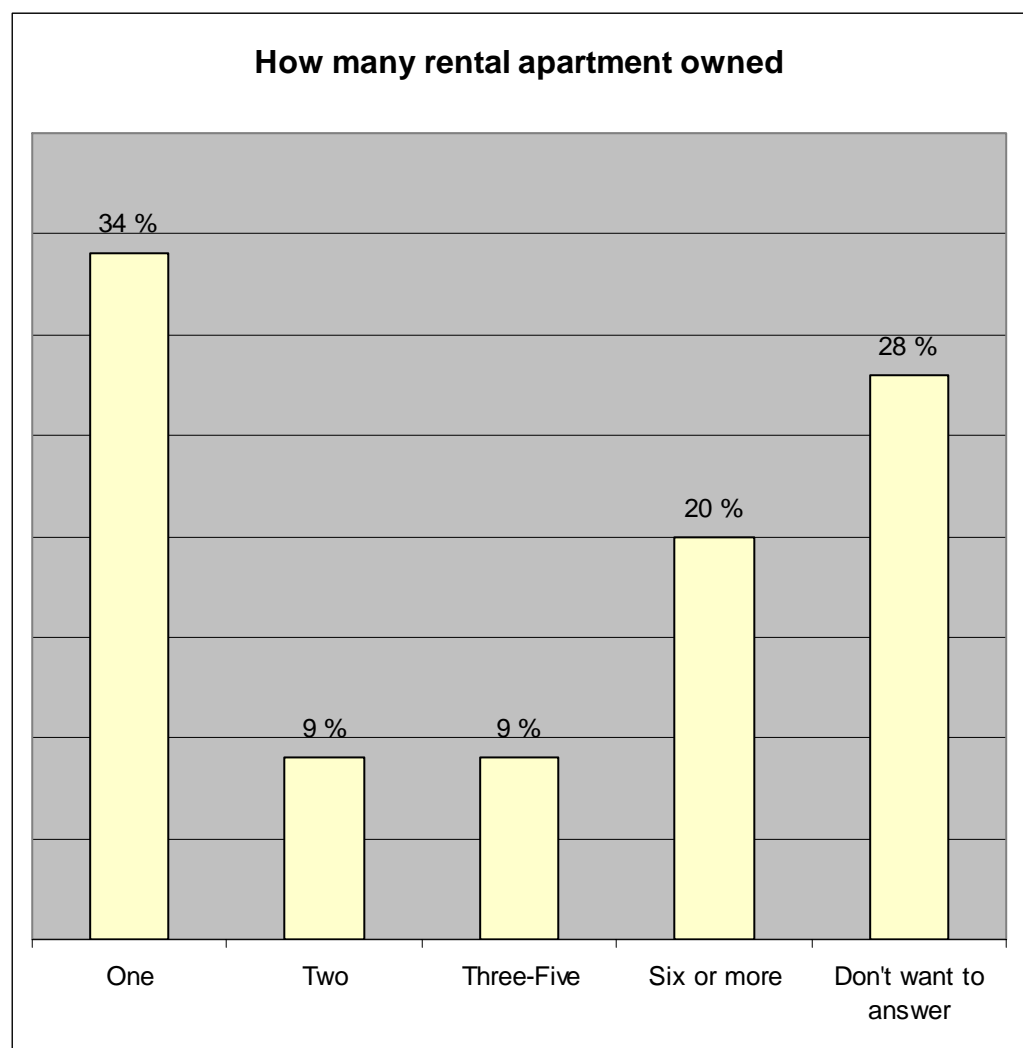


Figure 12. How many rental apartments owned

From the interviewed, 28 percent refused to answer this question.

Significant number, 20 percent, of the interviewed had six or more rental

apartments. As overall estimation, the common advertiser in Aamulehti owns only one apartment and only few of the owners of six and more do not use any apartment rental agency.

6.11 The eleventh question

“Did you know that OVV provides apartments (and services) to others too than students only?”

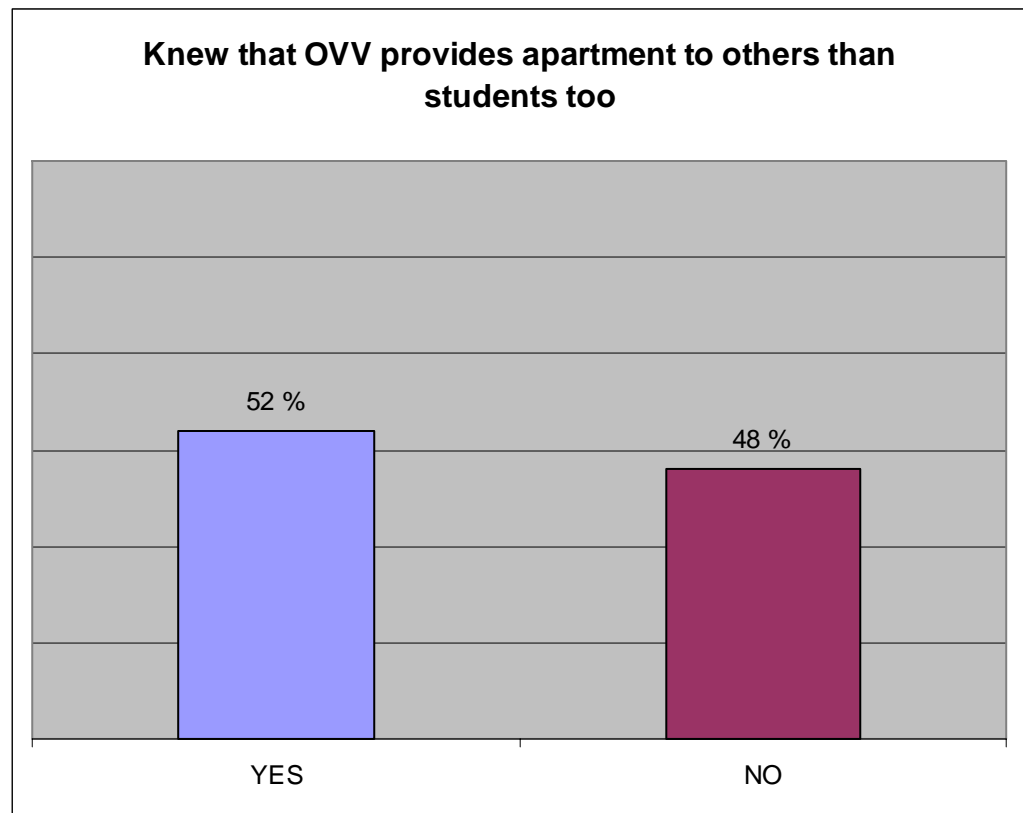


Figure 13. Knew that OVV provides apartments to others than students too

Hardly over half of the interviewed knew that OVV provides apartments others than students too. The misbelief comes for the name “Opiskelijoiden Vuokravälitys” which indicates that the service is only for student. Anyway, it is only the name of the franchise and even though OVV focuses a lot to students they don’t ignore any other segments.

It is already mentioned in OVV posters and advertisements that the services are to both, students and non-students but it definitely still need work that people do not consider OVV as a “student only”-service.

6.12 The twelfth question

“How often would you like OVV to contact you when your apartment is in our distribution?”

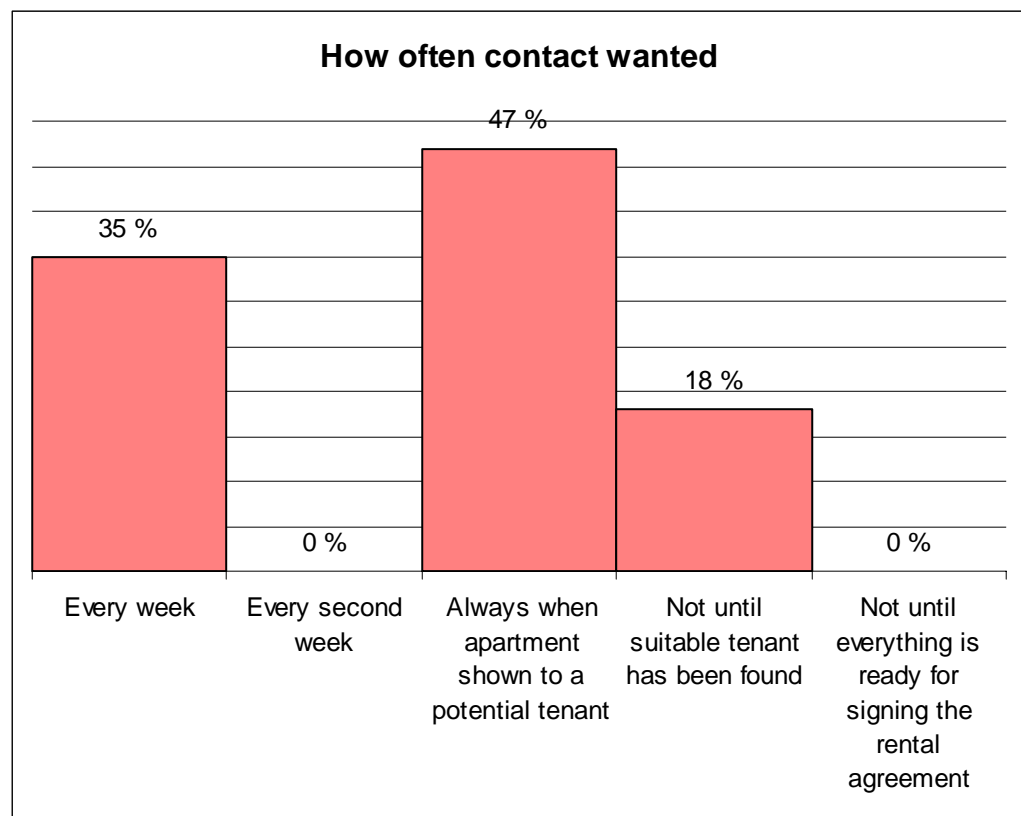


Figure 14. How often contact wanted

Almost half, 47 percent would like OVV to contact them every time when their apartment is shown to a potential tenant. They said that this way they would know that OVV is really doing something to get their apartment rented. Thirty-five percent thought one contact per week would be suitable

and the rest, 18 percent, said contact is needed only when suitable tenant is found.

Making a phone call to the apartment owner always when apartment is showed to a new potential tenant would increase the amount of work significantly. Landlords would like to know details about the potential tenants and how they liked the apartment; this would take a lot of time. Even three or four of these calls would take an extra hour every day.

6.13 The thirteenth question

Can you remember seen OVV advertisement in:

- 1) Newspaper Aamulehti?
- 2) Internet?
- 3) Magazine?
- 4) Phone book?
- 5) Announcement board?

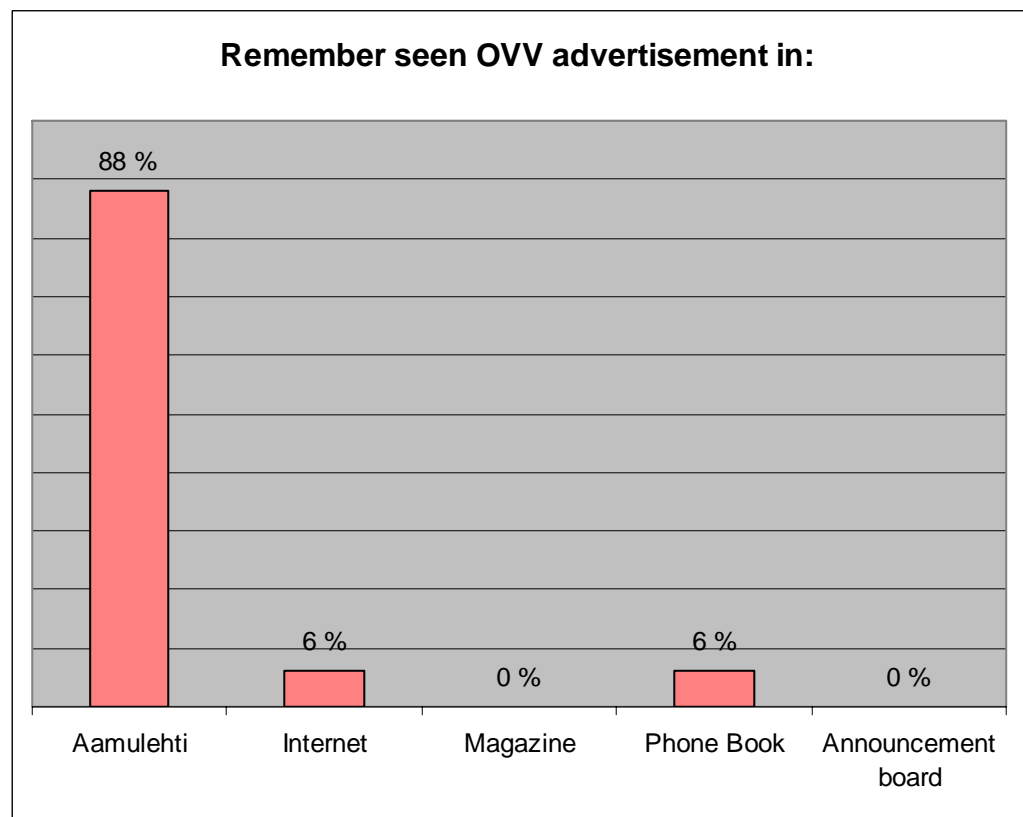


Figure 15. Remember seen OVV advertisement in

Majority, 88 percent, remembered seen OVV advertisement in local newspaper Aamulehti. Six percent said they had seen the ad in internet or phone book.

The result 0 percent in magazines and announcement boards are not that surprising as OVVs advertisements are only in student magazines and announcement boards of polytechnics and universities.

6.14 The fourteenth question

In the fourteenth question the interviewed were asked to grade some qualities of OVV with scale one to five (one is the worst and five the best).

Average value

Speed of OVV	3.4
Reliability of OVV	3.8
Prices of OVV	4.3
Professionalism of OVV	3.7
Efficiency of OVV	3.6

In general, all these five got a rather good average grade. Most interviewed were comparing these attributes of OVV to the ones of other apartment rental agencies.

The high average grade of Prices of OVV is somewhat misleading. None of the interviewed had ever paid anything to OVV, the tenant had always paid the commission fee and this was the reason why they gave so high grade to the prices of OVV.

6.15 The fifteenth question

“The image of OVV is supposed to be relaxed, youthful and expert. How have we succeeded in this image? Grade with scaling one to five”

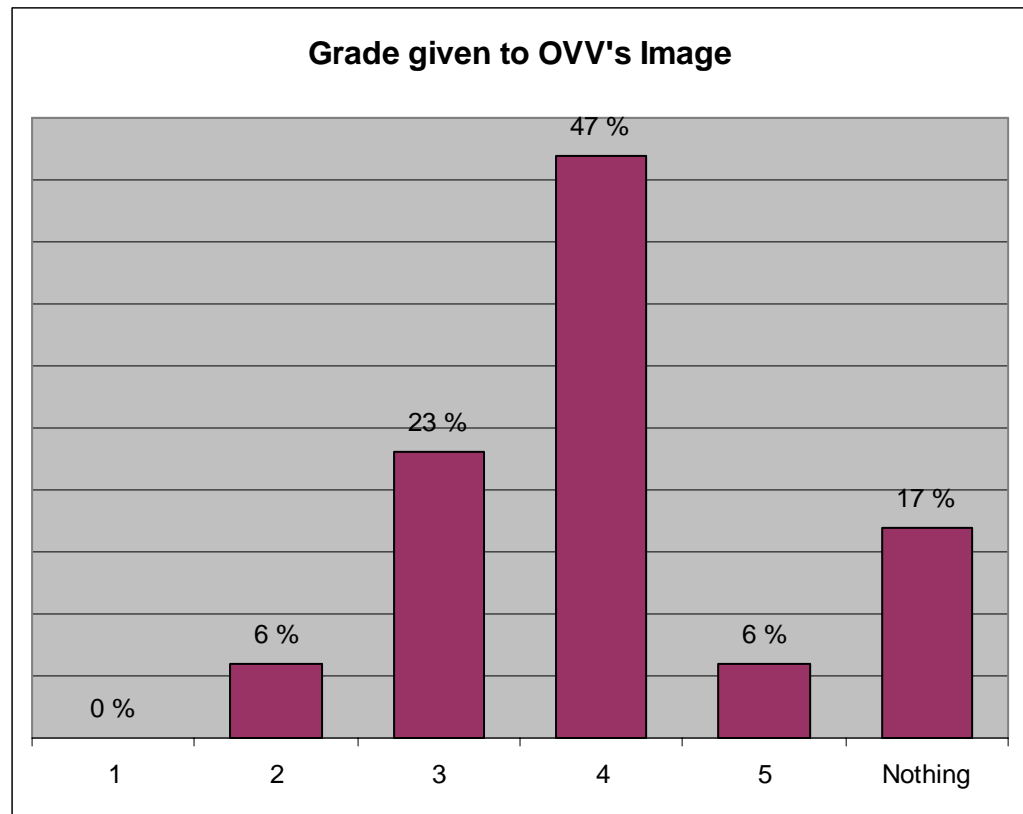


Figure 16. Grade given to OVV's Image

Majority of the interviewed thought that OVV had succeeded well, really well or even excellently with the image. None gave a grade one and only six percent gave grade two. Seventeen percent didn't want to answer anything.

6.16 The sixteenth question

“Do you want to rent your apartment especially to students?”

- 1) Yes
- 2) Not especially

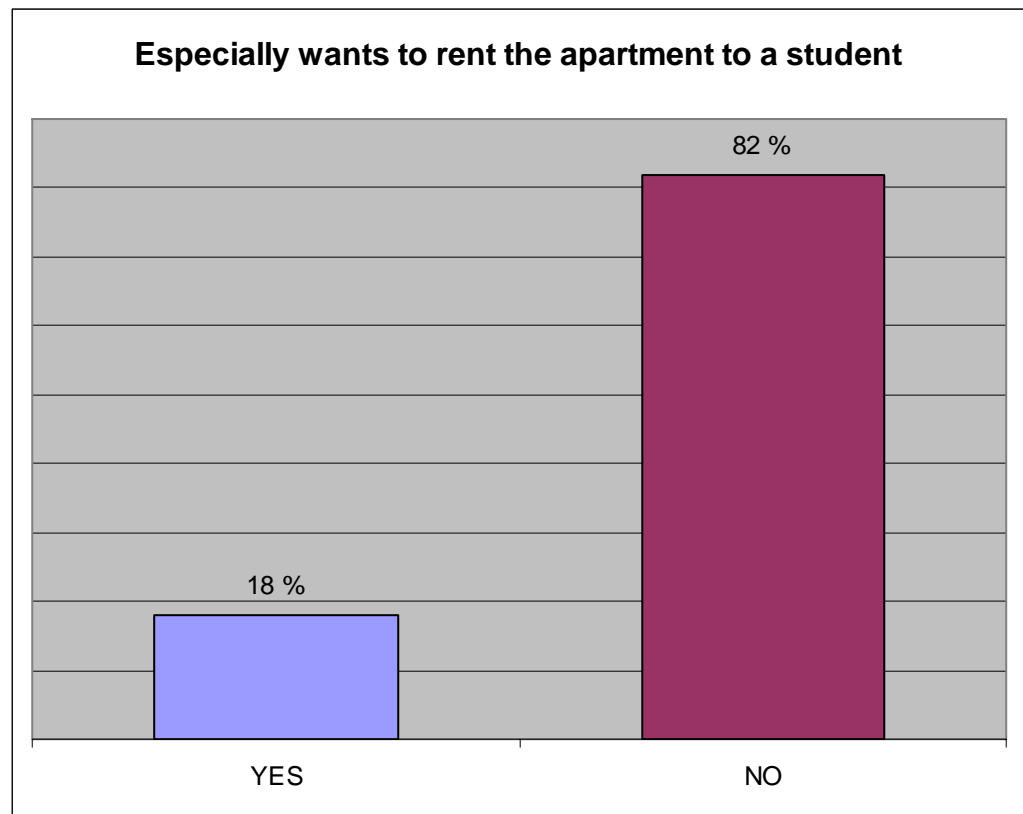


Figure 17. Especially wants to rent the apartment to a student

Only 18 percent wanted to rent their apartment especially to students. Most were just looking for a reliable tenant, student or working people.

6.17 The seventeenth question

“Will you use OVV services in the future?”

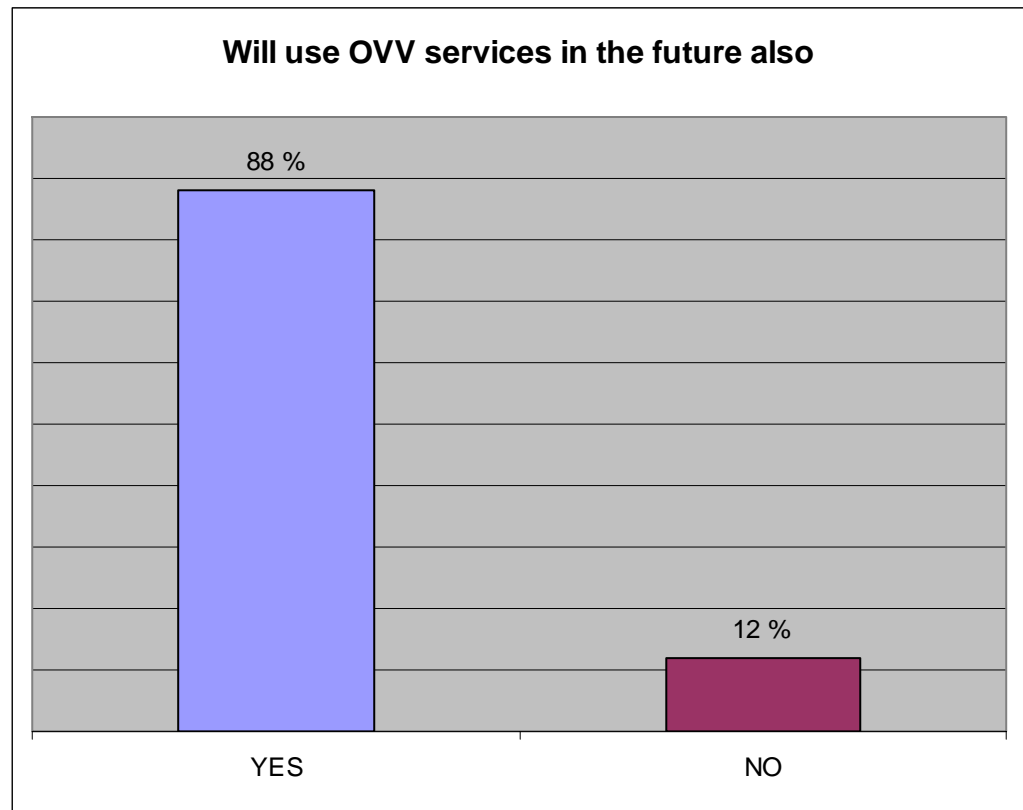


Figure 18. Will use OVV services in the future also

6.18 The eighteenth question

“How satisfied are you with the last tenant got through OVV? Give a grade, scale one to five”

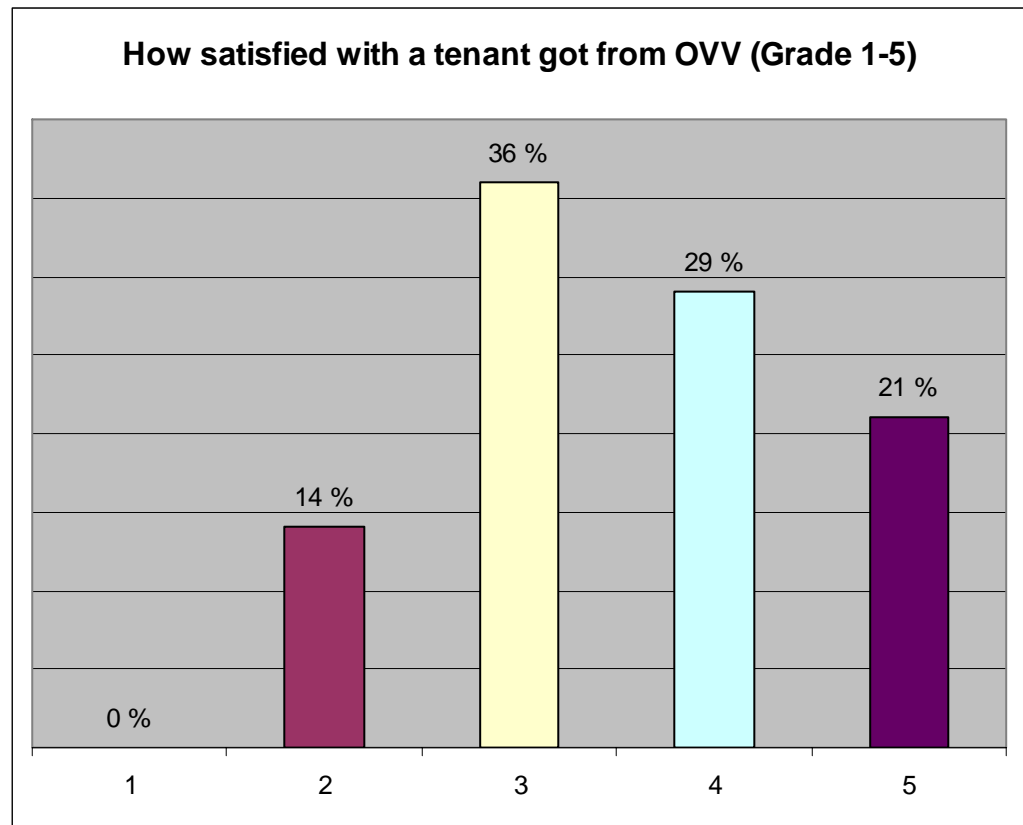


Figure 19. How satisfied with a tenant got from OVV

The interviewed seemed to be pretty satisfied with the tenants got through OVV. 36 percent gave the last tenant they got through OVV a neutral grade 3 and 50 percent together gave a grade 4 or 5. None gave a grade one and only 14 percent gave grade two.

I suppose that those who are not that satisfied with the service of OVV refused to answer the phone interview and thus the results are bit misleading.

6.19 The nineteenth question

“Age of the interviewed”

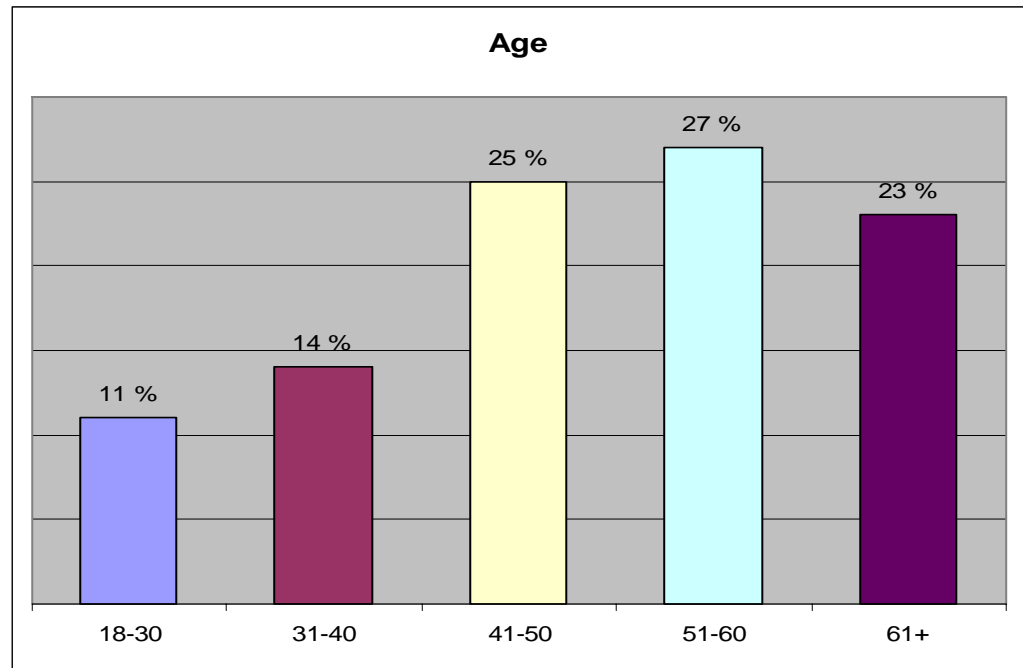


Figure 20. Age of the interviewed in years

6.20 The twentieth question

“Gender of the interviewed” (not asked but estimated)

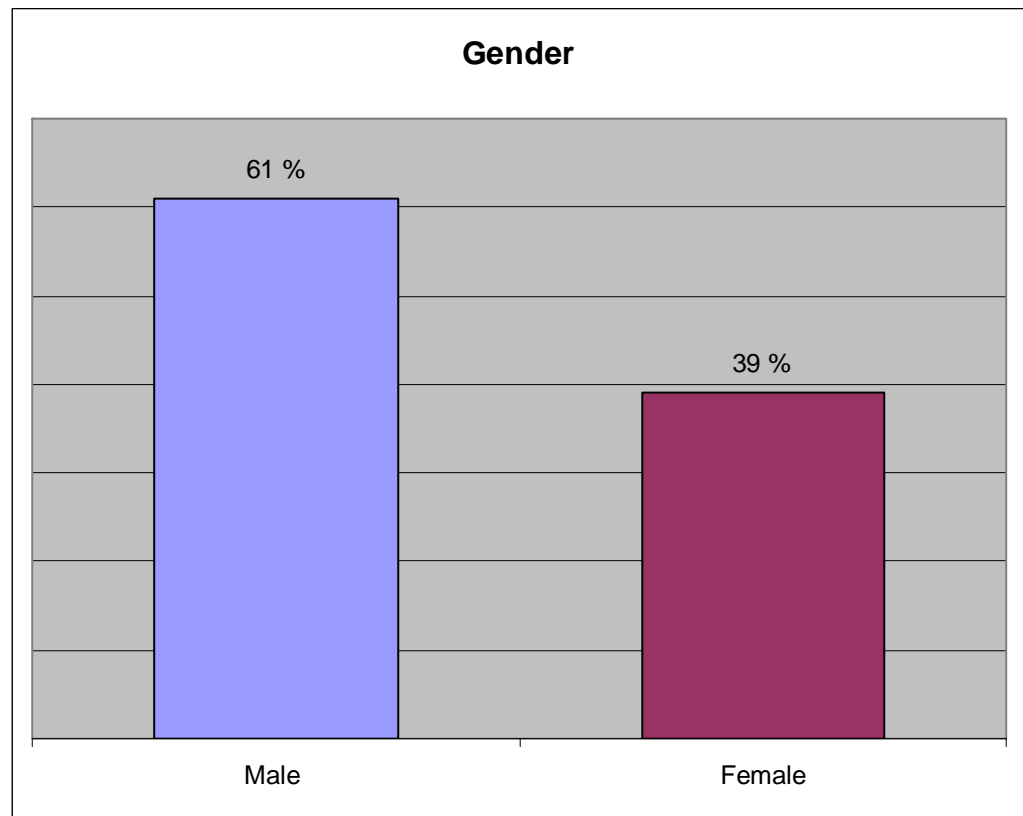


Figure 21. Gender of the interviewed

7.0 Conclusion

The overall research process was long and taught me a lot. Hopefully the study itself provides OVV Tampere some useful information it was looking for.

The three basic questions were studied and researched. It appears that demand for apartment rental services do exists, the problem is that not so many of the potential landlords are aware of the fact that OVV offers some services for them free of charge. The landlords using an apartment rental agencies usually seem favor the same old agency they have used before and are not interested in other alternatives. The situation might be different if they would know more about the services OVV has to offer.

While executing the telephone interviews I managed to get several new clients to OVV making the marketing campaign part of the telephone interviews successful.

Secondly we wanted to know where the potential landlords look for information about apartment rental services. That was researched as well as have they noticed the ads of OVV and what do they think of students as tenants (as most of OVV potential tenants are students or young professionals). As expected, most landlords do look for information from Aamulehti (where OVV has an ad). Problem is that only one third of the interviewed that were not old OVV customers knew that OVV rents apartments to others too than students. This might scare some potential customers away.

The third question to find out was what does the OVV customers think about OVV. This was studied, for example, with questions about the speed and reliability of services, satisfaction level for tenants got through OVV,

would they use OVV in the future and how well the image of OVV has succeed.

The overall grading for students was pretty good, though I introduced myself as a student and that might have an affect to the answers given to me. Anyway, the average value (in a scale of 1-5) for students was 4.0 when I asked how reliable they thought students are as tenants.

To find out how people see the image of OVV was difficult. In the initial stage (testing) I asked the people to tell me what the thought about the image of OVV and when I noticed they couldn't give any sensible answer I changed the question to be grading question: "how well has OVV succeeded in its image" telling them first what the aim is. Because of this I should say that I didn't managed to find out what people really thought about the image of OVV.

The research revealed that there is no noticeable discrimination against foreigners, most landlord are willing to rent their apartments to a foreigner with the same rules as to a Finn.

The question number 10 showed that there are lots of landlords who have many rental apartments. Getting these as a customers and having an exclusive right to rent their apartments would be worth focusing. Amazing number of 20 percent of the interviewed belonged to this group and we have to remember that all interviewed were private persons.

Now, when looking backwards I should have asked questions like: have the customers of OVV talked about the services offered by OVV with anyone else (use of word-of-mouth), and how interested would the non-OVV customers are in free of charge OVV services. These both would have enhanced the affect of the telephone interviews as a marketing campaign.

7.1 Reliability

When looking backward, I must confess that the questionnaire should have been planned more carefully and leave some question out of it. Some questions would have needed more focusing to be more useful. Also, conducting another research by mail to old OVV customer would have been a good idea, though we considered that in the beginning and calculated that it would have been too expensive for a small franchise office. The questionnaire would have required more testing and as I had worked in OVV only a month when I started to plan the questionnaire I didn't have enough knowledge what were the most crucial problems in the apartment rental business.

The response rate was really good, but still contacting people was difficult and the total amount of interviewed was left lower than originally planned. Nevertheless, the results give good guidelines and especially customer satisfaction part gave valid information.

Still I'm satisfied with the quality of results I got and the thing I learned.

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