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MASTER'S THESIS

AN ANALYSIS OF DECISION-MAKING FACTORS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN SELECTING THE SUMMER PROGRAMME: THE CASE OF THE LJUBLJANA SUMMER SCHOOL

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AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education is facing continuous changes due to an increasing impact of globalization and the growth of student enrolments worldwide, particularly in the overseas and emerging markets. The so-called “massification” and the global knowledge economy are the two main drivers of the higher education transformation around the world, which are generating unprecedented changes in the field of higher education (Altbach, 2013). Education has become a key determinant of the growing importance of intellectual capital in today’s increasingly competitive global socio-economic landscape. There are several trends which have proven to be especially important in shaping international education and its exponential internationalization, such as: student mobility programmes, research collaboration and university rankings (Marginson, 2012).

Higher education institutions (hereinafter: HEIs) have always been affected by international trends and operated within a broader international community of academic institutions, scholars, and research (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009). Internationalization caused a move from a simple student exchange to the sophisticated business of global recruitment and head hunting which we see today in battle for top talent (De Wit & Brandenburg, 2011).

Like many other organizations, HEIs are dealing with the significant importance of return on investment (hereinafter: ROI) and the quality of services offered to their customers – both students and employers. One of the ways how HEIs can manage their portfolio is by offering various kinds of summer programmes which are offered at market conditions and generate not only important revenue, but also promote the institution and aid in subsequent recruitment of international students to other full-time degree type programmes. This is particularly important for countries which might not benefit from a positive country of origin effect like Slovenia (unlike, for example, the US or the UK).

For education institutions, enrolment in summer programmes creates additional revenue, increases the efficient use of facilities, helps build various kinds of teaching and research capabilities, and facilitates other academic objectives, for example, international accreditations (Doane & Pusser, 2005; Vedder et al., 2010). This is the reason for a significant interest of HEIs to maintain and increase enrolment figures in summer programmes. Therefore, understanding which students are more or less likely to attend a summer programme and which are the main factors influencing their decisions, is of critical importance for maintaining the quality of such summer programmes as well as the satisfaction of participating students, faculty and staff (Smith & Read, 2013).

Students as customers, willing to pay market tuition fees, are more demanding than students studying at public universities, such as the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana (hereinafter: the FELU), in Slovenia. Institutions offering summer programmes must take into account the factors influencing the student's decision-making process and the process of a specific summer programme selection. By examining the selection of a summer programme as the consumer decision-making process, educational recruiters and marketers can gain some insight, use more functional approaches to achieve higher enrolment into such programmes, and understand the drivers of service quality and participant/stakeholder satisfaction (Moogan & Baron, 2003). Understanding their reasons and motivation helps HEIs to offer higher quality services (related to surpassing expectations) and better content (e.g., interdisciplinarity, applicability), to build specific capabilities and to acquire the needed resources which the students are looking for to improve their employment and which the employers particularly value.

The main purpose of our joint master's thesis is to understand how (international) students decide on a summer programme and how important are particular types of decision-making factors in this process. As a case study, we focus on the Ljubljana Summer School programme (hereinafter the LSS programme) since it is with over 500 participating students and a 16-year tradition one of the biggest summer school programmes in Europe. Our main objective is in this regard to understand the reasons and criteria for choosing the LSS programme by (predominantly international) students in order to help develop the programme in the future. Thus, in our master’s thesis, we focus on the following research questions:

- Which are the key factors influencing the international students' decision-making when selecting a summer programme abroad?
- How important is the content and the quality of the courses offered within a summer programme?
- Are tuition fees equally important to all students applying for summer programmes abroad?
- What role do the school and the country image play as decision-making criteria?

Additionally, an objective of our master’s thesis is to highlight the importance of short-term programmes for HEIs' internationalization and the development of the curriculum in the future.

The obtained results from our survey-based analysis among the past participants and applicants of the LSS programme in the academic year 2014/2015 will assist the FELU management in planning future strategies for its internationalization. The LSS is one of the most important projects of the International Relations Office (hereinafter: IRO), which is highly involved in the FELU's internationalization process. The research will provide important information on the quality and current success of the programme in terms of providing support to students within the programme selection process as well. The obtained results will be of great value for further development of the LSS in the future.

A quantitative analytical approach is employed in the empirical part of our research, based on a web-based questionnaire in English language among past participants and applicants of the LSS programme in the academic year 2014/2015. A convenience sampling approach has been employed, generating a sample of over 400 complete surveys (response rate of 28%). The survey instrument was constructed based on a careful review of the literature and several rounds of consultations with a panel of marketing and internationalization experts. Data has been analysed with Microsoft Excel 2010 and SPSS programmes. With the help of SPSS, simple uni- and bivariate statistical analyses were complemented by the simple linear OLS regression analysis.

This master's thesis is structured in three parts: theoretical framework, empirical part and recommendations. In the theoretical part, we draw on existing scientific and professional literature and studies related to the internationalization of higher education, the role of marketing, and especially branding of HEIs as well as the specifics of consumer behaviour and decision-making in higher education. The empirical part analyses the results of an online questionnaire conducted to past participants of the LSS programme and to applicants for the programme in July 2015. In the recommendations section, we highlight key recommendations for the future development of the LSS programme and recommendations which can contribute to the FELU's internationalization process and positioning as a leading multiple-accredited business school in the Central and Eastern Europe.

The first and second chapters of the thesis describe consumer behaviour in HEIs and give an insight on the factors that influence consumer (student) behaviour. We present the decision-making process itself, from need recognition and problem awareness to specifics in decision-making of international students. We continue with marketing in HEIs and focus on how institutions are marketing and branding their summer school programmes. In the fourth chapter, we introduce the study abroad programmes, from aspects of internationalization of HEIs to study mobility programmes and short-term programmes. The main focus is put on existing summer programmes in Europe and the LSS programme, which is one of the biggest summer programmes in Europe at this moment. The fifth chapter focuses on empirical analysis, where we highlight the purpose and objectives, and present main research hypotheses, methodology used to acquire data, and results. We extend the findings from the empirical part to the next chapter, where we discuss the theoretical and managerial implications of the results, and end with the sixth chapter by giving further recommendations to the FELU management for further development. We conclude the thesis by summarizing the main findings, and provide the full literature review at the end.

1 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN HIGHER EDUCATION

When focusing on consumer behaviour as a research topic, we realize that it is one of the most massively studied topics by researchers and marketers today, since understanding consumers has become the bedrock of marketing as a discipline. As we are all consumers, we all have some kind of patterns driving our behaviour. Companies and marketers strive to better understand us in order to meet our needs, satisfy our wants and influence our consumer behaviour in their favour. Blackwell, Miniard & Engel (2001) have summarized the definition of consumer behaviour as all activities of obtaining, consuming and disposing of products and services, which are preceded and followed by decision-making processes. MacInnis and Hoyer (2008, p. 3) have similarly focused on the definition of consumer behaviour as being the entirety of consumer's decision with regard to acquisition, consumption and disposition of goods, services, activities, experiences, people and ideas by decision-making units. According to Schiffman, Hansen & Kanuk (2008), consumer behaviour can also be defined as behaviour which consumers display when searching for products, making decisions and actual purchases, and when using and evaluating products and services for which they expect to satisfy their needs and wants. Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg (2010, p. 6) have likewise defined consumer behaviour as "the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires". Moreover, the study of consumer behaviour focuses on how consumers think (how they make decisions and which decisions they make), how they feel (emotions) and how they behave (which are the psychical actions that result from the mentioned decisions and emotions) (Schiffman, O'Cass, Paladino & Carlson, 2013). In this context, companies pay special attention to understanding and influencing ways individuals spend their available resources on products and services.

With the help of the above stated definitions and additional information which we found during our research, it is not difficult to acknowledge that the study of consumer behaviour is of great importance if we want to successfully market our products and services. All these definitions lead to the common view that the consumer buying behaviour is a process whose aim is to satisfy consumers' needs and wants by purchasing products and services, as well as corresponding post-purchase behaviour. Academics and researches are unanimous that this is an on-going process subjected to continuous change as the consumer purchase characteristics are changing over time. Moreover, the study of consumer behaviour is helpful in many other aspects as consumers are individuals with different mind-sets and attitudes towards the purchasing process and their behaviour is affected by many different factors and contingencies. Kotler, Wong, Saunders & Armstrong (2004) believe that knowing consumers and understanding their behaviour is anything but simple as consumers often act contrary to what they say, or even believe and feel. In many cases, they are not aware of the deep and real motives behind their actions, and they often change their mind at the last minute. Having said this, we focus on various types of factors which influence consumer behaviour, in terms of a general theoretical framework.

As a research area, consumer behaviour combines various different disciplines, including: psychology, sociology, social psychology, cultural anthropology, business and economics, and, most recently, neuroscience.

Consumer psychology, defined as a scientific study of consumer (individual) behaviour (Mullen & Johnson, 2013, p. 1), includes drive and motivation studies, studies of goals and incentives, perception studies, studies of personality and self-concept, learning studies and studies of attitude formation and change (Blythe, 2013). These studies help us understand the actions and responses to different promotional messages, or products, and how the consumer experience and personality characteristics influence their choices (Batra & Kazmi, 2009). Sociology, as the study of human behaviour in groups (Blythe, 2013, p. 215), shows us that consumer actions in groups can differ from the actions of these same individuals when they are making decisions on their own. It is important to consider the influences of group membership, family and social class on consumer behaviour when studying consumer behaviour, as well as various other social structures and contexts (Batra & Kazmi, 2009). Studies of peer and reference groups, studies of family, studies of class and culture, and studies of self-image and role are contributions from sociology which help to understand the sociological drivers for consumer behaviour (Blythe, 2013). Social psychology is the "scientific study of the effects of social and cognitive processes on the way individuals perceive, influence and relate to others" (Smith, Mackie, & Claypol, 2014, p. 5). It studies how individuals operate in groups and how different opinions influence individuals in their consumption behaviour (Batra & Kazmi, 2009).

Cultural anthropology, as the study of human beings in society (Batra & Kazmi, 2009, p. 9), explores the development of core beliefs, values and customs that individuals inherit from their relatives and influence their buying behaviour. It also helps compare consumers of different nationalities and cultures. Business and economics is the study of demand (Blythe, 2013, p. 13) at the individual level, at the level of the firm, and at the level of the overall economy. Within this study, concepts, such as utility, value for money and economic choice, are considered and help explain the rational side of consumer behaviour. Consumer neuroscience, a subfield of neuroeconomics, can be defined "as the study of the neural conditions and processes that underlie consumption, their psychological meaning, and their behavioural consequences" (Reimann, Schilke, Weber, Neuhaus & Zaichkowsky, 2011, p. 610). Neuroscience can contribute to understanding the consumer psychology within four main areas: decision-making (how neural activity influences consumer preferences), rewards (how they influence perceived value), memory (product and advertising memory), and emotions (marketing stimuli on motivational and emotional basis) (Solnais, Andreu-Perez, Sánchez-Fernández & Andréu-Abela, 2013).

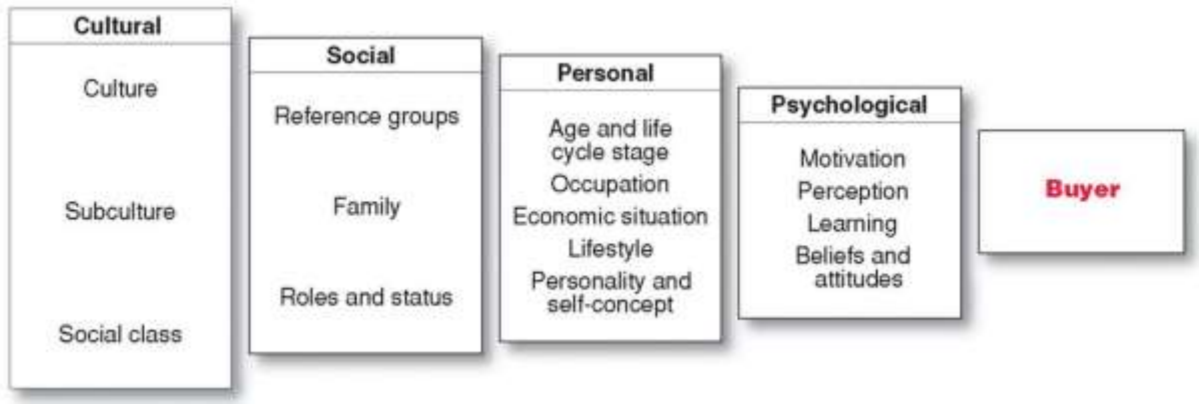
As it can be seen, consumer behaviour studies derive from different academic disciplines and direct studies by marketing academics. Consumer behaviour is appealing as a field of study as it, after all, concentrates on people. In our master's thesis, we examine consumer behaviour through the view of the following disciplines: consumer psychology, sociology, social psychology, cultural anthropology, business and economics. Consumer psychology is important to understand individuals' (students') actions and responses to promotional messages and how their experience influences their choices (e.g., some of the students have attended the LSS programme more than once). Sociology is helpful when it comes to understanding how individuals (students) are influenced by their families, friends and colleagues when they are making a decision. We look at consumer behaviour also through social psychology as we are interested in how individuals (students) and their behaviour are influenced by different opinions (e.g., from their friends or colleagues who had already attended the LSS programme). Cultural anthropology is important as participants of different nationalities and cultures attend the LSS programme. Finally, the business and economics discipline helps understanding the demand on individual (student) level (e.g., we consider the concept value for money to understand the rational side of individual (student) behaviour).

1.1 Factors influencing consumer behaviour

The field of consumer behaviour was often referred to as "buyer behaviour" to describe consumer interaction at the time of purchase. Nowadays, consumer behaviour is recognized as an on-going process which consists of three key stages: (1) pre-consumption, (2) consumption and (3) post-consumption. It is important to understand customer needs at all stages as the level of value created at any stage impacts consumer's actions, opinions and feelings towards a product or a brand (Solomon, Rusell-Bennett & Previte, 2012).

Consumer behaviour is affected by different groups of factors. In most cases marketers are not able to control many of the corresponding factors; however, they should try to identify them and take them into account when designing appropriate marketing strategies. Figure 1 shows the types of factors that influence consumer behaviour.

Figure 1. Factors influencing consumer behaviour



Source: P. Kotler & G. Armstrong, *Principles of Marketing* (14th ed.), 2011, p. 135.

According to the authors, many levels of factors influence the actual process of consumer buying behaviour – from broad cultural and social influences to motivations, attitudes and beliefs, which lie deep within the individual and may be totally subconscious (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010).

1.1.1 Personal factors

Some of the most common personal characteristic which have an influence on consumer decision making are, for example: age, life-cycle stage, education, occupation, lifestyle, economic situation (income), personality and self-concept. Age and life-cycle stage are one of the most typical time-related impacts on the way people consume products and services. Life-stage changes usually result from demographics and life-changing events (milestones), therefore marketers often define their target markets in terms of life-cycle stage (i.e. generation Y, middle age consumers etc.) (Armstrong, Adam, Denize & Kotler, 2014). Social class indicates people who have similar income and social standing in the community, and, therefore, share similar tastes and interests (Solomon et al., 2012). Consumer's occupation and economic situation are quite inseparable and interrelated, since the price range of products that the consumer will buy mostly depends on their income, or the income of their household. Consumers with higher incomes generally do not pay so much attention to the price of products and are able to afford more expensive brands. Consumers with less income are, however, more price sensitive when purchasing products and compare the prices of products, in order to choose the product with the lowest price. This is of course also moderated by the perceived importance of the product and the level of involvement with the product which depends on the product category in question (Armstrong et al., 2014).

Lifestyle is closely related to one's values and personality, and manifests in actual patterns of behaviour (Hoyer et al., 2012). Lifestyle is expressed through one's activities, interests and opinions, and captures the person's whole pattern of acting and interacting in the world (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Personality is a mix of distinctive patterns of behaviours, tendencies, qualities and personal dispositions that lead to consistent response to environmental stimuli (Hoyer et al., 2012, p. 396). Funder (2001, p. 2) defined it as "individual's characteristic patterns of thought, emotions, and behaviour, together with the psychological mechanisms – hidden or not – behind those patterns". Self-concept is about how individuals see themselves in terms of consumption patterns, branding and other aspect which are consumption-based (Blythe, 2013). Understanding the relationship between self-concept and possessions is important for marketers as people's possessions reflect their identities (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010).

1.1.2 Social factors

Consumer behaviour is affected by social factors such as, for example: group affiliation (i.e., small groups), family, social roles and/or social status (based on social stratification). By "small groups" the authors (Armstrong et al., 2014) refer to membership groups and reference groups. Within reference groups, norms and standards are provided, and consumers judge their attitudes and behaviour according to them (Blythe, 2013). Membership groups are the groups that have a direct influence and to which an individual belongs, whilst reference groups are groups to which an individual does not belong, but they affect behaviour, lifestyle and individual's attitudes. In case of reference groups, marketers need to work on reaching the opinion leaders within these groups as they exert social influence on others because of their knowledge, personality and other characteristics (Armstrong et al., 2014). Family is also a very important consumer buying organization in society. As the lifestyles evolve, the buying roles change and marketers have to be aware of these changes, in order to avoid the use of stereotypes (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011).

With the expansion of the Internet, a new type of social interaction has developed, the so-called online social networking. Social networking media range from blogs and social networking websites (i.e., Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, etc.) to entire virtual worlds (Second Life, Gaia Online, etc.). Marketers are, therefore, keen on the mentioned types of social media to interact with consumers and build closer consumer relationships. However, they have to keep in mind that, in this way, results are difficult to measure and control, since users are the ones that control the content on social networks, and any kind of marketing attempts can easily backfire (Armstrong et al., 2014).

1.1.3 Psychological factors

According to Armstrong et al. (2014), consumer behaviour is also greatly influenced by the following four main psychological factors: motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes. Different authors have defined motivation as:

- The psychological process that gives behaviour purpose and direction (Kreitner, 1995).
- A predisposition to behave in a purposive manner to achieve specific, unmet needs (Buford, Bedeian, & Lindner, 1995).
- An internal drive to satisfy an unsatisfied need (Higgins, 1994).

If a consumer is motivated, it means that he or she is willing to engage in a goal-relevant activity (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008).

A motive or drive is a need that directs an individual to seek satisfaction. There are many existing theories of human motivation. Two of the most famous are Sigmund Freud's theory of id, ego and superego, and Abraham Maslow's theory about hierarchy of needs. Freud (1923) was focused on a person's buying behaviour and the fact that it is affected by subconscious motives that even the consumer himself does not fully understand. Through the motivation research, it is possible to uncover underlying emotions and attitudes towards brands, and buying decisions by using a variety of so-called probing techniques. Maslow (1943) sought to explain why people are driven by particular needs at particular times, and that human needs are arranged in a sort of hierarchy, with lower-end needs having to be fulfilled first, before proceeding to higher-end needs. Each individual will try to satisfy the most important need first, and once this need is satisfied, it will not be a motivator anymore and the individual will try to satisfy the next most important need. Maslow's work suggested that marketers reflect on the types of needs consumers might be satisfying when they are buying goods and services (Armstrong et al., 2014).

The perception influences people's selection, organization and interpretation of information that help them form a meaningful picture of the world. The authors emphasize three types of perceptual processes: selective attention, selective distortion and selective retention (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011). Selective attention refers to the fact that consumers are more aware of stimuli that are relevant to their needs; they notice ads for products which are related to their needs and easily overlook those which are not. Selective distortion describes the tendency of consumers to interpret certain information in such a way that it will support our existing beliefs. Because of selective retention, consumers are more likely to remember only the good things about a certain brand they favour and forget the good things about the brands they do not like (Armstrong et al., 2014).

Most of the human behaviour is learned. Learning refers to a permanent change in consumer behaviour which arises from experience. It is an on-going process and psychologists have developed several theories about the learning process (Solomon et al., 2010). Learning occurs through different drives, stimuli, cues, responses, and reinforcement. Understanding of the learning theory is important for marketers as they can build a demand for a product by associating it with strong drives and providing positive reinforcement. By doing and learning, consumers acquire beliefs and attitudes which influence their buying behaviour. Beliefs can be based on real knowledge, opinion or faith, and can carry an emotional charge. Attitude can be described as individual's evaluations, feelings and tendencies towards an object. Marketers should try to fit the products into existing attitudes as these attitudes are very difficult to change (Kotler & Armstrong., 2010).

1.1.4 Cultural factors

Hofstede (1994) best defines culture as software of the mind. The impact of culture is very natural and automatic; therefore, it is often taken for granted. It is only when we are exposed to different cultural values that we become aware of how culture actually shapes our behaviour (Tyagi & Kumar, 2004). Hofstede (2007, p. 413) defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another". This means that culture is a collective attribute which is not directly visible but manifested in behaviours, and is common to some, not all people (Hofstede & McCrae, 2004). Culture can be also defined as a set of values, beliefs, perceptions, needs and behaviours, learned by members of different societies, and it is one of the most basic causes of individual's wants and behaviour (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Shiffman and Kanuk (1994, p. 410) stated that "consumers both view themselves in the context of their culture and react to their environment based upon the cultural framework that they bring to that experience. In this regard, culture is often associated with context. Each individual perceives the world through his own cultural lens". Culture has a wide-ranging and prevalent nature and, therefore, its study requires a detailed examination of the character of the total society through various factors which give society its distinctive flavour (Schiffman et al., 2008). In a broader sense, values and beliefs are mental images which have an effect on specific attitudes; these attitudes are likely to influence the way people respond in specific situations (Tyagi & Kumar, 2004). Beliefs consist of numeral mental or verbal statements which reflect the person's knowledge and assessment on something particular, whilst values are few in number and are not tied to specific situations or objects. Customs, on the other hand, reflect routine behaviour (Schiffman et al., 2008).

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2010), every group or society has a culture and cultural influences which affect consumer behaviour, may vary greatly between different countries. Culture exists at different levels and can be related to nationality (national culture), ethnicity, regionalism (regional culture), as well as professions, or various kinds of sub-cultures. In essence, culture is the glue which binds members of a certain group together (Douglas Brown, 1994, p. 163). These groups can be defined as "groups of people with shared value systems based on common life experiences and situations" (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011, p. 136). The authors introduce social classes as part of societies, defining them as relatively permanent and ordered divisions whose members share similar values and behaviours. Marketers are interested in social classes because people belonging to the same social class tend to show similar buying behaviour. Marketers should develop marketing strategies which address cultural factors from domestic, regional and global perspectives.

1.2 THE CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The consumer decision-making process is one of the most studied topics in different scientific fields (e.g., sociology, psychology), as well as in the field of economics, especially from organizational and marketing (consumer behaviour) point of view. To understand the consumer decision-making process is important not only for companies but also for HEIs, since the environment in which HEIs are operating is becoming more and more competitive. In order to successfully compete on the market by attracting and retaining international students, it has become crucial for HEIs to understand the decision-making process of their potential customers. According to Aarinen (2012) international students can present an important source of revenue for HEI and country; however, apart from financial aspects, there are also other reasons to attract the international students – cultural and intellectual aspects (Mpinganjira, 2009). Regardless the aspects, a HEI should be aware of the fact that the selection of HEI presents one of the most complex and expensive decisions a prospective (international) student can face (Mazzarol, 1998). There have been undertaken many studies about international students' decision-making, focusing mainly on the UK, the US and Australia as the most desired international study abroad destination. This is not surprising, since all three countries are listed as a top study destination with the biggest share of foreign students enrolled to HEI (OECD, 2011).

The literature offers many definitions of the terms such as decision, decision making and approaches to studying decision-making (process). The literature on decision-making can be roughly divided in three categories, based on researchers' study perspective: a descriptive, a normative and a prescriptive stream (Bell, Raiffa & Tversky, 1988). While researchers of the prescriptive stream are focused on assisting people in making better decisions, the normative stream researchers are primarily focused on how decisions should be made. On the other hand, the descriptive stream is mainly interested on how decisions are actually made. All three streams are rather complimentary than conflicting (Boer, 1998). This thesis follows the normative stream, since its primary focus is given to how decisions are actually made.

The decision is described as a choice that you make about something after thinking about several possibilities, while the decision-making is defined as the action or process of deciding on something or of resolving a question (Cambridge Dictionaries online, 2015). It is quite clear that both of the terms suggest that decision or decision-making itself is actually more of a dynamic rather than a static action. It is a process. According to Sproles and Kendall (1986), the consumer decision-making process presents a mental orientation which characterizes the consumer's tendency towards making choices. Du Plessis et al. (1999) described the decision-making process as a set of behaviour patterns of consumers that precede, determine and follow the decision process of satisfying needs by obtaining products or services. Cant, Brink & Brijball (2002) see the decision-making as a cognition process which includes mental activities that determine which activities need to be taken, in order to remove a tension in current state caused by a need. Looking from a perspective of a student as consumer, Maringe and Carter (2007) define the decision-making as a multiple stages complex process, which is undertaken by the student who is deciding in which destination and programme to study. Before we continue on, we must note that concepts of choice, decision and decision-making are quite interwoven and hardly separated from each other. Therefore, in this thesis, we refer to the same process when we use these terms.

Despite the fact that we could study consumer behaviour without the involvement of decision-making process models, the complexity of the decision-making process still remains one of the main issues of researches. Therefore, the process can be the best present with the use of models (Livette, 2006). A model offers us a view on different stages of consumers approach towards making decision between alternatives. Models can also help us to understand the differences in consumers' decision process. (Blackwell et al., 2001; Livette, 2006). Models proved to be beneficial when it comes to studying complex issues, since they simplify reality (Caine & Robson, 1993).

One of the most cited and used models of the consumer decision-making process in the literature is the five stage model. As it can be seen in the Figure 2, the consumer goes through five stages: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post-purchase behaviour (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011). The consumer decision-making process (also called buying process) begins when consumer recognizes the need or a problem, and in order to solve the problem he or she searches for more information about the specific product or service. Then consumer performs an evaluation of alternatives, and according to his or her priorities, beliefs, etc., he or she decides about the purchase. The last stage presents the consumers' post-purchase behaviour, and it is as important as all previous stages, since it reveals consumer's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the purchase made.

Figure 2. Five stage model of consumer decision-making process

Source: P. Kotler & G. Armstrong, *Principles of Marketing* (14th ed.), 2011, p. 152.

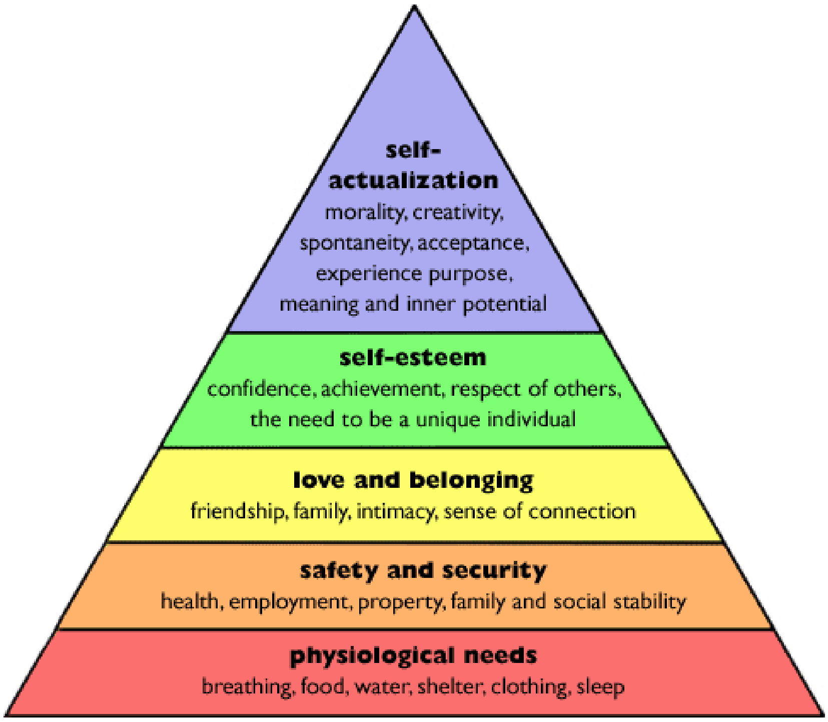
Kotler and Armstrong (2011) suggest that a consumer goes through all stages in every purchase situation, except when it comes to more routine purchases, then consumers tend to behave a bit differently by reversing or often skipping some stages in the decision-making process. For example, a person buying his or her regular shampoo brand will recognize the need, skip the stage of information search and evaluation of alternatives, and simply go to the purchase decision. However, the five stage model in Figure 2 is used to demonstrate all aspects that arise when consumer is faced with a new and complex purchase decision. It is clear that the buying process actually starts before the purchase (final decision) is actually made. In order to successfully sell the product or service, we must focus on the entire process and not only on the purchase decision.

1.2.1 Need recognition and problem awareness

The first and very important step in the decision-making process is need or problem recognition. If there is no need, the purchase will not likely occur at all. Cant et al. (2002) defined problem recognition as an awareness of the need to change from the existing state to the desired or ideal state. In other words, need recognition appears in situations when consumer realizes that there exists a gap between the actual situation and the desired or ideal one (Kotler, Burton, Deans, Brown & Armnstrong, 2012). Neal, Quester & Pettigrew (2006) argue that need or problem recognition can vary from situation and circumstances which may lead to purchasing idea. According to Tyagi and Kumar (2004), the consumer might not be aware of a specific need until she or he comes across the product or service (e.g., media advertisements, window-shopping, etc.).

Human needs can be classified into two categories: psychological and physical or functional needs. Physical or functional needs usually appear as the result of necessity, whereas psychological needs present an outcome of emotional feeling of the consumer (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg, 2006). According to Kotler and Armstrong (2011), the need can be triggered by internal (physiological) or external stimuli. In case of internal stimuli, the need comes from person's normal needs such as thirst, hunger (psychological need), whereas in case of external stimuli, the need appears due to exposure to an advertisement or exposure to a product in showcase (window-shopping). We say external stimuli create a want and not a real need. One of the most known and widely used representations of the hierarchy of human needs is Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Figure 3). According to Maslow, the individual is "stimulated" by certain needs he wants to achieve before focusing on the next one.

Figure 3. Maslow's hierarchy of needs



Source: A.H. Maslow, *A theory of human motivation*, 1943, p. 370.

As Figure 3 shows, each human has basic needs or so-called physiological needs such as breathing, food, water, etc. They appear at the bottom of the hierarchy and present a starting point for motivation to pursue other needs that follow: safety and security, love and belonging, self-esteem, and the last one on the top of the pyramid – the self-actualization. Maslow described self-actualization as the ultimate goal for individual to become everything that one is capable of becoming. It can appear in many forms, depending on the individual; it can be knowledge quest, understanding, finding the meaning of life, etc. (Maslow, 1970). As we mentioned before, the education is located on the top of the pyramid.

Students are driven by a number of needs to pursue studying abroad, and they will try to fill the gap only if it appears to be attractive, and choices are within the reach (Moogan et al., 2003). They will continue to pursue education as long as they perceive benefits to be far greater than the opportunity costs of extending the education (Davis, 2001). According to Teichler (2004), studying abroad proved to have different benefits for individual such as professional, linguistic, cultural and personal experience of staying abroad; perception of these benefits varies from individual. In his research, Teichler (2004) stated several reasons which played an important role in students' decision-making process of studying abroad. The main reasons were: learning foreign language, gaining new academic experience in foreign country, improving career prospects by self-development, and a wish to travel to different surrounding. The European Commission believes that the benefits of studying abroad may still not be sufficiently understood by the students (Sobková, 2011).

1.2.2 Information gathering

After the need or want is recognized and before the final decision is made, the consumer focuses on the information search about alternative selection of desired product or service to fulfil the need. According to Cant et al. (2002), information search presents the physical and mental activities performed by the consumer to obtain the information needed. The search for (additional) information highly depends on the individuals' knowledge, disposable information (feedback), previous experience, interest, etc.

Kotler and Armstrong (2011, p. 153) identified the following most frequently used sources from which consumers can obtain information:

- Personal sources (e.g., friends, family).
- Public sources (e.g., the Internet, mass media).
- Commercial sources (e.g., advertisements, salespeople).
- Experimental sources (e.g., testing, examining).

The influence on the final decision varies with the product or buyer itself. The information search by consumers increased with growth of the Internet (browsers such as Google and Yahoo), and many consumers now gather information on products and prices before physically entering the store (Jobber & Lancaster, 2009). While commercial sources usually inform the consumer, personal sources provide evaluation of the product or service. Findings from one of the recent studies have shown that the biggest influence on persons' purchase decision has actually word-of-mouth, and more and more people are being influenced by the user-generated content such as social networking sites, blogs, forums, and review sites when it comes to making final decision about the purchase (Kotler et al., 2012). According to Dudovskiy (2013), a person will more likely use more sources to obtain more information when it comes to the purchase of products or services of higher value. The quantity of the information influences consumer's awareness and knowledge of the product or brand; therefore, an organization must design a good marketing mix and carefully identify consumers' sources of information and the importance of each source (Kotler et al., 2012).

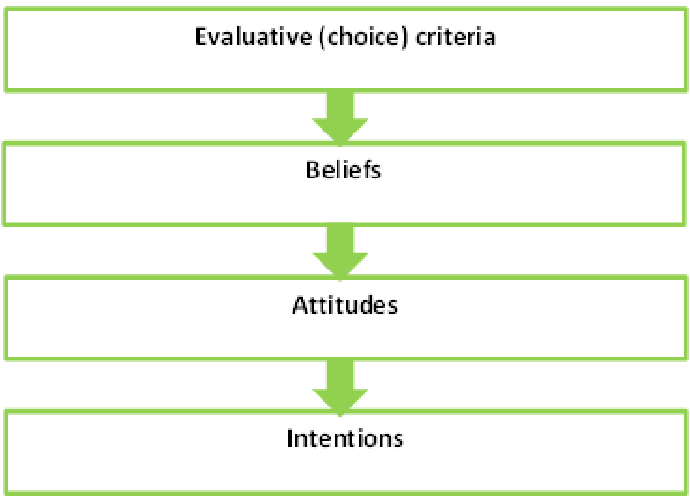
As we mentioned before, most of the information is received from commercial sources, however most effective ones tend to be the personal sources (Kotler et al., 2012): the same theory applies to the students who are looking for international education. According to Worthington and Higgs (2004), website and word-of-mouth present the key influencers on the decision in the information gathering phase. The European Commission also found how crucial are personal sources such as professors, coordinators and former participants – students – when it comes to promoting educational mobility. However, attractive destinations may present an exception in this case since the personal factor may not influence students' decision about the final choice (Sobková, 2011).

A recent study on influences on decision-making of international students has revealed the importance of the electronic content. The institution's website showed as an important factor to more than 70 per cent of the respondents, and online prospectus turned out to be important to more than 50 per cent. It has also shown that social media is crucial since it is primarily used in the information gathering phase where students indicated that they would like to engage with universities and their content via Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and LinkedIn. For students, the social media present a place to get factual information, opinions and direct contacts. Social media and website content are sufficient in the information gathering phase; however, when students initiate one-on-one conversation by email, they expect a tailored and personalized reply within two to three days (Beyond the data, 2014).

1.2.3 Evaluation of alternatives

Once the consumer had gathered all information, he or she needs to start the evaluation phase where additional information search can occur in order to perform a qualitative evaluation of alternatives. Cant et al. (2002) defined evaluation of alternatives as the act of identification of alternative solutions to the problem by assessment of pros and cons of each alternative. This phase is considered as one of the most important phases in the decision-making process (Dudovskiy, 2013). According to Jobber and Lancaster (2009), the evaluation can be considered as the system which consists of: evaluative (choice) criteria, beliefs, attitudes, and intentions (Figure 4).

Figure 4. The evaluation system



Source: D. Jobber & G. Lancaster, *Selling and Sales Management* (8th ed.), 2009, p. 83.

Choice criteria present dimensions used by consumer to compare or evaluate products or brands. According to Jobber and Lancaster (2009, p. 85), there are three types of choice criteria:

- economic (price, performance and reliability),
- social (status and social belonging), and
- personal (individual's psychology).

How the choice criteria is made depends on consumer and buying situation where consumers can carry out more, less or no evaluations – buying in the case of the latter is based on impulse and/or intuition (Cant et al., 2002; Kotler et al., 2012).Beliefs present the degree to which products possess various characteristics in the consumer's mind, or in other words how the consumer perceives the product based on the choice criteria he had set up. Beliefs are followed by consumer attitudes which present the degree of liking or disliking a product also based on the evaluation criteria and beliefs about the product where beliefs imply knowledge about the product and attitudes simply express the state of mind – liking or disliking. Here, intentions measure the probability if attitudes are to be acted upon, or simplify the likelihood that the consumer will buy the product based on his or her favourable attitude (Jobber & Lancaster, 2009). Kotler et al. (2012) argue that simple and single evaluation process cannot be applied to all consumers or buying situations; however, an organization should study how consumers actually evaluate alternatives in order to take different actions to influence the consumer's decision.

In this context, Sowdagur (2006) quoted authors Schiffman and Kanuk who identified four different types of individuals in decision-making process: economic, emotional, cognitive and passive individual. The first, economic individual takes rational decisions, while an emotional one takes decisions based on irrational and personal needs. A cognitive individual is someone who takes decisions based on information he or she obtains from the environment, personal needs, attitudes, social influences, perceptions and previous experiences. And the last type, a passive individual, is the one who can be simply influenced by a salesperson, marketer or an agent due to poor knowledge about the product.

Petruzzellis et al. (2010) believe it is also crucial for HEIs to understand how students make decisions in order to improve their positioning in the market which involves an institutional brand or image, market segments and communication strategy. The "product" or service of HEI can be seen as a bundle of institution-related attributes defined as components of the core product; according to Petruzzellis et al. (2010, p. 141), this bundle usually consists of the following elements:

- Physical or facilitating goods (e.g., HEI facilities, course material, additional services such as cafeterias, gym).
- Sensual or explicit service (being able to perform what you promised, e.g., HEI staff).
- Psychological or implicit service (providing prompt service, being willing to help students, etc.).

Since nowadays students can choose from various options where to study, the evaluation criteria consist from the entire students' experience which encompass apart from teaching and learning also provision of other services such as accommodation, willingness to help, assistance to get a visa, care, etc. The "value for money" became an important factor in students' decision-making process (Petruzzellis et al., 2010).

A recent study has shown that the most important factors when studying abroad are: quality of education, international recognition of education, country's attitude towards international students, safety and ease of getting visa. While these factors present basically a starting point, there are also other very important factors which should be taken in consideration by HEI. Here, the course choice turned out to be one of the crucial factors, followed by the country (location) and institution. One of the interesting findings was also that students perceive teaching quality based on tuition fee; however, the tuition fee is not that crucial compared to course choice when it comes to making final decision (Beyond the data, 2014).

1.2.4 Selection and purchase

Purchase decision is the next phase in the decision-making process. According to Cant et al. (2002), it presents the outcome of the evaluation by selecting the most desirable alternative from a group of other alternatives that consumer has made. In the evaluation stage, the consumer ranks the alternatives and forms purchase intentions, while in purchase phase a final decision of making the purchase or not is reached. Two factors can change the course of the final decision between intention and decision: attitudes of others and unexpected situational factors (Kotler et al., 2012). The first one is connected with "personal" opinion of others, while in unexpected situations (e.g., price fall expectation) a purchase may not occur at all.

Solomon et al. (2006) connect purchase decision with perceived risk, or in other words belief that purchase of a product or a service might have negative consequences, especially if the product or the service is expensive and the brand is unfamiliar to a consumer. According to Solomon et al. (2006, p. 272), there are five types of perceived risk: monetary, functional, physical, social and psychological risk. As the name already suggests, a monetary risk is connected to a financial risk, a functional risk is mainly connected to meeting the needs or performing its function, while a physical risk involves safety and health risk. The risk of losing self-esteem and self-confidence is connected to a social risk that a consumer can bear, whereas a product, service or brand can reflect a social status which presents a psychological risk (Solomon et al., 2006). According to Sowdagur (2006), a final decision can give an insight into consumer's social and individual environment which shows if the marketing strategy was adequate, or it needs improvement.

Once a potential student has formed an intention to enrol in the preferable HEI, several factors may influence on reaching the final decision. There have been made just a few studies which would identify and explain these factors in detail (Brown, Varley & Pal, 2009), and the existing literature on influencing factors implies the course content as the most important factor to influence the final decision which HEI to choose (Beyond the data, 2014).

1.2.5 Post-purchase evaluation

The last phase in the consumer decision-making process is the post-purchase behaviour, which, according to Dudovskiy (2013), many organizations tend to ignore by not realizing the importance that this phase can have on the future decision-making process of the same or different consumer. Cant et al. (2002) described the post-purchase behaviour as customer's evaluation of the product's performance based on choice criteria and consumer's perception of the product. In other words, this phase presents the consumer's experience with purchased product or service. The consumer can be satisfied or dissatisfied, depending on the relationship between his or her expectations and the perceived performance. If expectations are met, the consumer is satisfied or even delighted, and if expectations are excelled in the opposite way, the consumer is dissatisfied. Consumer satisfaction presents a key to building profitable relationships by keeping them and reaping their lifetime value; a satisfied consumer will tend to buy the product again, talk favourably about it to others (personal source/marketing), and buy other products from the organization. A dissatisfied consumer acts differently by spreading bad word-of-mouth which usually travels faster than a good one and in most cases does not come to the organization directly from the consumer. In order to avoid a possible bad word-of-mouth, an organization should measure customer satisfaction on regular basis, and set up a system that allows and encourages customers to complain directly to the organization (Kotler et al., 2012).

According to Audhes et al. (2009), discussing the student satisfaction can be quite complex since it may be very hard for the students to evaluate the quality of the service provided by HEI. One of the main reason why it is so hard to evaluate the quality hides in the nature of the service – intangibility (Moogan, Baron & Harris, 1999; Maringe & Carter, 2007; Audhes et al., 2009; Källström, 2009; Brown et al., 2009; Kotler et al., 2012). Edvardsson et al. (2005, p. 128) introduced four main characteristics which define the difference between product and service:

- intangibility (service cannot be touched, seen or smelled),
- inseparability (production and consumption are almost simultaneous activities),
- variability (service cannot be standardised),
- perishability (it is impossible to store service on a shelf).

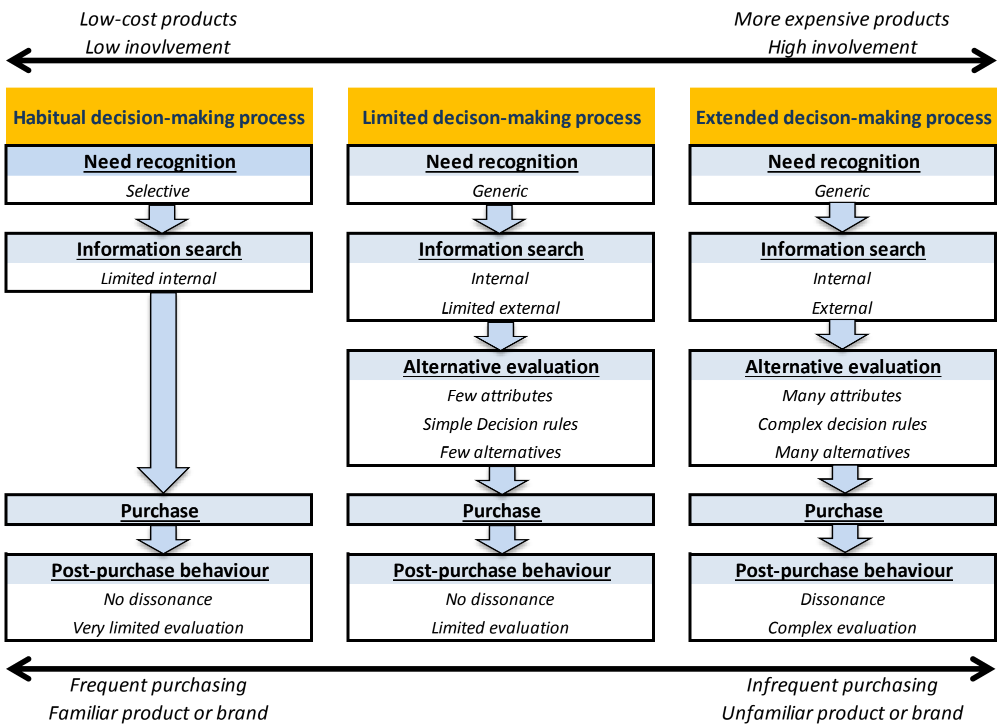
Another reason why it might be hard to evaluate the service of HEI can be found in the HEI's perception of students; while some HEIs believe their services should be tailored services according to student needs, other HEIs argue that students are not capable to identify the needs when it comes to content of education and knowledge (Audhes et al., 2009). According to Wilkins, Balakrishnan & Huisman (2012), regardless the perception, a HEI can benefit from student satisfaction in many ways such as attracting top students, increase level of external funding, charging higher tuition fees and also gaining the competitive advantage. While Elliot et al. (2001) argued that the satisfaction of students results in a short-term attitude according to their experience with service provided, Wilkins et al. (2012) emphasized that student satisfaction does not consist of only teaching and learning experience but of an overall (holistic) experience at HEI. Students want more social interaction, and those HEIs which tend to facilitate such approach tend to be ranked higher when it comes to choosing HEI; however, a HEI with a firm brand (e.g., Harvard) can be an exception (Audhes et al., 2009).

1.2.6 Types of consumer decision-making

In order to better understand the decision-making process, an amount of effort (e.g., time) which is put into the decision process needs be taken into consideration (Solomon et al., 2006), since the consumer behaviour differs a lot among different types of products and services; an effort put into the decision-making process which shampoo to buy is less significant compared to an effort put into the decision-making process of buying a car, a house, or considering which HEI to choose. In other words, more complex decisions involve more buying participants, more information search, more evaluation, and more time (Kotler et al., 2012). As the Figure 5 shows, there are three types of decision-making: habitual, limited and extended decision-making (Solomon et al., 2006, p. 261).

The habitual (also referred to as nominal or routinized) decision-making occurs when it comes to more frequent purchases of low-cost and low-involvement products. There is a little involvement of consumer in the decision-making which product or service to purchase, they simply buy the product (Kotler et al., 2012). In contrast to characteristics of the limited and the extended decision-making, the habitual decision-making does not involve a high degree of information search, and there is basically no evaluation phase in the decision-making process (Solomon et al., 2006). According to Kotler et al. (2012), in the habitual decision-making the consumers are quite passive and tend to buy products almost automatically without any active involvement in the evaluation or purchase of the product.

Figure 5. Types of consumer decision-making



Source: Adapted from D.I. Hawkins, R.J.A Best & K.A. Coney., *Consumer Behaviour*, 2002, p. 505; Solomon et al., *Consumer Behaviour: A European Perspective* (3rd ed.), 2006, p. 261.

On the other side, high involvement of consumers occurs in the extended (also called complex or traditional) decision-making process, since the product or brand they are buying is more expensive and they are not familiar with it, thus the purchase of such products is not frequent (Kotler et al., 2012). Consumers approach to purchase carefully by collecting information from both internal (memory, experience) and external (family, internet) sources; based on the importance of the decision, an extensive evaluation is performed by taking in consideration the attributes of one product or brand and compare it to the desired characteristics (Solomon et al., 2006). According to Kotler et al. (2012), a consumer will pass through a learning process by developing beliefs and attitude towards the product; therefore, it is crucial to understand the information search and evaluation behaviour in order to assist consumer in the decision-making process.

The limited decision-making occurs when the product is nor cheap nor expensive but rather something in-between, and the consumers are not highly motivated to engage in the information search as they are with more complex products; instead of information search, consumers simply use decision rules to reach the final decision (Solomon et al., 2006). A very little effort is given into pre-purchase evaluation of the product, and after the purchase a consumer might experience or not a dissonance (discomfort) with the purchased product (Kotler et al., 2012). The limited decision-making depends on the product and consumer knowledge and experience with the product he or she is purchasing, as well as the time in which decision needs to be made.

Having presented a general theoretical framework of consumer decision making, we now turn our attention to the specific context of consumer behaviour in education by international students.

2 BEHAVIOUR OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

2.1 Specifics of international students' decision-making in education

Like for any other company operating in the market, it is crucial for HEIs to understand the behaviour of their customers, which beside local students include also international students. According to the recent international student surveys, the competition for international students is becoming more and more tense and complex (Beyond the data, 2014). According to Aarinen (2012), international students present an important source of revenue (tuition fees) for an institution, as well as for the country. Beside the positive contribution to country's cultural, social, economic and intellectual aspects, Mpinganjira (2009) stresses also the positive influence on HEI not collecting tuition fees in terms of diversity of cultural and social perspectives to a learning process, as well as enabling an HEI to form international partnerships. Therefore, it is important for HEIs to shift more focus on international students, their behaviour and the factors which have an influence on their behaviour (Cubillo, Sánchez & Cerviño, 2006).

Surprisingly, not a lot of studies have been made which focus on the factors influencing decision-making of international students (Wilkins et al., 2012). Most of the existing literature is focused on analysing the factors that influence students' decision where to study in general, but less focused on the international students in particular. Despite the limited literature connected to factors influencing international students' decision-making, there is still a variety of factors that influence the selection of HEIs (see again Figure 1). One of the earliest studies of factors was made by McMahon (1992) who explained the flow of international students to the United States between 1960 and 1970 by two models. The first model indicated the "push" factors connected to the countries from where international student were from, and the second model presented the so-called "pull" factors of the host country. The author associated push factors with availability of higher education at home, while the pull factors focused on political, economic and social factors of the chosen destination.

Most of the researches made afterwards adopted the same framework of push and pull factors (Mazzarol & Soutar's, 2002; Cubillo et al., 2006; Maringe & Carter, 2007; Wilkins et al., 2012). Further on, a study made by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) became one of the most cited studies in the field. In their study, the authors analysed the motivations of more than 2,400 students from different Asian countries who came to Australia for a postgraduate study; they concluded that push factors are related to home country, while the pull factors present host country and its ability to attract students to study in it. The most common push factors mentioned in the literature are lower quality of education, unavailable course/-s, low employment possibility, economic and political issues, while the most common pull factors included better employment possibilities, higher quality of education due to reputation of HEI and country, improving language skills and cross-cultural experience.

Wilkins et al. (2012) argue that both "push and pull" factors actually present the external forces that have an influence on students' decision to study abroad, and overlook the characteristics of individual student and his behaviour. Many researches adopted the push and pull model as ground basis in order to develop more sophisticated and enhanced models.

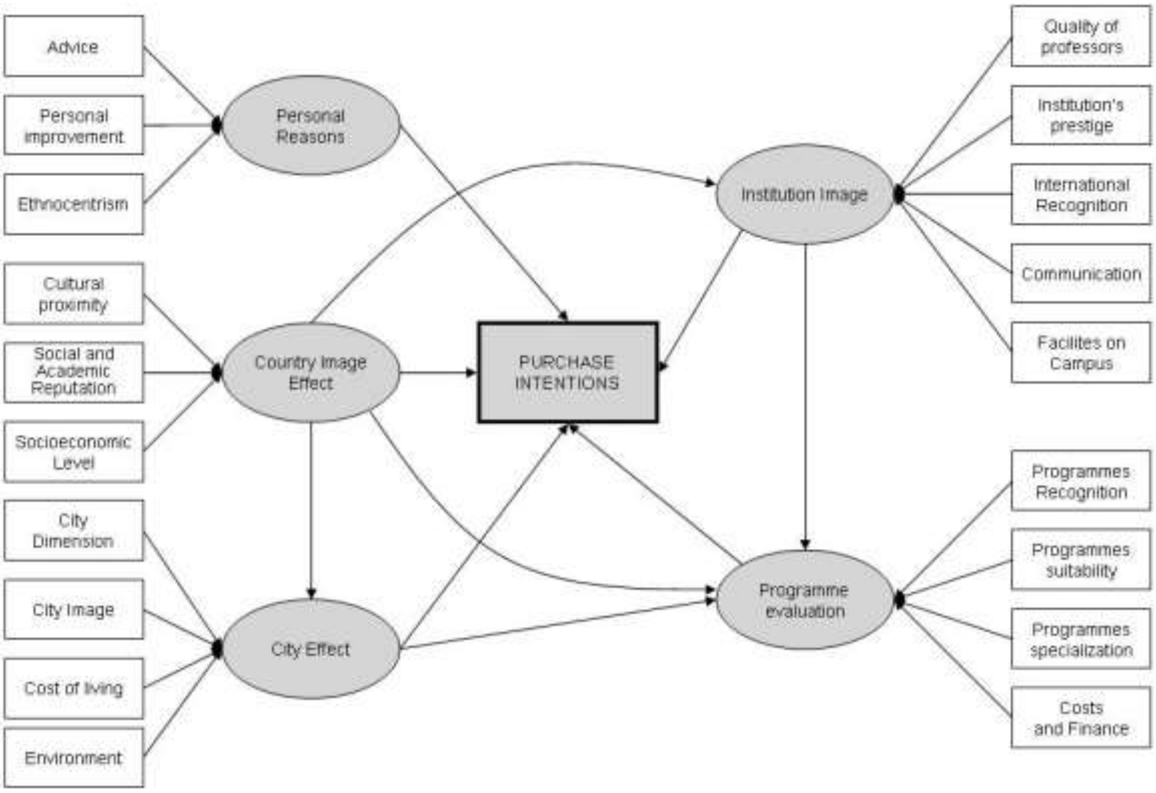
Table 1: Summary of the Empirical Research on International Students' Decision-Making

Reference	Factors influencing choice
McMahon (1992)	Economic and cultural links between source countries and host country; availability of scholarships; other assistence.
Lin (1997)	Quality of education offered; degree opportunities; reputation of institution; internship opportunities; faculty qualifications.
Joseph and Joseph (2000)	Necessary resources available; environment conducive to learning; reputable degree programme; clean and safe environment; costs.
Mazzarol and Soutar (2002)	Knowledge about host country; personal recommendations; safety; cost issues; social factors; reputation; quality of institution.
Binsardi and Ejwulugo (2003)	Education standard/recognition; qualific – worldwide; Ease of university; admissions; ease immigration procedures; ease of finding employment; cost of living; accommodation, safety and culture; lower tuition fee; providing more scholarship; providing better quality care and services; supplying more facilities; alumni networks.
Pimpa (2005)	University reputation; variety of courses offered; teaching quality; employment after study; good facilities at university for international students.
Cubillo, Sanchez and Cervino (2006)	Enhance future career prospects; living in a different culture; making international contacts; improve language skills; family, friends and professors recommendations; immigration procedures; city image; ranking position; academic reputation; program suitability; cost of education (tuition fees)
Li and Bray (2007)	Academic ability; social and cultural experience; economic income; ability in employment market; quality of education; internationalisation factors.
Bodycott (2009)	Employment after study; social and academic support; programme availability; accommodation on site; relatives/friends in area; English-speaking environment.
Abubakar, Shanka and Muuka (2010)	Quality of course; quality of lecturers; cost of course; safety; library facilities; range of courses; opportunities to mix with other students; recommendations; cost of living; proximity to home.
Padlee, Kamaruddin and Baharun (2010)	Quality learning environment; use of English language; quality of staff; university reputation; influences from family, friends and media; funding; costs; facilities at institution.

Source: Adapted from Cubillo et al., *International students' decision-making process*, 2006, p. 105–106; Wilkins et al., *Student Choice in Higher Education: Motivations for Choosing to Study at an International Branch Campus*, 2012, p. 416.

Cubilo et al. (2006) emphasize the importance of factors such as country, city and institution image, as well as the programme and personal reasons. According to Wilkins et al. (2012), personal factors, such as religion, recommendations from friends, professors and family, can additionally shift the final choice of country and HEI. The Figure 6 shows how personal reasons, country image, city effect, programme evaluation and institution image influence the purchase intention of international students.

Figure 6. Model of factors that have an influence on the international students' decision-making process



Source: Cubillo et al., *International students' decision-making process*, 2006, p. 107.

Personal improvement, ethnocentrism and advices from family, friends and professors are one of the main factors that have an influence on personal reasons and those directly on the purchase intention of an international student. Other authors, such as Binsardi & Ekwulugo (2003), Maringe & Carter (2007), Abubakar, Shanka & Muuka. (2010) and Wilkins et al. (2012), agreed that the recommendations received from family and friends played an important role in reaching final decision of HEI. According to Binsardi and Ekwulugo (2003) and Cubilo et al. (2006), it turned out that the best promotional strategy to attract international students is the student/alumni networks communicating the image of HEI – the word-of-mouth. However, when it comes to personal reasons, Maringe and Carter (2007) point out the importance of cultural differences. For example, students from Africa consider studying abroad as preparation for ambitious positions in their home country; Asian students perceive higher education as a future-investment; while EU students are focused on career and learning or improving languages. Therefore, HEI should adopt different marketing strategies based on the origin of international students in order to be more successful in the recruitment and the retention process (Maringe and Carter, 2007; Beyond the data, 2014). HEI should also take in consideration that students attend university due to benefits that a degree can or will provide, e.g., better employment opportunity, higher salary, social status, etc. (Cubilo et al., 2006).

Beside the influences of personal reasons on the purchase intention, there is also the effect of the country image that has according to Cubilo et al. (2006) a positive and strong relationship with the institution image; in other words, students perceive the institution image according to the country image; a positive country image reflects a positive and enhanced institution image beside other factors such as the quality of professors, international recognition, facilities, communication and institution’s prestige. In their research, Maringe and Carter (2007) confirmed the relationship findings by pointing out the strong influence of the country image over the institution image, since for the majority of students the choice of institution was less important than the fact that they are applying to study in the particular country, in this case the UK. Here, the country’s image has a particularly strong influence on quality and with it on the purchase intention of international students. Students will also consider and incorporate the city image in the decision-making process. For example, according to Cubilo et al. (2006), the city of Salamanca (Spain) developed a cultural image closely linked with learning Spanish language and culture, and in general the city reflects the image where people speak perfect Spanish; therefore, a lot of international students go to learn the Spanish language there. International students also consider other aspects, such as security, safety, quality of life, cost of living and educational environment, in their decision-making process. Maringe and Carter (2007) pointed out also the importance of historical ties (e.g., colonial) in the international students’ flow, since it is more likely for a student to decide to study in the colonialist country than in some other country. However, for this to happen, the host country should be more economically developed compared to the student’s home country (Minganjira, 2009).

Cubilo et al. (2006) found the same, positive and strong relationship between the institution image and the programme image that reflects programme recognition, suitability, specialization, costs and finances. It is important for HEI to develop a distinctive image (reputation, brand) of institution or programme in order to achieve the competitive advantage (Cubilo et al., 2006). In addition, factors such as city image and size, cost of living and environment influence the purchase intention of international students by reflecting the city image. Detailed factors that influence the purchase intention of international students are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Main factors and variables identified in the international students' choice process

Country image	Personal factors	Institution image
Cultural distance	*Enhance career prospects*	*Institution prestige*
Social reputation	*Future job prospects*	*Ranking position*
Academic reputation	*Future earnings prospects*	*Brand reputation*
Development level	*Higher status*	*Academic reputation*
Cost of living	*Living in a different culture*	*Researcher reputation*
Immigration procedures	*Make international contacts*	*Quality reputation*
Time to get the degree	*Improve language skills*	*Faculty Expertise of teaching staff*
	Family recommendation	*Professional experience of teaching staff*
	Friend's recommendation	*Facilities Campus atmosphere*
	Professor's recommendation	*Social life at university*
City image	**Programme evaluation**	*Safety and security*
City dimension	*International recognition*	*Library facilities*
Cost of living	*Programme suitability*	*Availability of computers*
Linguistic proximity or distance	*Programmes specialization*	*Availability of quiet areas*
Safety and security	*Quality programmes*	*Availability of areas for self-study*
Social facilities	*Recognition by future employers*	*Sport facilities*
International environment	*Total cost and finance*	
University environment		

Source: Adapted from Cubillo et al., *International students' decision-making process*, 2006, p. 108.

As Table 2 shows, the country image also affects the city and programme image; therefore, the effect on the final decision highly depends on different factors (Table 1) and their interweaving in the decision-making process. The model of factors that influence the international students' decision-making process by Cubilo et al. (2006) provides a good insight and basis for further research; however, the model itself does not provide any insight if there is also an opposite relationship between the programme and institution images, and the institution and country images. There is also an issue of the in-depth analysis of factors and their effect on students' decision, especially from the cultural aspect.

One of the most recent researches connected to the factors that influence the international student decision-making was made by an education solutions company Hobsons EMEA, surveying prospective students and receiving responses from more than 18,000 students from 195 countries. The findings of their research were the following (Beyond the data, 2014, p. 4–5):

- International students choose as first the course, then the country, and the institution.
- Fees are the second most important factor.
- Course rankings are more important than institution rankings or other factors such as fees.
- Perceptions of student satisfaction are not that important as institution rankings and fees.
- One of the key factors is graduate outcome; however, each HEI plays an important role in marketing their country as the desirable destination. Here, safety, hospitality of the country, ease of getting visa (country image) adds additional support to the institution image (marketing).
- HEI must be clear on brand value proposition for each course due to enhancement of the institution value.

- Social media is very important since it enables students to engage with HEI during the research phase.
- It is crucial to nurture students throughout the whole process by providing them information, and use more personalized approach towards international students.

However, according to Oplatka et al. (2015), creating one single list of factors and generalize it to all students is unwise, since such list will not provide a good answer why student chose a certain HEI. They see the higher education market and the students as market segments, which are all different and need to be targeted separately. Despite the fact that majority of researches made so far are focused on the US, Australia or the UK as the destination for a full-time study abroad, the findings from the report Beyond the data (2014) and the research of factors that influence the international student's decision-making in Cubilo et al. (2006) will provide a good basis for our analysis of factors that influence student's choice for the short programme of the LSS.

2.2 Factors influencing international students' educational behaviour

When we take a look at higher education as a process, it is clear that HEI presents a provider, while customers in this process are primarily students (Vrontis, Thrassou & Melanthiou, 2007). Thus, understanding the students' decision-making process is crucial for HEI in order to better position itself and successfully compete on the market by satisfying the needs of its customers (Vorontis et al., 2007; Petruzzellis et al., 2010; Aarinen, 2012). Students, as customers, can be roughly divided into three groups: (1) local students, (2) foreign students, and (3) international students.

According to the OECD (2013a), international students are defined as those who crossed borders in order to study and are not residents of the country where they are studying, while local and foreign students are defined based on their citizenship. Therefore, international students present a subset of foreign students; however, their study period is shorter than the one of a regular foreign student. Considering HEI and foreign/international students, there is no doubt about the business behind, since, for example, in Australia in 2007, higher education was the third largest export earner (Mpinganjira, 2009), and according to OECD (2013a), the number of foreign students annually increases by 6 per cent, reaching almost 4.3 million of foreign students in 2011.

There is a large number of studies focused on the students' decision-making and the factors which influence the student's choice of a specific institution based on certain geographical area (e.g., Moogan et al., 2003; Mazzarol 1998; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Maringe, 2006; Petruzzellis et al., 2010). However, according to Oplatka (2015), there is a small amount of literature and meta-studies which would draw together the findings from prior studies. The majority of researchers have examined the factors which influence the students' choice of HEI and the students' decision-making as a process (Wilkins et al., 2012) consisting of five stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase decision and factors (Kotler et al., 2012). The process starts when the need of studying abroad is recognized and finishes with a post-purchase behaviour or evaluation of the product or service, and like any other consumer of services, students also face the problem of evaluation since the services have higher degree of intangibility (Moogan et al., 1999; Maringe & Carter, 2007; Audhes et al., 2009; Källström, 2009; Brown et al., 2009, Kotler et al., 2012). According to Patterson, Romm & Hill (1998), the nature of HEI services can be described as services with huge complexity, interpersonal contact, customization and divergence. Therefore, it is no wonder that the selection of HEI presents one of the most complex decisions a student must make, since decision is usually connected to a high degree of expenses such as tuition fee, living expenses, etc. (Mazzarol, 1998). In order to ease the decision, it is needed a high involvement of the student in the decision-making (purchase) process (Cubilo et al., 2006), since selection of a country and a specific HEI can be compared to an online purchase (but with high degree of involvement), where we make a purchase based on information we acquired online rather than physically visiting the HEI campus (Aarien, 2012).

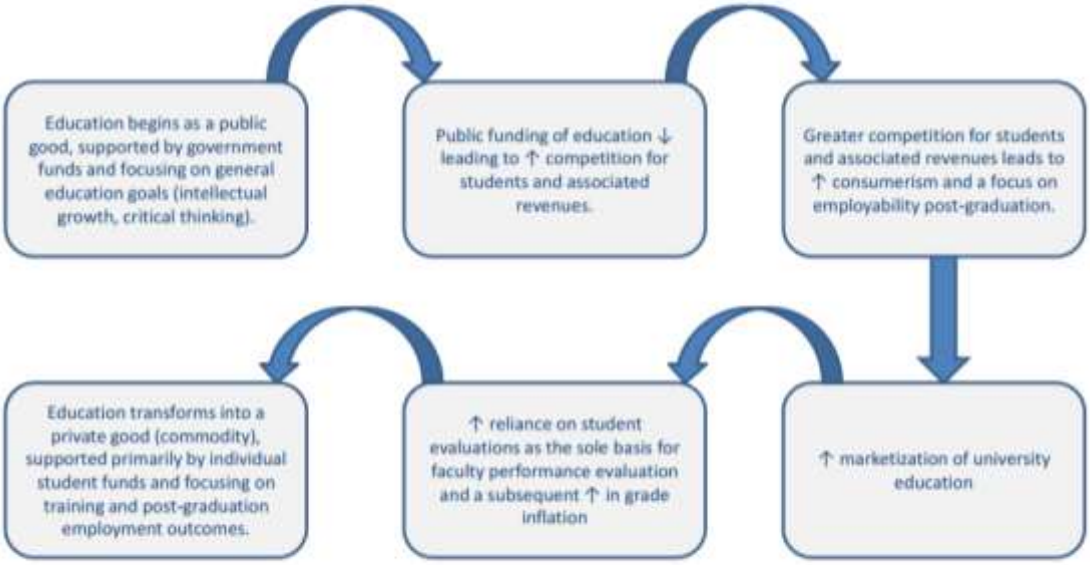
When it comes to international students as decision-makers, there are two different views; one where the student is seen as a good and critical decision-maker (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003), and the other where the student is seen as a low qualified decision-maker due to limited knowledge and poor information (Baldwin & James, 2000). Students often seek additional information from their friends or fellow colleagues, since the decision-making process usually starts one year in advance in order to accumulate enough information to make a good decision (Moogan, 2011). According to Worthington and Higgs (2004), websites and word-of-mouth present the key influencers on decisions in the information gathering phase. Also, one of latest researches made on international students' decision-making and factors who influence it confirmed the importance of the word-of-mouth in choosing a HEI (Beyond the data, 2014).

3 MARKETING OF HIGHER EDUCATION

3.1 The marketization of higher education

In the past, marketing was a philosophy mainly used in the business world, and the main role of HEIs was to develop a knowledge society – to serve the community, do research, teach students, etc. (Ramachandran, 2010). This situation lasted while HEIs were able to attract adequate financial resources from public and/or private funding, and there were many job opportunities available to students. However, austerity pressures, increased competition in the field of education, dominance of undifferentiated universities offering similar programmes at low-end prices, and the need to offer programmes in emerging areas forced HEIs to start searching opportunities for growth, becoming more market oriented. All shifts and changes, such as new types of information and communication technologies, alternative forms of academic systems, life-long learning and internationalization, introduced new perspectives to teaching and learning. Very soon, the higher education sector became a sort of a "marketized" environment, and educators started to look at marketing as a discipline that might help them keep their HEIs viable and relevant (Kotler & Fox, 1995). The Figure 7 shows the tendency towards marketization of education.

Figure 7. The trend toward marketization of education



Source: K.M. Judson & S.A. Taylor, *Moving from Marketization to Marketing of Higher Education: The Co-Creation of Value in Higher Education*, 2014, p. 56.

A lot of research has been done about the marketing in the HE environment. For example, Green (2003) discussed varieties of efforts to reengineer the higher education and connect it closely with market principles and management approaches which are used in the business environment. Clayson and Haley (2005) examined how marketing models could be applied to HEIs and students. Gibbs (2008) analysed the changes in education influenced by marketing, while emphasizing that tools of marketing should not be used carelessly. Newman and Jahdi (2009) explored the impact of marketization on academic staff and students. All researches and discussions have highlighted the increasing reliance on marketing concepts in the higher education environment. Several opportunities have been opened to the higher education sector for building a strong relationship with students and the community in their strain to provide quality education. Of course, not only opportunities arise, but also many challenges for academics and HEIs, and it remains to be seen if HE institution will respond to the challenges or fail to resist the pressure of market forces (Ramachandran, 2010).

The main goal of marketing in a higher education context is to define a quality education system which is market oriented, while following its primary function to provide specific type of service of general social benefit. Marketing strategies and activities in the educational system are much more limited than in other service industries. The reasons for that are the direct influence of state regulations defining the educational system, and the established control mechanisms of accreditation bodies that prescribe the evaluation system and the quality control system (Gajić, 2012).

Looking from the traditional perspective, students in higher education environment were viewed as members of the educational institution and as part of the academic community; therefore, they were referred to as “partners” (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008), “co-producers” (McCulloch, 2009), “collaborators” (Taylor & Wilding, 2009), “participants, change agents, evaluators, co-creators, or experts” (Kay, Dunne & Hutchinson, 2010). However, during the recent decades, students’ role shifted, and they have become considered as “consumers” (Palfreyman & Warner, 1998), “clients” (Bailey, 2000) or “customers” (White, 2007). According to the research done by Little, Locke, Scesa & Williams (2009), universities view students less than partners in the learning community and rather more as consumers, even though the student engagement is seen as central to enhance student experience. Through the process of marketization, internationalization and globalization of HE, the consumer model and customer orientation have experienced an increasing significance (Maringe, 2011).

Those supporting marketization claim that because of its existence universities will become more accountable, engage more with the society, and gain an important role in the economic development (Brown, 2010). They also claim that the expansion of the market into lecture rooms will provide better value for money, making universities more efficient and more responsive to the needs of the society and the economy (Furedi, 2010).

In contrast, critics raise questions on the commodification of education as they feel that marketization is destroying the identity of academics and the essence of education. But it is not quite clear what is being bought and sold when it comes to the academic education. The authors describe it as a quasi-market which is forcing institutions to compete for resources and funding. The disturbing part of the marketization of education is that the relationship between academics and students is being compared with the model of a service provider and a customer (Furedi, 2010). Natale and Doran (2012) stated that the marketization of HE has become epidemic, progressing without reference to significant ethical challenges. growing costs to society, students and educators while pursuing a model with such inherent conflicts. There can be found little evidence on advocating the benefits of “marketized” higher education, especially when looking through the lens of learning (Judson & Taylor, 2014).

One of the problems arising when studying higher education is the disconnection and the conflict between the literature on the marketization of higher education and the literature on marketing for higher education. Many authors who write about the marketization of higher education believe that marketing is a practice which damages education by using business techniques (advertising, branding, etc.), causing degradation of the higher education environment and problems which HEIs are currently facing with. On the other hand, many academics often focus only on the application of marketing theories to higher education, while overlooking the discussions on the marketization of higher education in order to understand the students’ decision-making processes or to enhance the position of HEIs without considering the broader context of higher education. In practice, however, these two disciplines overlap; but for now, there is no succinct theory that would help us understand and explain the similarities and differences between these economic and marketing perspectives (Nedbalová, Greenacre & Schulz, 2014).

Globalization and its elements are nowadays widespread and multifaceted in the higher education, and the higher education market can be considered as a global phenomenon. For this reason HEIs are becoming aware of the importance of marketing themselves in the existing international competition for domestic and international students. The value, effectiveness and benefits of using marketing theories and concepts, which have been effective in the business world, are gradually being used by many universities in order to gain competitive advantage and a bigger share of the international market. Authors recognize that there is a considerable debate regarding the marketization of higher education internationally, and there are many political and ethical concerns about it (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006).

3.2 The importance of marketing philosophy and core marketing concepts

Over time, the meaning of marketing evolved and the customer became the central aspect for organisations when making decisions. Maringe (2005, p. 566) defined marketing as a "term that describes any exchange relationship to ensure that parties in this relationship derive the maximum benefit from the exchange". Both parties expect satisfying exchanges: the customer expectation is a greater benefit than the costs incurred in a marketing transaction, the marketer expects to gain some kind of value earned in return. Expectations about the future behaviour and delivering the promises made are developed through their interaction and this soon results in a form of a relationship between both parties (Pride & Ferrell, 2014).

American Marketing Association (2013) defined marketing as "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large". Kotler and Keller (2012) mention two definitions of marketing: social and managerial. The social definition shows the role of marketing in society; therefore, it defines marketing as a societal process which delivers to individuals and groups what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and services of value with others. Managers, however, sometimes define marketing as the "the art of selling products"; but selling is actually not the most important part of marketing.

As higher education is a non-profit sector in most countries, the marketing concepts applied to this sector do not function in the same way as they do in the business sector where the main objective is profit-making. In addition, higher education is a service, and peculiarities applicable to marketing of services apply to it (Nicolescu, 2009).

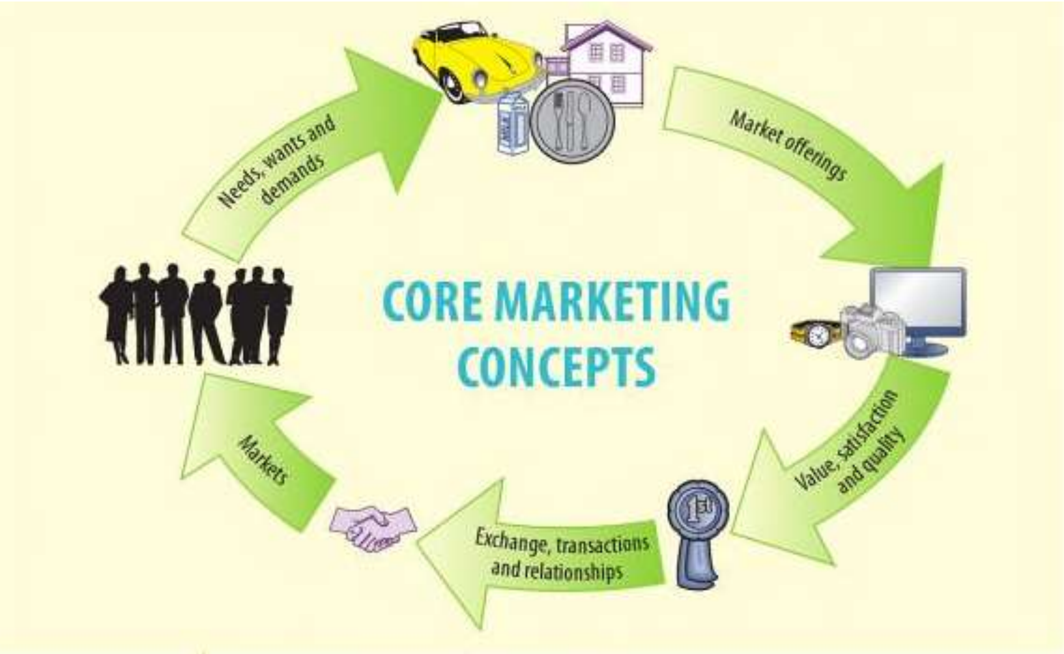
In order to understand the function of marketing, it is necessary to understand the set of the core marketing concepts:

- Customer needs, wants and demands.
- Values, satisfaction and quality.

- Market offerings: goods, services, and experiences.
- Exchanges, transactions and relationships.
- Markets.

The Figure 8 illustrates the above mentioned set of core marketing concepts.

Figure 8. Five core customer and marketplace concepts



Source: Armstrong et al., *Principles of marketing*, 2014, p. 6.

People have many strong and complex needs such as basic physical needs, social needs and specific individual needs. These needs are part of people and cannot be created by marketers; however, marketers have the ability to stimulate them. If a specific need is not satisfied, the person will try to find a way to reduce the need or satisfy it (Armstrong et al., 2014, p. 5). Kotler and Keller (2012) distinguished five different types of needs:

- *Stated needs* (the needs that customers clearly talk about).
- *Real needs* (the actual needs of customers which they might not be able to state to the marketer; the marketer has to figure out what the stated need is).
- *Unstated needs* (they are not stated, but are expected; for example, good after-sales service).
- *Delight needs* (customer gets more than he/she wants).
- *Secret needs* (the need that is not disclosed, but the existence is somehow indicated to the marketer).

Needs transform into *wants* when they are directed to a specific object; this object could satisfy the existing need (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Wants are shaped by individual's personality and culture. As societies are evolving, the wants of the members of society expand, and as people are exposed to more objects, producers try to provide as many want-satisfying goods and services as possible. It is known that customers have almost unlimited wants, but, on the other hand, they have limited resources. Therefore, when wants are backed with buying power, they transform into *demands.* Customers want to get the best value for their money, and they, therefore, demand products that make this possible for them (Armstrong et al., 2014). Kotler and Keller (2012) defined 8 possible demand states:

- *Negative demand* (customers dislike a product and are willing to pay to substitute it with another product).
- *Non-existent demand* (customers are unaware of or not interested in a product).
- *Latent demand* (customers are unable to satisfy the need with the existing product).
- *Declining demand* (customers purchase a product less or stop purchasing it).
- *Irregular demand* (interest in purchasing a product varies on a seasonal, monthly, daily, or hourly basis).
- *Full demand* (customers are purchasing the amount of product that is equal to market offer of products).
- *Overfull demand* (more customers would like to buy products than it can be satisfied).
- *Unwholesome demand* (customers are purchasing products that have a negative connotation in society).

Good marketers invest a lot of time and efforts into learning and understanding customers' needs, wants and demands. They conduct qualitative and quantitative research to find out if any needs, wants and demands were unmet. All additional efforts that help them understand that customer needs, wants and demands are of great importance as they provide valuable information for designing marketing strategies (Armstrong et al., 2014).

Customer value is the difference between the tangible/intangible benefits and the costs of obtaining a product/service. Customers tend to choose the offerings that deliver the greatest value to them. Customers often do not judge the value objectively, but rather act on the perceived value, and that is why marketers need to ensure that customers recognize that higher value within their offering (Kotler et al., 2012). Customer satisfaction reflects how well the customer expectations about products or services were met. If the performance is bad and the expectations are not met, the customer is disappointed; but in case the expectations are met or even exceeded, the customer is satisfied and delighted (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

Market offering can be described as a combination of goods, services and experiences that is offered in the market in order to satisfy a need or a want. To distinguish between products that are physical objects and those products which are intangible, the marketers use the expressions goods and services/experiences. If looked in a broader sense, market offerings also include entities such as: persons, places, organizations, information and ideas. Smart marketers look beyond the attributes of products and services, and work on creating brand experiences for customers (Kotler et al., 2012).

Armstrong et al. (2014) define exchange as a relationship in which one person wants to obtain a desired object from someone while offering something in return. Marketing is present to build and maintain exchange relationships, but there would be no marketing without the exchange that is one of the central concepts. Transaction, however, happens when two parties trade values between themselves (e.g., monetary transactions in stores). But marketers have higher goals than just obtaining new customers and creating exchange; they want to retain the existing customers and build strong relationships with them by delivering a great customer value.

Potential and actual buyers of products are brought together at the *market* as a result of having particular needs or wants which can be satisfied through exchange relationships (Kotler et al., 2012). The role of marketing in this case is to manage markets to derive profitable customer relationships. In order to create these kinds of relationships, it is most necessary to do a lot of consumer research and product development, and to work hard on distribution, communication, pricing and service, which are all very important marketing activities (Armstrong et al., 2014).

The marketing concept has experienced different evolutionary stages over the decades, which could be defined as marketing approaches or marketing philosophies (Nicolescu, 2009). These approaches were the following: production concept, product concept, selling concept, and marketing concept. Nowadays, marketers operate increasingly with the holistic marketing concept (Kotler & Keller, 2012). According to Kotler and Keller (2012, p. 18), the holistic marketing is based on "development, design, and implementation of marketing programs, processes, and activities that recognize their breadth and interdependencies." The holistic marketing was introduced as the new era of marketing which goes beyond the traditional concepts as it recognizes that in marketing everything matters, and an integrated and broad perspective is necessary.

The authors have identified four key dimensions of holistic marketing: internal marketing, integrated marketing, relationship marketing and performance marketing. The main purpose of internal marketing is to ensure that everyone in the organization, especially the senior management, embrace the proper marketing principles, since marketing activities within an organization can be as important as those activities which are directed outside the organization. Integrated marketing is a holistic approach to communication in marketing, and it occurs when marketers develop activities and assemble programs in order to create, communicate and deliver value for consumers. It is important to provide consistent marketing messages; hence marketers should design and implement each marketing activity in the way that they keep in mind all other activities. Performance marketing necessitates understanding of the financial and nonfinancial returns from marketing activities and programmes to the business and the society. Additionally, performance marketing addresses ethical, social, legal, and environmental effects of those activities and programmes.

The most important philosophy and the most relevant in the case of higher education is the *relationship marketing*. Because of strong competition and gradually demanding consumers, relationship marketing has attracted great attention of researchers and managers (Brito, 2011). Relationship marketing was mostly mentioned within industrial and service markets; however, its importance can be seen in all types of organizations (Grönroos, 2004; Ang & Buttle, 2006). In spite of significant interest during the last 10–15 years, relationship marketing can still be described as some kind of an "umbrella philosophy with numerous relational variations rather than a wholly unified concept with strongly developed objectives and strategies" (Egan, 2004, p. 19). Relationship marketing refers to "all marketing activities directed toward establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relational exchanges" (Morgan & Hunt, (1994, p. 22). Al-Alak (2006, p. 4) defined relationship marketing as "a set of marketing activities or actions that attract, motivate, and enhance existing and potential students' relationships as well as students' parents, relatives, friends, reference groups for the benefit of all sides concerned, emphasizing on retaining existing students until their graduation, and attracting further students". Many different expressions have been used as alternatives for the term relationship marketing, such as one-to-one marketing, direct marketing, customer relationship management (CRM), integrated marketing, interactive marketing and similar (Helgesen, 2008).

Kotler & Keller (2012) specified four main key components of relationship marketing: customers, employees, marketing partners (channels, suppliers, distributors, agencies), and members of the financial community (shareholders, investors, analysts). In order to build solid relationships with all of them, marketers need to understand their capabilities, resources, needs, goals and desires. The outcome of the relationship marketing is the so-called relationship marketing network which consists of the organization itself and all supporting stakeholders with whom profitable and long-term value-adding relationships have been built. Organizations, however, need to shape separate services and messages for individuals, based on information such as demographics, psychographics, past transactions, including media and distribution preferences. When focusing on the most profitable customers, products and channels, organizations are able to reach profitable growth and build high customer loyalty. Relationship marketing emphasizes customer retention as that is much cheaper than attracting new customers. It is very important to successfully conduct customer relationship management (hereinafter: CRM) and also partner relationship management (hereinafter: PRM).

As already mentioned above, relationship marketing is a relevant and applicable strategy for the higher education because the service staff (e.g., lecturers, administrative personnel, etc.)

needs to be responsive to the students' expectations and needs (Nicolescu, 2009). The higher education sector has multiple clients (students, employers, society), and they are seen as the main beneficiaries of the higher education services (Maringe, 2006), especially students who are the principal and direct consumers of the mentioned services (Stensaker & D'Andrea, 2007). Moreover, there are additional stakeholders with interest in the higher education, such as parents, the government, and other funding and professional bodies. The stakes may be tangible (e.g., money and legal rights) or intangible (e.g., trust, moral claims, prestige) (Kantanen, 2007). The needs and wants of different stakeholders are rarely the same; therefore, the higher education activity can get quite complex. It is easier to segment and treat students differently; however, this is more difficult when it comes to other stakeholders (Nicolescu, 2009).

The roots of relationship marketing can be found in principally three areas: distribution channels, industrial marketing and services marketing (Brito, 2011). As the higher education is seen as a "pure service that requires greater amount of interpersonal contact" (Sultan & Wong, 2012, p. 756), we further focus on specifics of the services marketing mix which is applicable to higher education.

3.3 The marketing mix framework in higher education

Education is treated as a special type of service which is offered to domestic and international customers; therefore, the marketing in educational services is rather specific. When HEIs think of marketing, they often picture it as big advertising and promotion budgets, lustrous brochures, and powerful selling activities. However, the core of the marketing should be in meeting consumer needs effectively (Ng& Forbes, 2009). Nadiri, Kandampully & Hussain (2009) agreed that it is crucial for HE providers to understand students' expectations and perceptions on quality service in order to attract them and meet their needs. Marketing orientation in the public HEIs generally depends on the management staff who ought to be good scientists with strong marketing orientation and outstanding managerial skills. Regrettably, the majority of researchers do not have such an orientation as to their educational background and scientific profile and the public institutions are hardly ever administered by professional managers in comparison to private ones.

Public institutions are not obliged to have a powerful marketing orientation because of their status; but luckily, external circumstance sometimes motivate the leaders to be more marketing sensitive and consider the market conditions in their activities. Consequently, this requires extensive education for the staff to understand the importance changing the attitude toward educational goals that are delivered in the context of the market (Domański, 2014). The key to long-standing market advantage, particularly in the domain services marketing, is to offer greater choices, deliver true value, and engage the hearts and minds of consumers (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2003).

When compared with other marketing areas, marketing in educational organizations shows great similarities with social marketing and service marketing. Objectives of the educational marketing, when looking from the social marketing perspective, are gaining fundamental knowledge, increasing the level of individuals' education, and developing the practical skills and competencies needed by individuals for a better social integration and adaptation to the labour market standards. The higher education sector should create specialists in specific fields, as gained knowledge and skills transfer from universities to the community through graduates' professional and human development, which shows the social responsibility of universities. By using specific research marketing tools, universities have the ability to identify the real needs of the community and labour force market regarding educational programmes (Filip, 2012).

If analysed from service marketing perspective, the educational marketing can be described as an example of a service product with limited tangible output (Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2006). Because of the educational services characteristics, which are intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability, specific ways of marketing strategies have to be implemented. The professionalism of educators is one of the most important determinants of student satisfaction, as inseparability and heterogeneity are related to their skills and the way of their interaction with the audience (Filip, 2012).

Institutions use different marketing tools to produce the response they want from its various market targets. This set of marketing tools, also called the marketing mix, consists of everything that a university can do to influence the demand for its services. For tangible products, the traditional 4 Ps model was used and it included the following elements: product, price, place, and promotion. However, the services sector uses the extended 7 Ps model for satisfying the needs of its customers, which includes the four elements of the traditional model and three additional elements: people, physical evidence (facilities), and processes (Ivy, 2008). Table 3 shows the expanded marketing mix for services and its elements.

Table 3: Expanded Marketing Mix for Services

PRODUCT	**PRICE**	**PLACEMENT**	**PROMOTION**
Physical good features Quality level Accessories Packaging Warranties Product lines Branding	Flexibility Price level Terms Differentiation Discounts Allowances	Channel type Exposure Intermediaries Outlet location Transportation Storage Managing channels	Promotion blend Salespeople Advertising Sales promotion Publicity Internet/Web strategy
PEOPLE	**PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**	**PROCESS**	
Employees - *Recruiting* - *Training* - *Motivation* - *Rewards* - *Teamwork* Customers - *Education* - *Training*	Facility design Equipment Signage Employee dress Other tangibles: - *Reports* - *Business cards* - *Statements* - *Guarantees*	Flow of activities - *Standardized* -*Customized* Number of steps - *Simple* - *Complex* Customer involvement	

Source: Adopted from J. Gajić, *Importance of marketing mix in higher education institutions*, 2012, p. 31.

3.3.1 The traditional elements of the higher education marketing mix (4 Ps)

The traditional marketing mix comprises of four different elements: product, price, place and promotion (McCarthy, 1960). The *product* plays a central role in the traditional marketing. Because of the perishability of the educational product, educational institutions can generate services only as long the educational programmes have customers. Within the product strategy, we can consider the educational service as the product, and the student as the customer, or the student as the product which is delivered to the labour market. When student is treated as the customer, the university focuses on satisfying the student demands. These universities follow only the student need for a diploma, and sometimes the provided educational programmes are not suitable for the labour market. However, in the case when the labour market is the customer, the university gives more attention to the knowledge needed to successfully commence a career. In this way, the educational products (students) have a stronger connection with the latest industry advances and with companies from their areas of study. Both options should be balanced in order to reduce the perception gaps between students, professors, and companies (Enache, 2011). HEIs offer different products in addition to regular academic programmes for full-time and part-time students, such as short-time courses for professional development, tailor-made courses, executive education, and similar.

Some HEIs have centres for professional development and other professional bodies that work jointly on the programmes with academic departments. This kind of collaboration and the collaboration with international universities enable HEIs to run programmes of international standards. Within the higher education sector, academic staff from one HEI is willing to seek expertise from another HEI in order to develop new programmes (Ramachandran, 2010).

In higher education, the price is commonly linked to tuition fees, which are usually fundamental revenue for many HEIs. The price policy has to consider the different target group profiles and the impact on overall university image. For some consumers, expensive services are identified to be adding significant value; on the other hand, others are attracted by the offered discounts and scholarships. It is also important to attract sponsorships and funding from the private sector (Filip, 2012).

The place refers to the way how universities distribute their academic offer in order to meet students' wants and needs, and to exceed their expectations (Ivy, 2008). Traditionally, the distribution referred to the physical location of a university; but with the technology development and the usage of electronic platforms, universities have increased service availability. Many international universities have adopted the use of electronic platforms and e-learning programmes in order to target consumers that have difficulties to physically attend a programme (Filip, 2012). As place provides service performance and enhances the fulfilment of exceeding expectations, it should not be undervalued (Enache, 2011).

The promotion is what helps universities to keep a constant dialog with students, employers, academic staff, and other stakeholders. Educational institutions are using different communication techniques to reach their target audience, such as public relations sales promotion, advertising, and personal selling. In higher education, these techniques can be specified as educational show exhibits, open days and academic conferences, and also direct-mail promotions, web pages and social networks (Filip, 2012). The communication with prospective students needs to be done in the way that they understand the educational product. A great amount of information can be provided through a web site (Enache, 2011); however, the Internet should not be the only channel used for communication with students (Ivy, 2008). Alumni students of a particular HEI can be of great support in providing constructive experience to prospective students as they can share their experience and encourage students to enrol. Additionally, HEIs need to promote themselves to the public and potential funders, and focus on building a positive image in the society. They need to be aware of the message they create and distribute as it is strongly connected with reputation which is one of the key drivers within HEIs (Enache, 2011). HEIs should work on developing a promotional strategy that would identify the students as their primary customers (Soedijati & Pratminingsih, 2011).

3.3.2 The elements specific to the marketing mix in higher education

In order to use a complete marketing strategy, educational institutions have added three variables to the traditional marketing mix: people, physical facilities and processes (Enache, 2011).

HEIs need capable people, i.e., academic, administrative and support staff, who interact with prospective and currently enrolled students, and are capable of doing the work on the high quality level. The academic success depends on people's quality and their research performance which is measured by the relevance of published articles, books and specialty studies, as well as by the partaking in scientific conferences for disseminating information (Raţiu & Avram, 2013). Perceptions of graduate students on the academic staff are especially important as they can play an important role within their choice process (Cubillo et al., 2006).

The physical evidence (facilities) in higher education refers to the entirety of tangible components that contribute to the development of academic activities (Soedijati & Pratminingsih, 2011). The relevant aspects of the HEI facilities creating the first impression are: modern equipment, modern appearance of the building, variety of lecture and seminar rooms, a well-equipped library, different recreation areas, cafeterias, etc. (Raţiu & Avram, 2013). The campus building and all facilities, the hardware and other tangible evidence reflect the quality of the service that will be delivered (Enache, 2011).

The process is a specific element in the higher education marketing mix as it enables students to benefit from activities that contribute to the formation of the experience from what is being offered to them (Raţiu & Avram, 2013). Processes involve all administrative and bureaucratic work, including registration procedure, course evaluation, examination, result dissemination, graduation, etc. There are many other processes that need to be implemented alongside to ensure the top level of student satisfaction, i.e., accommodation, finance system, library, etc. (Ivy, 2008). The enrolment process is the only process which transforms a candidate into a student; therefore, it is one of the main parts of the process strategy. Together with people and physical evidence strategy, the process strategy can improve the institution image and attract more candidates. If the enrolment process is successful, it can provide good students who take on the knowledge transferred to them, and with that affect the quality of the educational product (Enache, 2011).

3.4 Branding of higher education institutions

Organizations and companies in numerous service industries have started developing and using branding strategies in order to build stronger brands; in this regard, HEIs are no exception (Pinar, Trapp, Girard & Boyt, 2014). As a marketing management concept, branding has gained a growing popularity in the HEIs over the last years. The national and the international competition has increased substantially; therefore, the HEIs are searching for ways to differentiate themselves in order to attract students and academic staff from an increasingly globalized educational market (Hemsley-Brown & Goonawardana, 2007). Their name and reputation have become more and more significant as HEIs became more market oriented and promoted (Vidaver-Cohen, 2007). The incentive for the branding of HEIs includes counteracting decreasing enrolments, reduced retention and global competition, augmenting image and prestige, growing financial resources, etc. (Toma, Dubrow & Hartley, 2005; Williams, 2012). Branding in HEIs is not easy because of certain multifaceted factors, for example: diverse stakeholders, internal organization, existing resistance to change, a range of offered programmes and majors, existing gaps between what institutions promise and what students actually get, and similar (Williams Jr. & Omar, 2014a). The question arising is whether HEIs are providing what their customers want and need, and if they are marketing themselves in this way. If this is the case, the brand of a certain institution is enhanced; if not, the brand management is required to accomplish these goals (Hemsley-Brown & Goonawardana, 2007; Williams, 2012).

De Chernatony, McDonald & Wallace (2010, p. 31) defined a successful brand as “a cluster of functional and emotional values that enables organizations to make a promise about a unique and welcomed experience”. According to Bennett and Ali-Choudhury (2009, p. 85), a university brand is “a manifestation of the institution’s features that distinguish it from others, reflect its capacity to satisfy students’ needs, engender trust in its ability to deliver a certain type and level of higher education, and help potential recruits to make wise enrolment decisions”. Bulotaite (2003, p. 451) suggested that mentioning a name of a certain university straightaway arouses “associations, emotions, images and faces”, and that universities should work on building, managing and developing these impressions. According to Mourad, Ennew & Kortam (2011), a brand has different types of attributes, such as: symbolic attributes (social image, brand personality, and positioning), service attributes (price, perceived quality, after-sales service), and provider attributes (service location, past image, and relationship between service providers and consumers). However, the authors’ model does not clearly show the interdependence that exists among these different brand attributes.

Strong brands have a real value in capturing customer preference and loyalty (Pinar et al., 2014), because they represent consumers’ perceptions and feelings about a certain product and its performance (Kotler & Keller, 2012). A common belief in all these definitions is that branding has an important differentiation role (Chapleo, 2010). When a certain product or service becomes a brand, it gives a message and a promise of a particular level of quality and trustworthiness. The strength of the bond between a consumer and a brand depends mostly on the level of brand awareness and the consumer’s positive association with the brand (Farhana, 2012). Each organization is a brand itself, and corporate branding involves building differentiation and preference at the organizational level, and not only on a product or service level (Curtis, Abratt & Minor, 2009). The organization’s unique business model can be stated through its mission, values, communication, beliefs, and culture; the corporate brand expresses this visually and verbally (Knox & Bickerton, 2003). Therefore, universities can also be defined as brands. Their offering, identity and added values differentiate them from one another (Chapleo, 2010). Brands have a significant influence on students’ decisions within this increasingly competitive HE environment (Chen, 2008). The student’s identification with a certain institution's brand is based on knowledge, awareness and experience of a brand (Balmer & Liao, 2007).

The marketing and branding literature includes different views of the brand identity. Some authors defined the brand identity as an internal concept that originates from the organization (i.e., what a certain institution wants the brand to represent) (de Chernatony & Cottam, 2006; Kapferer, 2004). According to Kapferer (2004), the brand image exists before the brand identity, and it can be described as a combination of several brand messages; the brand identity is identified to be what the company represents to the customer. Bosch, Venter, Han & Boshoff (2006) emphasized that the brand identity in higher education consists of visual and verbal expressions of a brand. Their empirical study showed that the verbal expressions (i.e., reputation, personality) exert a noteworthy positive influence on the brand identity of HEIs. Furthermore, Srivastava (2011) identified the brand identity as a set of associations that a brand strategist efforts to create and uphold. It is important that the values and the behaviour of employees are consistent with the defined values of the brand. The key components that build the brand identity are: brand vision and culture, positioning statement, brand personality and relationships (Goi, Goi & Wong, 2014). While the identity characterizes how a certain organization is in reality, the image represents how the organization looks from the "outside"; the difference between these two terms really does exist (Marič, Pavlin & Ferjan, 2010).

For this reason, if it happens that an objective brand audit results in disclosing an unhealthy brand, the HEI needs to determine, especially from the financial and competitive standpoint, why the brand is not working. The institution should find a way to either refocus or revitalize the existing brand in order to meet their goals and the customer needs. Some institutions might even need more extreme strategies, such as changing the name of the brand or retiring a brand.

Critics may argue that the implementation of branding is challenging the traditional values that exist within academia, and especially within particular universities. The question arising is whether the general academic values have a place within the branding process and if such process would build on the cultural heritage of a university as a scientific institution (i.e., truth, freedom of research, freedom to teach and learn, objectivity, etc.). It means that branding might challenge the institutional integrity of universities (Wæraas & Solbakk, 2009). Branding can be presented as a solution to university's issues, even if it forces the university to examine its essential purpose of existence and form a reliable definition of its organisational identity. Branding might raise existential questions about what the university stands for or what it wants to stand for. Finding consistent answers to these questions could be difficult, and the university can remain in the state of problematical self-definition (Wæraas & Solbakk, 2008).

Some authors claim that branding as a concept can be equally applied to higher education and to other sectors, and classic functions of brands apply well (Opoku, Abratt & Pitt, 2006). On the other hand, many authors argument that brands in HEIs are intrinsically more complex. Therefore, the conventional brand management methods cannot be adequately applied

(Maringe, 2005; Jevons, 2006). Bunzel (2007) believes that consumers are aware of the brands, and centre their attention on the better ones. In his opinion, the motivation of HEIs for engaging into marketing and branding of programs is often to enhance their reputation and have a positive effect on the higher education ranking; however, there is little evidence that branding really creates any change in this way.

Strong reputation is one of the crucial competencies for HEIs in the global market (Mazzarol& Soutar, 2012). According to Sultan and Wong (2012, p. 758), “the image of a university in a competitive global market is important because it determines the marketability of the programs/courses, and affects student attraction, retention and funding opportunities”. Consequently, universities disburse a substantial amount of resources on their brand campaigns in order to present themselves to prospective students (George, 2000). According to Brown and Gedder (2006), many universities have engaged in reconstructing their image in order to reposition themselves in the educational market and to advance their reputation.

The university branding is becoming more and more important due to the increasing tuition costs; but at the same time, the number of students who pursue the higher education degrees is increasing; therefore, the value of the degree is quite significant. Employers are searching for future employees who have a strong educational background, and universities are worried about their own ability to attract the best students available. Additionally, the competition for private and state funding is growing; therefore, the university branding makes an effort on a global scale. (Tas & Ergin, 2012).

Even though the need for brand management and brand building has been increasingly rising, the HE sector lacks theoretical models for the higher education marketing and branding (Williams, 2012). Hence, service branding models and more specifically, service brand identity, should be employed in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the HEI brand identity (Goi et al., 2014).

4 UNDERSTANDING STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMMES

Student and academic mobility in higher education is not something new; it is quite an old phenomenon that goes back a couple of centuries. From the ancient Greeks, the Romans, to medieval period, and so on, people left their home in search of knowledge and development. From the very beginning, universities have always been international institutions, attracting scholars and students from all over the world. Today, most of universities are considered to be “national” universities, solely due to public funding, since tuition fees do not provide enough resources to cover expenses connected to university, such as for example: administration, teaching staff, facilities, literature, equipment, etc. However, public funds are limited and further development without new, bigger investments it is not possible. Therefore, students from foreign countries – international students, who pay the tuition fee – are more than welcome to universities across the world. While the private (self-funding) HEIs in some countries are enrolling tuition fee paying students, in some other countries (e.g., Scandinavian countries), domestic students and the international students are not paying any tuition fees.

Beside the financial reasons for student and academics mobility, there is also a common belief of HEIs to engage with internationalization, or as others refer to it, globalisation (Byram & Dervin, 2008).

4.1 Internationalization

HEIs were always engaged in the exchange of students, professors, knowledge and ideas worldwide to respond to the changes in the environment brought by globalization. Globalization increased the flow of students, professor and researchers, and with it fostered the transfer of knowledge and ideas (Heylin, 2006). For this reason, most of the HEIs started to operate across their national borders, and just like the countries, universities have also become more interconnected on the global scale and changed the higher education to a global enterprise (American Council on Education, 2011). The fact that higher education is a business is not surprising, since the number of students going abroad continues to grow and is expected to reach 7.5 million by the year 2025 (Charles & Delpech, 2015). This will only increase the competition among the HEIs for students on the global scale where Asian students represent more than a half of all foreign students (53 %), the largest numbers coming from developing countries such as China, India and Korea (OECD, 2013b). The awareness that decisions regarding the internationalization of education will influence our international partners and students, in the short run and in the long run, made the internationalization as one of the key parts of strategic planning at HEIs worldwide (Ralyk, 2008). Therefore, it is important for HEIs to understand the issues evolving around internationalization.

The term internationalization presents a broad concept which is widely used in the literature connected to management, while it has been recently used since the concept was applied also to HEIs (Delgado-Márquez, Hurtado-Torres & Bondar, 2011). In the international business literature, however, internationalization is seen as a process of the organization's entering foreign markets. The internationalization process begins when organization with its products or services enters a foreign market, usually from domestic market or domicile country (Makovec Brenčič, Pfajfar, Rašković, Lisjak & Ekar, 2009). This multidimensional process consists of several strategies, concerning: defining the market, market entry options, strategy regarding the products/services, and strategy of development of internal processes. Therefore, internationalization is also described as a movement of company's operations and processes beyond the borders of domicile country to foreign markets, and by this increasing company's involvement in international processes of purchasing and selling products or services (Katsikeas & Morgan, 1997, Buckley et al, 1999). Based on direction and flow of processes and transactions, we distinguish three types of internationalization: inward, outward and cooperative/network internationalization (Makovec Brenčič et al, 2009). Inward internationalization can appear as a response to increasing foreign competition on domestic market, where the number of foreign organizations is increasing and expanding their business based on for example import, licence and joint ventures. Here, inward internationalization reflects in purchasing of raw and semi-materials, strategic partnerships on areas such as logistics and technology. On the other side, outward internationalization is described more as a traditional approach to internationalization, by expanding the business operations across the national borders. Beside the inward and the outward internationalization, there is also the cooperative/network internationalization which is related to all kinds of non-capital alliances between organizations (e.g., strategic alliances). Such alliances are highly represented in automotive, aviation and pharmaceutical industry (Makovec Brenčič et al, 2009).

Despite the fact that the concept of internationalization was recently applied to HEIs, there is a vast literature with various focuses on the mentioned topic. Some studies deal with the concept of the internationalization (De Wit, 2002, 2011; Mitchell et al., 2012), others deal with the approaches to internationalization (Hénard, Diamond & Roseveare, 2012; Cantu, Özturgut, Pereira & Ramón, 2014), and the third ones study the effects of internationalization (Olaniran & Agnello, 2008). However, its authors cannot avoid discussing the issue evolving around the two terms: globalization and internationalization. There is a small confusion in the usage of these two terms; most of the authors are using terms interchangeably, since they are closely linked; however, both of them present a different phenomenon (Scott, 2000; De Wit, 2002). The variety of interpretations of the internationalization by different stakeholders has created barriers in developing a conceptual model to address and clarify the meaning of the internationalization (Knight, 2004). For some people internationalization presents a set of international activities connected to mobility of students and professor, international partnerships, international projects, international academic programmes; to others internationalization means a delivery of the education to other countries; and the third group considers internationalization as an intercultural or global dimension of the learning process (Knight, 2004). According to De Wit (2009), it is this diversity of perceptions and terms that created one of the fundamental issues when it comes to the internationalization in higher education; therefore, it is necessary to conceptualize the term internationalization.

One of the first attempts to define the internationalization was made by Knight (1994, p. 7), where the internationalization was described as the process of integration of the intercultural aspect into research, teaching and institutions service. Despite the wide popularity of the Knight's definition of internationalization, Kälvemark and van der Wende (1997, p. 19) argued that definition is too narrow, and proposed, therefore, a wider definition, where the internationalization was presented as the systematic and continuous effort towards a more responsive higher education to the challenges and requirements connected to the globalization of economy, society and labour markets. One of the key points of this definition is presenting a real response of the HEI, as well as the country (government), to the changing environment by addressing the cultural, technological and other changes, and responding to them. Knight (2004, p. 10) acknowledged the given argument by Kälvemark van der Wende; however, in her opinion, the proposed definition simply places the internationalization to the external context, which she believes to be globalization, and it, therefore, does not define the actual meaning of the internationalization in the HE sector. Another definition was proposed by Söderqvist (2002, p. 29), defining the internationalization as a changing process from the national to the international HEI that includes the international component in all aspects of its holistic management in order to enhance the learning and teaching quality to reach the desired competencies. According to Knight (2004, p. 10), this definition also has some limitations since some HEIs and countries perceive internationalization broader than teaching and learning at the institutional level; therefore, it does not provide a comprehensive definition. Based on different interpretations and definitions of the internationalization, de Wit (2002, p. 114) concluded that with raising popularity of the international aspect people misuse the term and shape it according to their beliefs. He believes that the term internationalization deserves a more focused definition, and suggests the use of a working definition with conceptual framework for internationalization, which he believes to be more relevant. Knight (2004) also agrees it is necessary to provide a definition of the internationalization that would reflect the reality, would be understood on national and institutional level, and would be able to provide relevance even in the future developments. The working definition described the internationalization on national and institutional level as: "*the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education"* (Knight, 2003, p. 2).

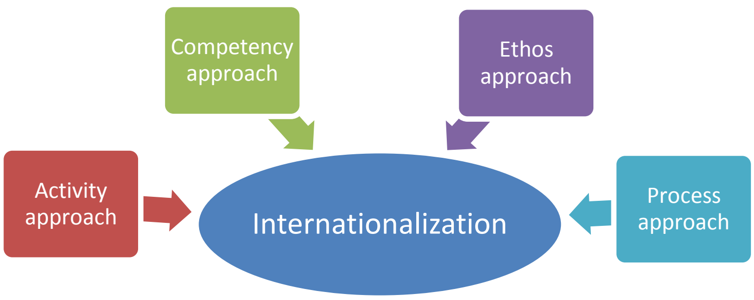
To better understand the working definition of the internationalization it is necessary to describe the main terms in provided definition. The term *process* in this definition is used to stress out the importance of the internationalization to demand continuing effort and should be seen as a dynamic set of on-going activities linking various types of actors and resources. The term integration is used to address the importance of embedding the international, intercultural and global dimension into programmes and policies. The terms *international, intercultural,* and *global dimension* are often used together when it comes to internationalization; however, all of them reflect a different meaning. For example, the term *international* is used to present the relationships among and between nations, countries or cultures, while the term *intercultural* is used to point out the cultural aspects of internationalization at home. The term *global* is used to address the wider picture of the internationalization. Final terms *purpose, function and delivery* are also placed and used together, since *purpose* reflects the mission and role of the HEI, *function* presents the primary elements of HEI such as learning, teaching, research, service, etc., and *delivery* refers to programmes and courses which are offered domestically or in another countries – campus (Knight, 2004, p. 11–12).

Some other definitions of internationalization made after Knight (2003) adopted the same framework. For example, according to Deardorff (2006), the internationalization presents the process which involves the international perspective of learning, research and service offered by HEI. Hsu (2012) also viewed internationalization as a process of initiating policies for adapting competencies and knowledge about the other cultures. According to Knight (2004), it is hard to achieve an agreement among the authors and form a universal definition due to the complexity of the internationalization itself. It would be also hard to apply the formed definition due to countries differences in culture and education system. This is why the definition should not include or mention benefits, outcomes, stakeholders, and activities of internationalization, since they vary from country to country (Knight, 2004).

Addressing and defining the term internationalization is not the only issue that the authors are dealing with. There is also the issue of the interchange ability of the terms internationalization and globalization. This confusion was pointed out by several authors (Knight & de Wit, 1997; Scott, 1998; de Wit, 2002, 2011; Knight, 2004; Teichler & Kehm, 2007, Altbach & Knight, 2007, Cantwell & Maldonado, 2009), and despite that these two terms are close, their meaning is different. Knight and de Wit (1997, p. 6) stressed out the difference between internationalization and globalization by defining the last as the flow of knowledge, economy, people, technology, ideas across the borders and with it affecting each country differently. For Scott (1998) and de Wit (2002, 2011), both terms are complex to define and distinguish from one another, since they are intertwined in many aspects. Knight (2004) sees globalization as part of the environment where the international aspect of higher education is playing an important role; and both Altbach and Knight (2007) and Cantwell and Maldonado (2009) describe the internationalization of HEI as the country's respond to the impacts of the globalization. For Tichler and Kehm (2007), internationalization emphasizes the activities that cross the borders, where the country and its borders still play an important role; while on the opposite side, the globalization is putting more emphasis on blurring the country borders. To summarize, most of the authors see internationalization as a response to the impacts of the globalization.

The complexity of the internationalization arose from its numerous definitions, elements and approaches (Yee, 2014). Yee (2014) sees a greater challenge in the use of vast related terms such as international studies or education, transnational education and globalization of the higher education. As we already mentioned before, the terms are closely related; however, they reflect a different aspect from one HEI and its country to the other. In order to lower this complexity around the diversity of definitions evolving around the internationalization, Qiang (2003) provided a conceptual framework where he explained different approaches to the internationalization. An approach presents just a different concept of a definition which reflects priorities, values and actions taken towards internationalization (Knight, 2004). Despite the fact that definitions sometimes overlap, Qiang (2003, p. 250–251) identified four key approaches to internationalization: activity, competency, ethos and process approach (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Approaches to internationalization



The activity approach emphasises the role of activities involved around student and academics exchange, service, curriculum and international students (Qiang, 2003), where it is expected from HEIs to design a curriculum that would accordingly prepare students and academics for *global citizenship* (Bresciani, 2008), by providing study, research and academics exchange as well as recruitment of the international students (Cantu et al., 2014). Qiang (2003) argues that taking international dimension as the flow of activities often turns out as a fragmented approach towards the internationalization, since the correlation among and between activities as well as the possible benefits and impacts are not taken into consideration. On the other hand, the competency approach is stressing out the importance of the development and the enhancement of knowledge, values, attitudes and skills of students, academics and staff, to become more multicultural (Qiang, 2003). Programmes and curriculum are seen as tools for development of those skills, which are crucial to respond the issues evolving around the labour market; at the same time, Qiang (2003) is pointing out the growing need of the identified important competencies which would help students, staff and academics on local and global scale. Ethos presents the third approach towards internationalization, where a major emphasis is given to creating the climate that would support and value intercultural initiatives (Qiang, 2003).

Beside the development of students, staff and academics, academic standards and income generators, Knight (2004) also identified the cultural diversity as one of the basic components of the internationalization. In order to navigate the internationalization process, Hsu (2012) proposed an implementation of activities, policies and services that would enable integration of intercultural dimension into student via HEIs' service. According to Qiang (2003), the internationalization will never fully occur if a strong belief and climate that would support the development are not present. Therefore, the development of supportive climate is necessary (Table 4). The forth approach to internationalization is the process approach. This approach emphasizes the integration of intercultural dimension into service, teaching and research throughout activities, where the special emphasis is put on the programme aspect as well as the procedures, policies and service (Qiang, 2003).

Table 4: Summary of approaches to internationalization in HEI context

Activity approach	
It focuses on higher education activities that promote an intercultural dimension, including the presence of international students curriculum and student or faculty exchange.	Klasek (1992)
	Harari (1992)
	Mestenhauser (1998)
	Green and Olson (2003)
	Powell (2004)
	Green and Shoenberg (2006)
Competency approach	
It emphasizes the development of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that are important for one to compete in the global market place.	Soderqvist (2002)
	Ven der Wende (2007)
	Ayoubi and Masoud (2007)
	Elkin et al. (2008)
	Lipsett (2009)
Ethos approach	
It emphasizes creating a culture or climate that values and supports intercultural perspectives and initiatives.	Pickert et al (1992)
	Hanson et al. (1992)
Process approach	
It stresses the integration of an international dimension into teaching, research and service through a combination of activities, policies and procedures.	Knight (1994, 2004)
	Schoorman (1994)
	De Wit (2002, 2011)
	Olson et al. (2001)

Source: Adapted from Delgado-Márquez et al., *Internationalization of Higher Education: Theoretical and Empirical Investigation of Its Influence on University Institution Rankings*, in: Globalisation and Internationalisation of Higher Education, 2011, p. 270.

According to Knight (2004), an approach presents a description of the implementation and the concept of the internationalization. The fact that approaches are overlapping is not surprising at all, due to complexity of the internationalization. Approaches are also not fixed and can shift during different stages of development; therefore, it is believed that some HEIs are using different approaches simultaneously; according to Knight (2004), there is not just one right approach. Regardless of the approach used, the diversity and multiculturalism contributed to the raise of internationalization and with it the strain to develop and equip students, staff and academics with global competencies (Cantu, 2013). With the increasing demand for global competences, more and more effort was given into developing models towards internationalization. One of such models was proposed by the American Council of Education (from here on ACE) that a HEI must accomplish or develop in order to become internationalized (Figure 10).

Figure 10. ACE's Model for Comprehensive Internationalization

Source: Peterson et al., *Challenges and Opportunities for the Global Engagement of Higher Education*, 2014, p. 5.

According to ACE, a comprehensive internationalization consists of six interconnected pillars: articulated institutional commitment; administrative structure and staffing; curriculum, co-curriculum, and learning outcomes; faculty policies and practices; student mobility; and collaboration and partnerships. HEI elements, such as mission, goals, policies, procedures and other elements, play an important role in creating the internationalized climate and with it the global engagement of students, staff and academics. It is important to give full attention to a building platform as well as to invest the resources and time in order to succeed. Beside time and resources, it is crucial for HEI to have a proper leadership who is committed to steer the internationalization by combining the elements and setting proper strategies to achieve desired goals. It is very important to design suitable curriculum to enhance the learning outcome and to set up policies at institutional level that will support the process of internationalization. The process of determining which other HEIs and countries will be engaged with is very crucial, and must, therefore, be aligned with institutional priorities. In order to collaborate with other HEIs, curriculum and requirements must be arranged with the partner HEI, and expectations must be reached on both sides in order to build a sustainable partnership (Paterson et al., 2014).

But why are partnerships, curriculum, student mobility and other components so important? Why is the internationalization of higher education important? The environment in which HEI is operating is under constant and fast change as a result of globalization, which increased competition on international level and raised the competition in the education sector. This increasing demand for international academics and students contributed to the development of study abroad programmes as well as international for-profit providers in higher education (de Wit, 2011). According to Knight (2003), there is a huge competition between HEIs and companies over the higher education market share in terms of recruitment of the international (fee-paying) students, by offering paid education service, such as training programmes, language certificates, etc. In diversity of the education providers, who pursue different goals and approaches towards internationalization, it became important for the HEI to rethink the delivery of education (teaching, service, research) and to understand the purpose of it (Ralyk, 2008).

According to de Wit (2002, p. 83), there are four basic and broad categories of rationales that are driving the internationalization: academic, cultural, economic and social. Under these categories, Knight (2003) identified rationales which are showed in the Table 5.

Table 5: Rationales Driving Internationalization

Academic	**Cultural**	**Economic**	**Social**
Profile and status	*Intercultural understanding*	*Financial incentives*	*Social and community development*
Enhancement of quality	*National cultural identity*	*Labour market*	*Citizenship development*
Institution building		*Economic growth and competitiveness*	*National identity*
International academic standards			

Source: Adapted by Knight, *Internationalization Remodeled: Definition, Approaches, and Rationales*, 2003, p. 2–3

In her study, based on de Wit's categories of rationales, Knight (2003, p. 22–28) speaks of arising rationales at two different levels:

- The institutional level (e.g., quality standards, income generation, knowledge production, etc.).
- The national level (e.g., strategic alliances, HR development, commercial trade, etc.).

According to Knight (2003), there are some national-level as well as institutional-level rationales that cannot be quite placed under any of the categories stated by de Wit (2002). On the national level there are rationales, such as: strategic partnerships (also on the institutional level), nation building, HR development, cultural development, and commercial trade. Rationales on the institutional level that cannot quite place under any of the four categories are: knowledge production, student and staff development, income and international branding (Knight, 2003, p. 23). What the author wanted to point out is the positive impact of the internationalization on the rationales mentioned above. According to de Wit (2002), rationales are interconnected, their importance may vary within the specific country as well as by the country, and their importance may also shift over time. Economic rationales are considered to be the leading rationales of the internationalization (de Wit, 2011), and it is still believed that trend will keep on moving in the same direction (Shaydorova, 2014).

One of the important rationales behind the internationalization from the academic perspective is international academic standards which can be reached through different accreditations.

The rising of globalization competition, also among the HEIs, and the positioning on the global market became one of the main concerns of HEIs; therefore, international academic standards (rankings, accreditations) came into play. International organizations such as the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) are responsible for accrediting business schools around the world. The first, American organization rewards an AACSB accreditation, and the second, European organization, rewards an EQUIS accreditation to business schools for achieving high standards, based on the following factors: technology and teaching resources, research and faculty quality, service offered to students, ties to business community, etc. (The FELU, 2015).

4.2 Student mobility programmes

Student mobility (programmes) presents one of the building blocks towards the comprehensive internationalization (Figure 12). The term itself (student mobility) refers to students who are studying abroad for one semester or a year, or they are taking full degree or simply participate in special short-term programmes abroad (Knight, 2012, p. 24). Despite the growing number of student mobility's, the percentage of mobile students in comparison to all enrolled student is quite small, since the mobility is not equally available to all students across the world. As it was mentioned before, student mobility is not completely free in terms of cost, and most students cannot afford to study abroad (Murphy-Lejeune, 2008). According to Altbach et al. (2009), the nations who are poor enrol far less students compared to the nations who are wealthier; costs (e.g., tuition fee, living expenses, study material, opportunity costs) still presenting a huge barrier to student mobility. In order to maintain and enhance student mobility as well as to ease the access to higher education, some countries, the European Union and certain companies offer scholarships to those students who decide to study abroad; therefore, the number of mobile students is increasing (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Long-term growth in the number of students enrolled outside their country of citizenship (in millions)

Source: OECD (2014): *Education at a Glance 2013*, p. 344.

As it can be seen in the Figure 11, throughout the years, the number of students enrolled outside their home country (based on citizenship) was rising, from 0.8 million worldwide in 1975 to staggering 4.2 million in 2010, and 4.5 million in 2012. Despite the fact that the shaded area in the Figure 11 corresponds to a different time scale than the rest of the time series, the data can still be used in comparison to previous years. The reason for such huge expansion can be attributed to the interest in promoting social, academic, political and cultural connections between the countries, especially when the European Union was reshaping. Another reason for expansion can be found in the internationalization of labour markets, where the demand for highly skilled people was also rising (OECD, 2014).

Over the past three decades, the number of students enrolled outside their country of citizenship has risen dramatically, from 0.8 million worldwide in 1975 to 4.5 million in 2012, a more than fivefold increaseThis remarkable expansion stems from an interest in promoting academic, cultural, social and political ties among countries, particularly as the European Union was taking shape, to a substantial increase in global access to tertiary education, and to reduced transportation costs. The internationalization of labour markets for highly skilled people has also given students an incentive to gain international experience as part of their higher education.

The most popular and spread mobility programme within the Europe is ERASMUS PLUS (former Erasmus; also Erasmus+) mobility programme, sponsored by the European Union and whose purpose is to equip students (also academics and staff) with certain skills in order to increase employability as well as to modernise the education and strengthen quality on the European level. The most common action under the Erasmus+ programme is the student mobility for studies, which enables student to study from 3 to 12 months abroad. In the first year of the Erasmus programme (1987–1988) more than 3,200 students went to study abroad with the support of the Erasmus grant, while in 2012–2013 the number of students who went to study abroad was more than 212,5200 (Table 6).

Table 6: Erasmus+ student mobility in figures in 2012–2013

	Type of student mobility		Total
	Studies	Work placements (traineeships)	Student mobility
Total number of Erasmus students	212 522	55 621	268 143
Average EU monthly grant (€)	253	376	272
Average duration (months)	6.2	4.7	5.8
Number of special needs students	339	49	388
Top sending countries (absolute numbers)	ES, DE, FR, IT, TR	FR, DE, ES, UK, PL	ES, FR, DE, IT, PL
Top sending countries (% share of the student population)	LU, LI, ES, LT, LV	LV, LI, LT, EE, MT	LU, LI, LV, LT, ES
Top receiving countries	ES, FR, DE, UK, IT	UK, ES, DE, FR, IT	ES, DE, FR, UK, IT
Level of studies (% share)	Bachelor 70 % Master 28 % Doctorate 1 % Short-cycle 1 %	Bachelor 56 % Master 30 % Doctorate 3 % Short-cycle 11 %	Bachelor 67 % Master 29 % Doctorate 1 % Short-cycle 3 %
Average age of students (years)	22.4	22.9	22.5
Number of higher education institutions sending students	2 325	2 675	3 267
Gender balance (% of women)	60.6 %	61.9 %	60.9 %

Source: European Commission, *Erasmus Facts, Figures & Trends*, 2014, p. 7.

As the Table 6 shows, in 2012–2013 there were 268,143 mobile students: 55,621 students did traineeship abroad and 212,522 students went to study abroad. The average monthly grant that a student who studied abroad received from the EU (Erasmus) was 253 EUR, while their mobility period lasted in average 6.2 months. 70 % of those students were studying on bachelor's level, 28 % on master's level, 1 % on doctoral level, and 1 % on short cycle studies. There were more than 2,300 of HEIs who were sending students abroad (more than 60 % of them were females), and the top destinations were Spain, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Italy. On the other side, the average age of more than 55,600 students who did the traineeship abroad was 22.9, their traineeship lasted in average 4.7 months, and the average grant a student received was 376 EUR. Still, there are more students who decide to go on a study exchange than to do the traineeship abroad, due to available placements and study curriculum.

Apart from mobility grants for staff, academics and students, Erasmus+ provides grants also for other initiatives such as special curriculum development, intensive programmes and thematic networks (Klemenčič & Flander, 2013). It is estimated that a 14.7 billion worth budget for the period 2014–2020 will provide opportunities for more than 4 million Europeans to train, study and work abroad (Erasmus+, 2015). Since the beginning of the mobility programme (in 1987) over two and a half million Europeans have benefited from it, and the mobility trend is expected to continue to grow in the near future (European Commission, 2014). The programme was introduced to wider Slovenian public in 1999, when Slovenia joined the programme networks (Klemenčič & Flander, 2013). Most of the international students, who enrolled to the FELU, came within the Erasmus+ programme framework (Internal sources of FELU International Relations Office, 2015).

Beside the student mobility, the Erasmus+ programme also supports staff and academics mobility to develop certain skills and knowledge regarding languages, cultural and economic differences (European Commission, 2012). The European Commission strongly believes and expects that the Erasmus+ programme will have positive effects on the internationalization of HEIs and strengthen the international cooperation between HEIs (Klemenčič & Flander, 2013). In their research, the authors have also found that the effects of the Erasmus+ programme on the internationalization of HEIs are still not that visible in Slovenia. The reason for that is the lack (or weakness) of certain aspects of internationalization: study programmes and courses offered in English, internationalization of the curricula, use of foreign literature, number of visiting and full-time international academics, and integration of domestic and international students. There are notable differences between HEIs within the same university, as well in Slovenia in general. Despite no clear or visible connection between the Erasmus+ programme and the internationalization of HEIs in Slovenia, Klemenčič and Flander (2013) conclude that the Erasmus+ programme still presents one the major building blocks of the internationalization.

Beside the Erasmus+ programme, student can go on a study exchange via special bilateral agreements which are made between countries or HEIs. Bilateral agreements usually cover agreements made with HEIs or countries located outside of the EU. In the case of the FELU, such bilateral agreements are made with countries, e.g., Montenegro, China, Russia, etc. Bilateral agreements are also made between HEIs, where HEIs agree upon the number of exchange students, period of the study exchange, enrolment criteria, etc. In the case of bilateral agreements made on country level, students can go on an exchange to any HEIs within the specific country, while bilateral agreements made on HEIs level involve only the study exchange within those two HEIs. Similar to the Erasmus+ programme, students who are going abroad via bilateral agreements also receive a grant and are exempted of paying the tuition fee at the host university (Internal sources of FELU International Relations Office, 2015).

Considering the time frame, student mobility can last for a semester or a year (Knight, 2012, p. 24). Students going abroad for the semester usually spend there from 4 to 6 months, while students who go for the whole year spend up to 10 months abroad. In addition to spending one semester or a year abroad, there are also two special forms of student mobility, based on time aspect: taking a full degree, or participation in short-term programmes (Knight, 2012, p. 24). The difference between taking a full degree and spending a year or a semester abroad is that students who are taking the full degree move to the other country to enrol and complete the full degree at the host HEI, while students who are spending the year (or the semester) move to the foreign country to undertake a part of their home study obligations at the host HEI. Students who cannot afford to spend a year or a semester abroad due to time or costs restraints, can participate in short-term programmes, which usually last from one week up to one month (Knight, 2012).

4.3 Short-term programmes (summer programmes)

Short-term programmes can present part of a degree programme, or can be completely independent programmes which are carried out by home or host HEIs. When it comes to short-term studies, there is one important thing that needs to be defined – how long is actually the "short-term" programme. From the time aspect, most of the HEIs perceive a short-term programme as a programme that lasts less than a semester or a quarter (Donnelly-Smith, 2009). Most common types of short-term programmes are workshops with a variety of topics, language courses, study tours, conferences, and winter or summer programmes (Knight, 2012, p. 25). A summer school can be described as a special short-term programme or a course designed mostly for foreign students which is being offered during the summer break (Torenbeek and van Rest, 2014, p. 2). Every year, in the summertime, countless HEIs organize summer (or winter) programmes (from here on interchangeably used with terms summer sessions, summer schools) and offer variety of courses.

4.3.1 Background

The first summer schools appeared in the United States in the 19th century, where (higher) education was already seen as a commodity bearing a certain price. On the contrary, in Europe, (higher) education was still considered as a responsibility of the government. Therefore, unlike the European students, the students in America had to graduate as soon as possible in order to avoid high extra costs; summer school was just the right solution for it, and so the "third semester" was born. Students could take a summer course at other HEIs and under the supervision of the staff at the home institution complete part of their study obligations at the home institution. The first summer school was introduced by the Harvard University already in 1823, which by that time had an already established brand as the leading HEI in the North America dating back to 1636. In Europe, the first summer schools emerged in the beginning of the 20th century in the United Kingdom (Oxford and Cambridge) where, unlike the summer schools in the United States which targeted students, they targeted the wider public who would otherwise not have enter the HEIs. Later on, at the end of the 20th century, summer schools in Europe started to follow the concept of summer schools in the United States. At the beginning, summer schools served as the starting point in the development of the exchange programmes with other HEIs, and later on summer schools served to maintain the balance of the exchange programmes. Soon after, summer schools were seen also as a good source of revenue and a firm building block for the HEI who are pursuing internationalization at home. In the last decade, we witnessed a huge transformation of summer schools, which changed from free and non-credited courses to fee-paying courses who are awarded with credits (European Credit Transfer System, or ECTS in short). As a consumer, student will buy a certain course which is relevant to his degree and earn certain number of credits (Torenbeek & van Rest, 2014).

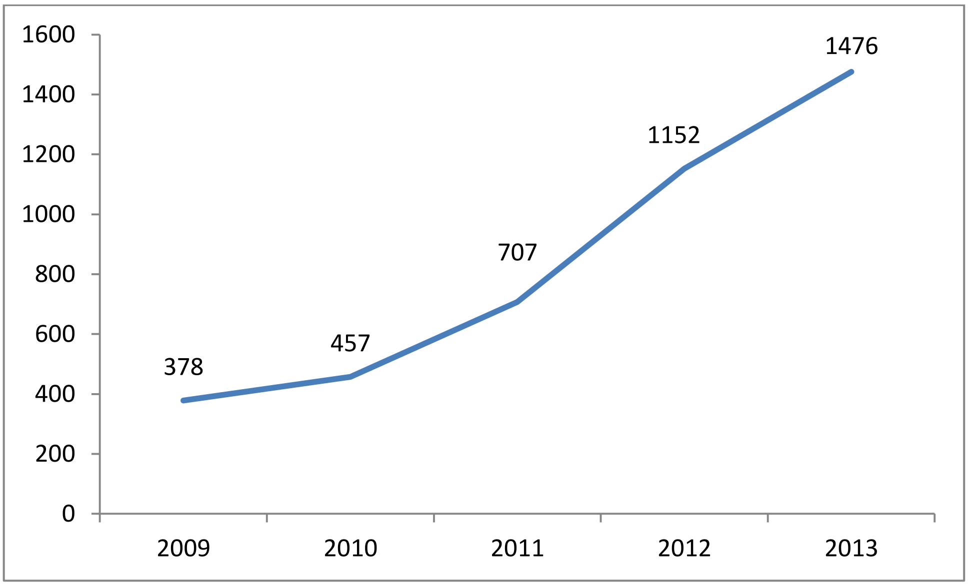
According to Smith and Read (2013), participation in the summer programme is beneficial for all parties: students, the faculty and the HEIs. Benefits of participation in summer programmes for students are: increased probability of degree completion, broadening horizons by taking courses which are not offered at their home institution, and better understanding of languages and cultures (Adelman, 2006; Knight, 2012). On the other side, the HEI can improve academic objectives, recruit future full-time international students and generate revenue, since a fee is being charged for the participation in the summer programmes (Vedder et al., 2010). According to Smith and Read (2013), this presents one of the main reasons why recruiters are strongly interested in maintaining and increasing enrolment in summer programmes. Therefore, it is no wonder that we are witnessing a rapid growth of the summer programmes across Asia, Europe and other parts of the world, and due to increased competition most of the existing summer schools formed alliance with other summer schools by offering joint programmes which can be coordinated by one summer school or a group of HEIs who formed partnership (Torenbeek & van Rest, 2014).

The summer school appeared as a good alternative to study exchange programmes due to grant cuts, growing demand of obligatory curricula at home institution, and other financial or time constraints. With the rapid growth of summer school, a self-financed education emerged, where students or their parents are paying fees directly for the course or education. While this direct form of fee paying has a long tradition in the United States, it is more of a new phenomenon in Europe. But what does self-financing actually has to do with summer schools? According to Torenbeek and van Rest (2014), self-financing is highly connected to the consumer choice and actually presents the greatest potential of a particular summer school from the financial aspect to provide a customized product in order to satisfy the needs of their consumers – students or recent students. At summer school, student chooses the course he or she would like to take and which may not be offered nor at student's home nor at other partner institutions. Then student pays the course fee which is design to cover running cost of offering the course at the summer school. Course fee (also study or tuition fee) varies from one summer school to the other summer school, and it can range from couple of hundred Euros to a couple of thousand Euros per single course. In addition to paying the course fee, in most cases students must also bear other expenses connected with summer programme, such as travel and accommodation expenses, nutrition, etc., which can be even higher than the costs of the study exchange (Torenbeek & van Rest, 2014). Therefore, offering a full service, by providing service such as accommodation, meals, transport, etc., can appear as a good competitive advantage over offering only a single service (Jobber et al., 2009).

4.3.2 Summer programmes in Europe

Despite the high cost of attending the summer school, the number of participants increased in the past decade, which has led to a growth of European summer schools (Figure 12). This explains the rapid growth of courses offered by summer schools in Europe since 2010. Torenbeek and van Rest (2014) note that approximately 25 to 35 per cent of the courses offered by summer schools were not listed due to hosting capacities and other issues. Therefore, the final number of courses offered was even higher than portrayed in the Figure 14; leading to staggering 2,300 courses in year 2013. Nowadays, most of the universities are offering some form of summer activity – from one course or workshop on specialized topics, regarding the cultural or language aspects, to comprehensive curriculum that includes variety of courses offered to all entry levels, bachelor's programmes, master's programmes, and PhD programmes (Torenbeek & van Rest, 2014).

Figure 12. The number of courses offered by summer schools in Europe per year



Source: Adapted by Torenbeek and van Rest, *Summer Schools in Europe: The culmination of a trend or the start of another*, 2014, p. 7.

As we already mentioned, in the past decade, summer schools have undergone a major change. Some of the summer schools moved from offering non-accredited courses to offering accredited courses, forming new alliances with other summer schools, attracting PhD participants by offering specialized courses on the PhD level, etc. There are several summer schools in Europe which are run on the individual HEI level (Pembroke College Cambridge Summer Programme, LSS programme) or the university level (Cambridge University Summer School). There are also joint programmes which can be coordinated by one or many HEIs, such as Helsinki Summer School, Amsterdam–Maastricht Summer School, and Utrecht Summer School. According to Torenbeek and van Rest (2014), there are many different forms based on which summer schools were founded, and while some of them are offering only few courses to limited number of participants, others are offering more than 150 courses and attracting thousands of participants (see Table 7).

Table 7: Europe country rankings by the number of available summer courses in 2013

Country	Institutions	Courses	Country	Institutions	Courses
Netherlands	20	346	Ireland	4	15
United Kingdom	28	286	Sweden	4	13
Germany	44	154	Lithuania	4	12
Russia	13	83	Turkey	3	10
Italy	25	79	Serbia	1	6
Denmark	8	63	Belgium	5	5
France	22	56	Israel	2	4
Austria	8	48	Latvia	4	4
Hungary	5	47	Romania	3	3
Slovenia	3	39	Ukraine	1	3
Spain	8	33	Poland	3	3
Estonia	3	31	Norway	1	3
Switzerland	12	29	Macedonia (FYROM)	1	2
Greece	9	27	Bosnia and Herzegovina	2	2
Czech Republic	9	25	Croatia	1	1
Portugal	8	22	Iceland	1	1
Finland	2	20	Monaco	1	1
TOTAL				**268**	**1476**

Source: J. Torenbeek and van Rest, Summer Schools in Europe: The culmination of a trend or the start of another, 2014, p. 9.

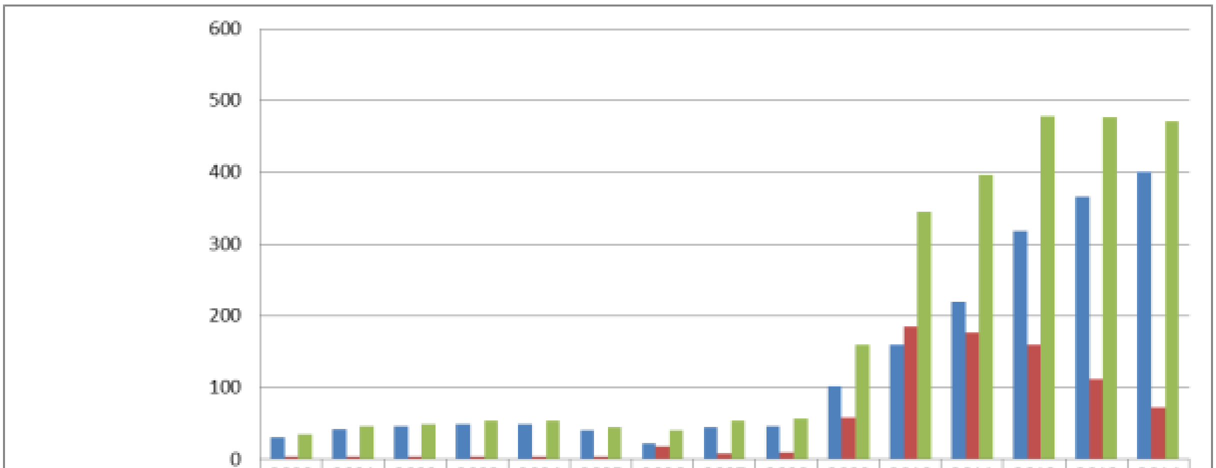
It is not surprising that the Netherlands dominates among the countries where the most summer courses are being offered in Europe, having one of the largest summer schools, not only in Europe but also on a global scale – the Utrecht Summer School. Founded in 1987, the Utrecht Summer School nowadays attracts around 3,000 students by offering more than 200 courses from variety of disciplines, such as culture, social sciences, art, law, economics, business, etc., on bachelor's, master's and PhD levels. The summer school is organized with the cooperation of three institutions: HU University of Applied Science, HKU University of the Arts and Utrecht University (Summer School Utrecht, 2015). The UK, a birth place of first summer school in Europe, is following the Netherlands offering the total of 286 courses. Despite the fact that there are more institutions in Germany which offer summer courses (44) compared to the UK (28) and the Netherlands (20), Germany as a country accumulated almost half of the courses offered by the UK and the Netherlands. The fourth and fifth place are taken by Russia with 83 summer courses and Italy with 4 courses less. All countries, except for the Netherlands, are relatively big countries; therefore, the numbers are not so surprising. What is more surprising and encouraging is that Slovenia with 3 institutions offered in 2013 in total 39 summer courses; 25 of them were offered by the LSS programme which is run by the FELU (Internal sources of the FELU International Relations Office, 2015).

4.3.3 The LSS programme

The LSS is a three-week programme, which is open to bachelor and master students, and recent graduates. In these three weeks, apart from attending the courses, students visit companies, socialize with other students from all around the world and discover local culture by attending organized weekend trips across Slovenia. The programme is divided in two parallel parts: official programmes which consists of offered courses, and optional programme which includes organized weekend trips and social events (Ljubljana Summer School, 2015).

The LSS programme opened its door to the first visitors, who were mainly from the former Yugoslavian countries, in the year 2000. Like any other beginning, the beginnings of the LSS programme were modest but firm and strategically oriented as well. Since the first opening of the LSS programme, the number of the international students enrolled in the summer programme dominates compared to the home students, with the exception of the year 2010 (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Number of the LSS programme participants per year



	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
International students	31	42	46	49	50	41	23	45	46	102	160	220	318	366	400
FELU students	4	4	4	4	4	4	18	9	10	58	186	177	160	111	72
Total	35	46	50	53	54	45	41	54	56	160	346	397	478	477	472

Source: Internal sources of the FELU International Relations Office, 2015.

Similar to the rapid growth of participants in summer programmes in Europe, the number of the LSS participants also started to grow rapidly from the year 2009, where 160 students were enrolled in 12 different courses. While in the year 2010 the number of students enrolled to summer school doubled, the number of offered course only in the year 2011 nearly doubled, reaching the total offer of 23 courses. In 15 years, the LSS programme grew into one of the largest summer schools in Europe and across the globe, considering summer schools offered and coordinated by a single HEI, in this case the FELU. Nowadays, the LSS programme hosts around 500 students from all around the world who can listen to 25 different accredited

(ECTS) courses on bachelor's and master's levels (Internal sources of the FELU International Relations Office, 2015).

In their free time students are offered a variety of activities ranging from sports and cultural events to company visits and organized trips across Slovenia on weekends when students do not attend any classes. This optional programme proved to be quite important for the summer school participants, since summer school is not perceived only as a study but also as a cultural and for some even a different lifestyle experience. Merits for this can be given to the offered additional service: a "hospitality package", which includes accommodation and two meals on the weekdays. Offering the hospitality package together with the study fee proved to be important, since most of the foreign participants of the LSS programme (around 95 per cent) decide to take the hospitality package (Internal sources of the FELU International Relations Office, 2015).

Within the LSS programme, the FELU offers also the Ljubljana Executive Summer School programme and the Ljubljana Doctoral Summer School programme. However, both of the mentioned programmes are not subject of study in this thesis, due to the specifics of the programmes and the international comparison with other similar programmes.

5 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

In the empirical part of the master's thesis we test the reviewed theory from the practical point of view in the context of the LSS programme. On the basis of the theoretical literature review in the first four chapters, and in addition to the years of work experiences in the international education field, the empirical research will help us answer the following research questions:

- Which are the key factors influencing the (international) students' decision-making when selecting a summer programme abroad?
- How important are the content and the quality of courses offered within a summer programme?
- Are tuition fees equally important to all students applying for summer programmes abroad?
- What role does the school and the country image/brand play as decision-making criteria?

The empirical research focuses on the analysis of the decision-making factors of (international) students who have previously participated in the LSS programme and have applied for the programme in the academic year 2014/2015. We highlight the purpose and objectives, and present the main research hypotheses and the methodology used to acquire the data and the results.

5.1 Purpose and objectives of the research

The main purpose of the master's thesis is to present the importance of particular types of factors that influence the (international) students' decision-making process, and to gain an understanding of how (international) students decide on a summer programme. For this reason, we focus on the LSS programme as our case study since it is considered as one of the biggest summer school programmes in Europe. The main objective of the research is thus to understand the reasons and criteria for choosing the LSS programme by the international and domestic students. By that, we will gain information on how successful the programme coordinators are currently at taking into account the influencing factors and what should be considered and improved when developing the programme in the future. Moreover, an important objective is to highlight the importance of short-term programmes for the internationalization of higher education institutions and the development of the curriculum in the future.

We try to attain the main objectives with the help of the following research goals:

- To analyse the decision-making factors according to the particular socio-demographic factors, such as gender, age, level of study and citizenship (country).
- To analyse the information seeking process and the decision-making process of students when searching and applying for a particular summer programme.
- To analyse the importance of the school, the country image/brand and the programme fees within the decision-making process.

As the LSS programme is one of the biggest projects of the IRO and one of the most important projects within the internationalization process of the FELU, the obtained results from our survey-based analysis among the past participants of the programme and the applicants for the programme in 2015 will assist the management of the FELU in planning future strategies for its internationalization.

5.2 Research hypotheses

Like for any other company operating in the market, it is crucial for HEIs to understand the behaviour of their customers, which beside the local students includes also the international students. As we already mentioned, by understanding the students' decision-making process, a HEI can benefit from student satisfaction in many ways, such as attracting top students, increasing the level of external funding, charging higher tuition fees, and gaining a competitive advantage over other HEIs (Wilkins et al., 2012). According to recent international student surveys, the competition for international students is becoming more and more tense, as well as complex (Beyond the data, 2014); since students present an important source of revenue, it is imperative for HEIs to fully understand that (Aarinen, 2012).

The research hypotheses, which represent the foundation for the empirical research, were set on the basis of the overview of the domestic and foreign literature and the available empirical research. With the help of the obtained data from our empirical research, we try to confirm or reject the following research hypotheses:

H1: The course, as a decision-making factor for selecting a summer school programme, is more important than either the school brand or the country (destination).

H2: The course content (syllabus) is more important than the lecturer of the course.

H3: Students are very price-sensitive to tuition fee increases for a summer school programme.

H4: The image of a country (as a tourism destination) plays an important role in reaching a final decision for a summer school programme.

H5: The word-of-mouth presents the most important source of information about a summer school programme

In the following part we will briefly touch on the theory that provided a starting point for the development of these hypotheses.

5.2.1 Hypothesis about the importance of the course for reaching a final decision

One of the most recent researches connected to the factors influencing the international students' decision-making was made by an education solutions company called Hobsons EMEA (2014), surveying prospective students and receiving responses from more than 18,000 students from 195 countries. In this research, the most important factor influencing the student's decision was the course, followed by the country and the institution (Beyond the data, 2014).

5.2.2 Hypothesis about the course content (syllabus) and the lecturer of the course

As mentioned in the research by Hobsons EMEA (2014), the course choice turned out to be one of the crucial factors when it comes to reaching a final decision. Therefore, it is important for HEIs to deepen their knowledge about the key dimensions and components that evolve around the course and its influences on the student's choice.

5.2.3 Hypothesis about the price sensitivity

The selection of a HEI presents one of the most complex decisions a student must make, since the decision is usually connected to a high degree of expenses, such as tuition fee, living expenses, etc. (Mazzarol, 1998). In order to ease the decision, a high involvement of the students is needed in the decision-making (purchase) process (Cubilo et al., 2006). The course fee (also study or tuition fee) varies from one summer school to the other summer school, and it can range from a couple of hundred euros to a couple of thousand euros per single course. In addition to paying the course fee, in most cases students must also bear other expenses connected with summer programme, such as travel and accommodation expenses, food, etc., which can be even higher than the costs of the study exchange (Torenbeek & van Rest, 2014). However, despite the high costs of attending the summer school, the number of participants increased in the past decade. Given the high involvement and importance of the decision, we formulated this research hypothesis to test the overall price sensitivity of the students selecting a summer school programme.

5.2.4 Hypothesis about the image of a country (as a tourism destination)

Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) were one of the first researchers who focused on the importance of reputation of HEIs and country, improvement of language skills and cross-cultural experience. Cubilo et al. (2006) went even further by giving more emphasis on factors such as country, city and institution image. According to Cubilo et al. (2006), the country image and the city image affect all five building blocks of forming a purchase intention or making a final decision. Cubilo et al. (2006) also pointed out a positive and strong relationship with the institution image; in other words, students perceive the institution image according to the country image. A positive country image reflects a positive and enhanced institution image. In addition, factors such as city image and size, cost of living and environment influence the purchase intention of international students by reflecting the city image (Cubilo et al., 2006).

5.2.5 Hypothesis regarding importance of word-of-mouth as a source of information

Personal improvement, ethnocentrism, and advice from family, friends and professors are one of the main factors that have an influence on personal reasons and these directly on the purchase intention of an international student. Other authors such as Binsardi and Ekwulugo (2003), Maringe and Carter (2007), Abubakar et al. (2010), and Wilkins et al. (2012) agreed that the recommendations received from family and friends played the key role in reaching final decisions for a specific HEI. According to Binsardi and Ekwulugo (2003) and Cubilo et al. (2006), it turned out that the best promotional strategy to attract international students is the student/alumni network communicating the image of HEIs through word-of-mouth. Students often seek additional information from their friends or fellow colleagues, since the decision-making process usually starts one year in advance in order to accumulate enough information to make a good decision (Moogan, 2011). According to Worthington and Higgs (2004), websites and word-of-mouth present the key influencers on decisions in the information-gathering phase.

5.3 Methodology

Our empirical research is based on primary data and secondary data. Research projects should begin with the secondary data which have been gathered by someone else for specific purposes prior to the current project, as they provide a good basis for research and help define research problems and objectives (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). The main advantages of the secondary data are their availability and the fact that collecting secondary data is usually instantaneous and free (Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2012). It is important to evaluate the secondary data with judgment to make sure that they are *accurate* (reliably collected), *relevant* (fit the research needs), *current* (up-to date for current decisions), and *impartial* (objectively collected) (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). The secondary data were collected by reviewing the existing scientific and professional literature, mostly acquired through online databases (e.g., Emerald, Proquest, and Science Direct), e-journals (e.g., Taylor & Francis, SAGE, and Springer Link), e-books, and library catalogues.

However, in most cases, secondary data cannot provide all needed information, and it is required to collect primary data (Kotler et al., 2012). Thus, a quantitative analytical approach is employed in the empirical part of our research. It includes a web-based questionnaire in English which was distributed among the past participants and the applicants for the LSS programme in the academic year 2014/2015. The survey instrument was constructed based on a critical review of the literature and several rounds of consultations with a panel of marketing and internationalization experts. Given the content of our research and the heterogeneous nature of our sample (in terms of cultural background) we mainly applied simple uni- and bivariate statistical analyses, complemented by a simple linear OLS regression analysis to test the impact of a selected factor on students' recommendation propensity.

5.4 Data

The primary data for the empirical analysis were collected with the help of the web-based questionnaire. The online tool for surveys (www.1KA.si) allowed us to design the survey and to collect, enter and analyse the data within the same software. The survey was sent by email to a total of 1,449 students (477 students who attended the LSS programme in 2013; 472 students who have attend the programme in 2014; 500 applicants in the academic year 2014/2015). The survey was sent to all students on 30 April 2015, and was active until 30 July 2015. The survey contained 26 closed questions, and required approximately 10-15 minutes for completion. Out of a population of 1,449 students, a sample of 415 valid surveys (response rate of 28.6% in total) was obtained after several rounds of reminders. However, each question generated a different sample as some respondents did not provide answers to all questions (treated as missing variables). The main target was the group of applicants for the LSS programme in the academic year 2014/2015, and the response rate within the mentioned target group was almost 64% (318 valid surveys out of 500). A high response rate from past participants was not expected, and the obtained sample confirmed our assumptions. Despite all this, the overall response rate of 28.6% was above our general expectations.

The collected data were analysed with 1KA (online tool for surveys), Microsoft Excel 2010 programme and SPSS. Descriptive statistics were analysed with the help of 1KA and Microsoft Excel 2010 programme. With the help of SPSS, simple uni- and bivariate statistical analyses were complemented by the simple linear OLS regression analysis.

The web-based questionnaire was administered in English language, since the majority of students were foreigners and English is also the official language of the summer school. The survey consists of only closed type of questions. In the survey, we were able to collect three different types of data variables, which have been distinguished by Dillman (2009):

- *Opinion variables* measure how respondents feel about something; what they think/believe is true or false.

- *Behavioural variables* measure what respondents did in the past, what they do now or what they will do in the future.

- *Attribute variables* measure respondents' characteristics, such as age, gender, education etc.

The survey was structured in several parts and contained six sets of questions addressing the following topics:

1. *General information:* Respondents were asked to provide information about the year of attendance at the programme in addition to their age and level of study at that time.

2. *Information-seeking process*: Respondents were asked to specify how they gained information about the programme, if they were deciding between different programmes and for how long, and if they were using social media within the information-seeking process.

3. *Decision-making process*: Respondents were asked to evaluate different factors according to their importance within the decision-making process and to rank specific factors that have influenced their final decision to participate at the programme. Respondents were also asked to specify why they have chosen the courses offered and how responsive were the programme organizers to their enquiries. Additionally, they were asked to specify how likely they would recommend the programme to their friends/colleagues.

4. *Slovenia as a tourism destination:* We wanted to know if the respondents found the promotion of the destination (Slovenia) useful/interesting and if it influenced their final decision; respondents were asked to express their opinion about the destination (Slovenia) and what it offers.

5. *LSS programme fees:* We wanted to know if the programme represents good value for money to respondents and what kind of price increase of tuition fees and hospitality package would still be acceptable for them.

6. *Demographics:* Respondents were asked to provide information about their gender, current age and citizenship.

All 26 questions were closed-type questions. More specifically, the following types of closed questions were used:

- *List questions*: We provided a list of items, any of which could be selected.

- *Category questions*: Only one response could be selected from the given set of categories.

- *Ranking questions*: Respondents were asked to place items in rank order.

- *Rating questions*: The Likert-type ordinal questions; respondents were asked to express how strongly they agree or disagree with particular statements.
- *Matrix* questions: Respondents were asked to respond to several interrelated questions at the same time within the same response matrix.

5.5 Results

In this section, we continue with the presentation of the main results of our research. The presentation of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents is followed by the descriptive statistics and the results of hypothesis testing.

5.5.1 Sample characteristics

The socio-demographic data were obtained from the final set of questions in the survey (corresponding to questions from 24 to 26) (See questionnaire in Appendix 1). As shown in Table 8, 140 respondents in our sample were male (45%) and 169 were female (55%). Thus, in terms of gender, our sample was quite balanced.

Table 8: Sample characteristics by gender (n=309)

Gender			
Answers	Frequency	Per cent	Valid
1 (Male)	140	34	45
2 (Female)	169	41	55
Valid	309	74	100

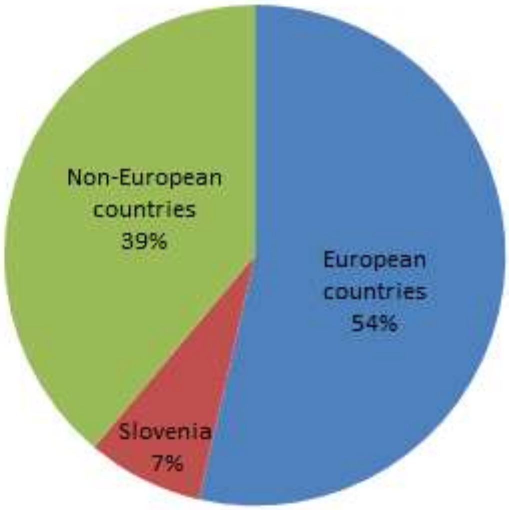
The average age of the respondents is 22.1 years (Table 9). 74% of them are aged between 19 and 23 years. Thus, we can see that the majority of surveyed respondents are undergraduate students.

Table 9: Sample characteristics by average age (n=309)

Variable	Text	Valid	Units	Average / per cent
Age	**Your age:**	309	415	22,1

306 respondents provided information about their citizenship. They were from 47 different countries. Figure 14 shows the distribution of respondents coming from European countries, from non-European countries and from Slovenia. 47% respondents were from countries that had the biggest number of representatives at the LSS programme in the last couple of years (Portugal, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Slovenia and Mexico).

Figure 14. Sample characteristics by citizenship (n=306)



5.5.2 Descriptive statistics

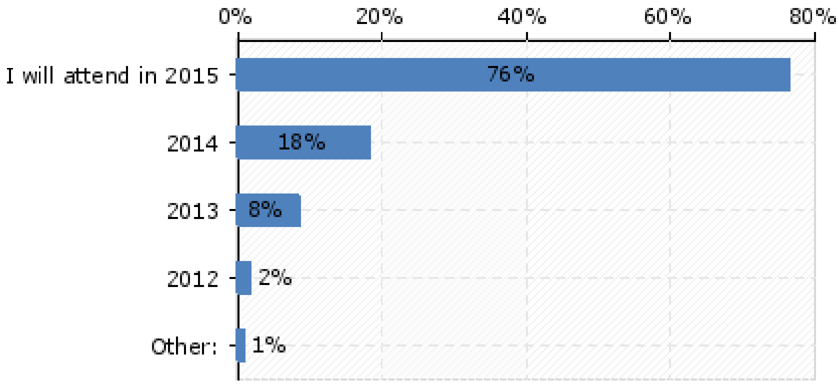
As already mentioned, the survey contained sets of various questions addressing different topics. In this part, we, therefore, present the descriptive statistics corresponding to each set of questions in the survey.

In the first set of questions students were asked to provide some general information by answering the following questions:

- In which year(s) they attended the LSS programme?
- At what age they most recently applied for the LSS programme?
- At what level of their study they attended (or planned to attend) the LSS programme?

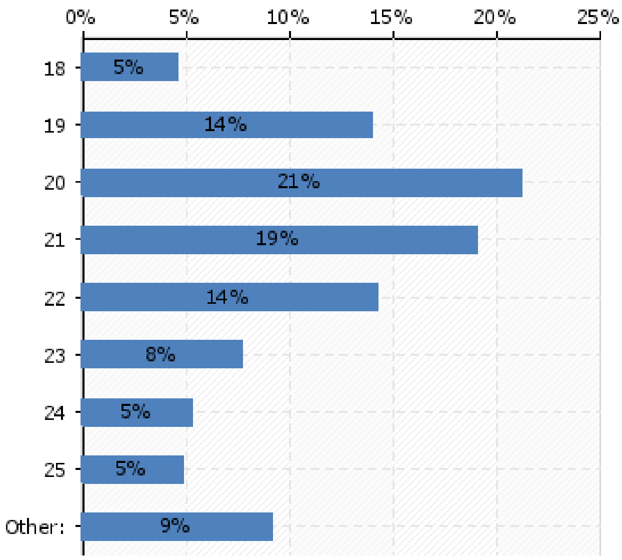
Figure 15 shows that most of the respondents (76%) are the students who planned to attend the LSS programme in (summer) 2015. 18% of the respondents attended the programme in 2014, and 8% in 2013. We would further like to stress out that students can attend the LSS programme more than once. This is especially the case for students coming from, for example, Kosovo. The analysis showed that 21 students (5%) have attended the programme at least twice and among them 2% have attended the programme in 2012.

Figure 15. Year of attendance at the LSS programme (n=415)



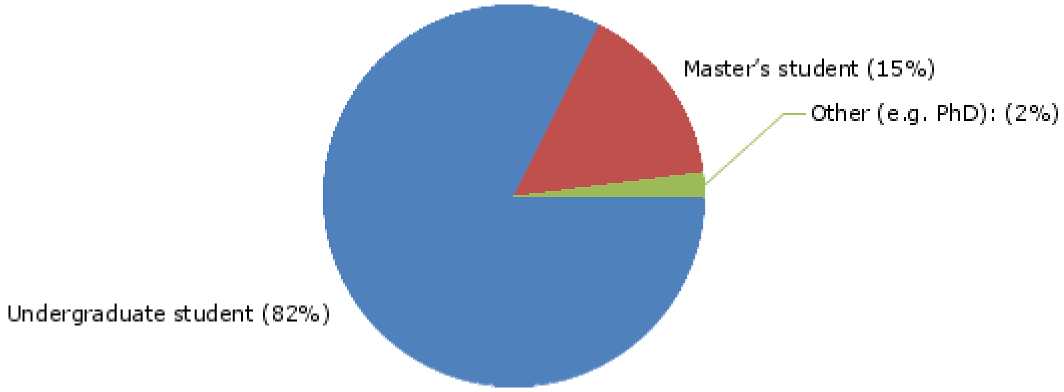
As shown in Figure 16, 68% of the respondents were aged between 19 and 22 when they most recently applied for the LSS programme. Thus, they were undergraduate students.

Figure 16. Age at the time of applying for the most recently attended LSS programme (n=415)



414 respondents have provided information regarding their level of study at the time of attending (or applying to) the LSS programme (Figure 17). Majority of them (82%) have attended (or planned to attend) the programme as undergraduate students, and 15% as master's students. 2% of respondents have attended (or planned to attend) the programme as recent graduates, professionals and PhD students.

Figure 17. Level of study at the time of attending the LSS programme (n=414)

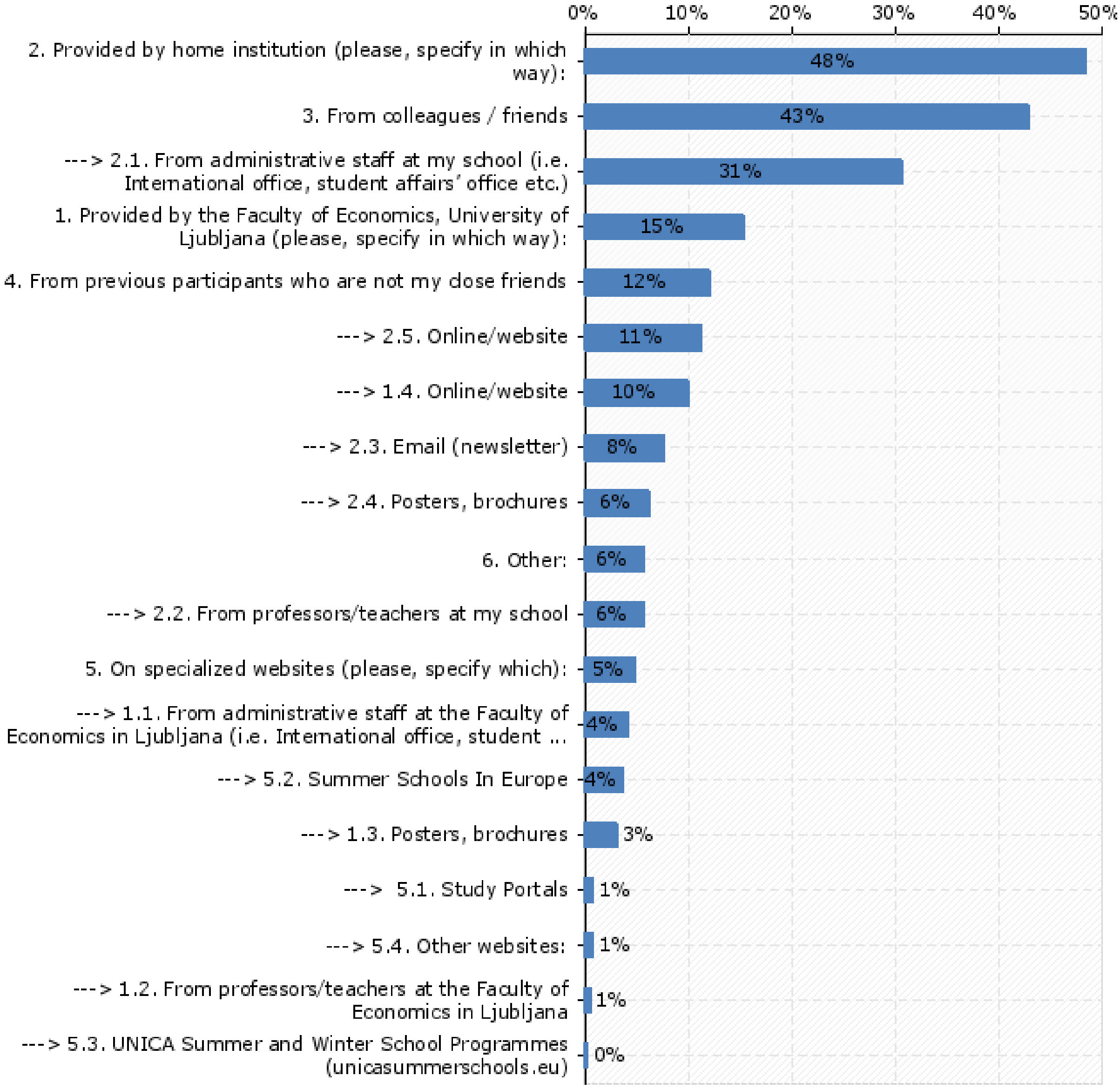


The second set of questions referred to the students' information-seeking process when deciding to apply for a summer programme; it consists of the following questions:

- How did you gain information about the LSS programme?
- Were you deciding between different summer programmes?
- How long did you spend searching for information before making your final choice?
- Did you use social media networks for finding information about summer school programmes?

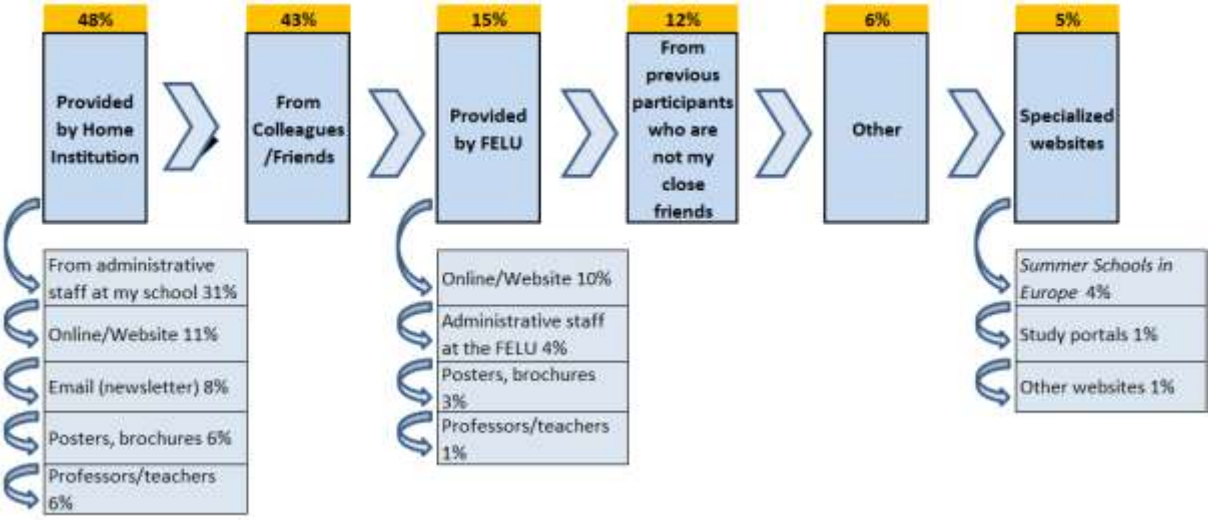
A lot of effort has been put into the promotion of the LSS programme through different marketing/distribution channels; therefore, we wanted to know what are the most frequently used ways of obtaining information about the programme. The main categories (i.e., ways of obtaining information) that were stated included additional subcategories as we wanted to indicate the majority of the channels that are, in fact, used for promoting the programme. Figure 21 presents the obtained results from the most to the least frequently used ways of obtaining information. With regards to the representation of answers in Figure 18 we would like to point out to the hierarchical number order at the beginning of each answer, where each information type could be further expanded to include several sub-options. For example, while the majority of information is provided by home institutions (answer No. 2), we can see that at those home institutions the administrative staff plays a much more important role than simply sending the emails/newsletters (answer No. 2.3).

Figure 18. Ways of obtaining information about the LSS programme (n=415)



To provide a better insight into the obtained results, we use Figure 19 to present the most frequently used ways of obtaining information about the LSS programme by categories (from the most frequently used category to the least frequently used category). Respondents were able to choose multiple options since most of them use several channels to obtain as much information as possible.

Figure 19. Most frequently used ways of obtaining information about the LSS programme by categories (n=415)



As shown in Figure 22, 48% of the respondents obtained information about the LSS programme through their home institution. The majority of them (31%) received information from the administrative staff and 11% found information on the home institution's website. The rest received an email (newsletter) about the programme (8%), checked the brochures/posters (6%) and gained information from their professors/teachers (6%).

The second most frequently used category was obtaining information from colleagues/friends (43% of the respondents). The word-of-mouth promotion is quite important as 12% of the respondents stated that they have (also) received information from previous participants who are not their close friends.

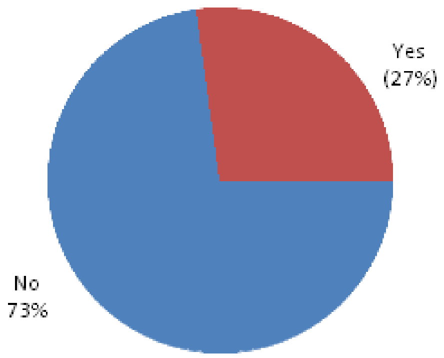
15% of the respondents stated that the information was provided by the FELU; most of them (10%) obtained information on the FELU website. The administrative staff at the FELU provided direct information to 4% of the respondents, 3% checked the posters/brochures, and only 1% obtained information from the professors/teachers from the FELU.

Only 5% of the respondents found information about the LSS programme on specialized websites where information about numerous summer programmes organized all over the world are published (e.g., *Summer Schools in Europe, Study Portals).*

Most of the 6% of the respondents who used other ways of obtaining information about the LSS programme have used *Google* as their search engine.

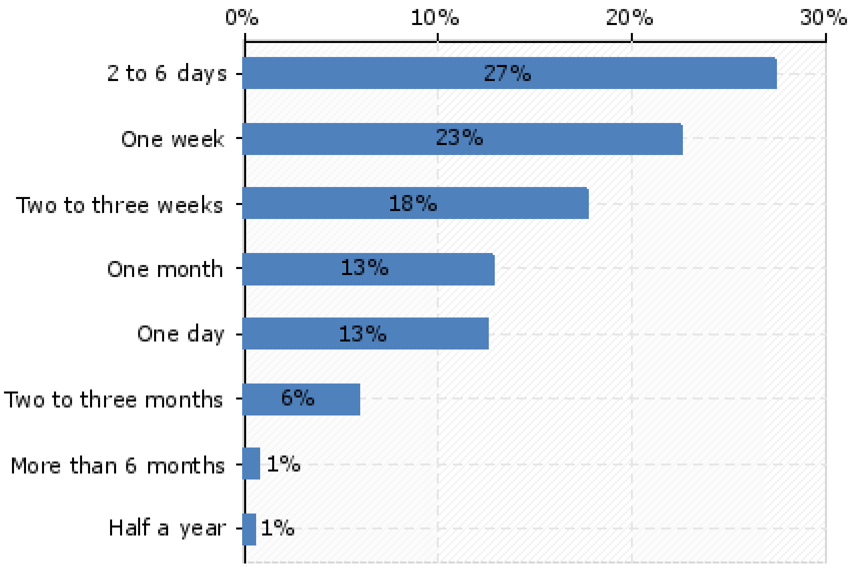
In the following question, we were interested if students were deciding between different summer programmes before making a final decision. 73% of the respondents stated that they were not deciding between different summer programmes (Figure 20); thus indicating their decision was mostly regarding only the LSS programme. 27% of respondents who considered different summer programmes were asked to specify the summer programmes they were considering. As their answers were not very precise, we could highlight only some of the mentioned countries where other programmes took place. These countries include: Spain, Germany, Czech Republic, the UK, France, Poland, the US, and China.

Figure 20. Were you deciding between different summer programmes? (n=392)



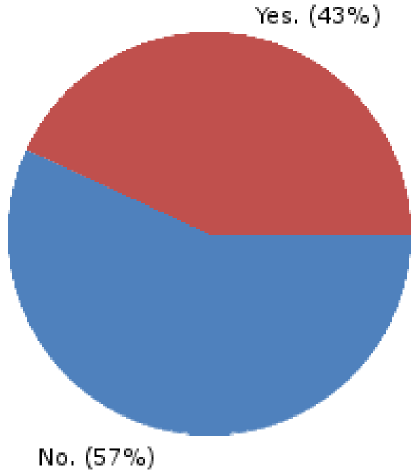
We wanted to know how long students were searching for information before their final decision to attend a specific summer programme was made. Figure 21 shows that among the 391 respondents who answered the questionnaire, 27% of them needed 2 to 6 days before making the final decision and 23% needed one week. The obtained data show that 94% of the respondents needed a month or less to reach a final decision.

Figure 21. The time needed to reach the final decision (n=391)



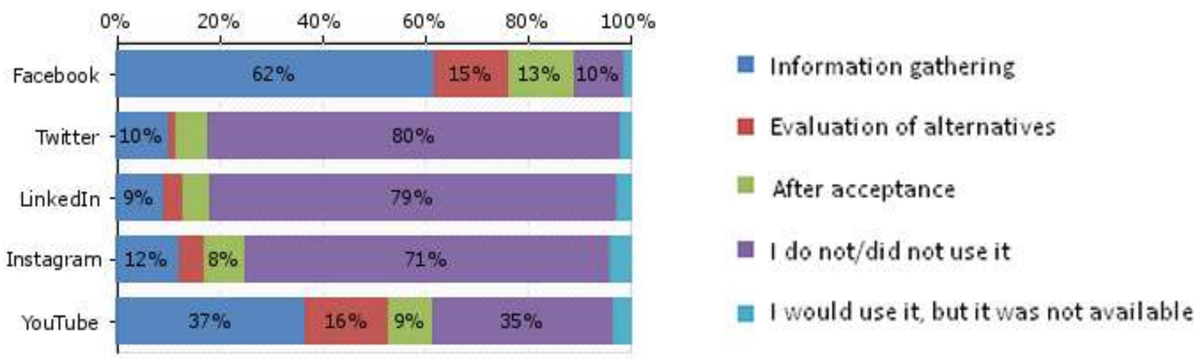
When it comes to using the social media networks for finding the information about the summer programmes, more than half of the respondents (57%) did not use any kind of social media networks to obtain the information about summer programmes. On the other hand, 43% of the respondents did use the social media networks (Figure 22). Thus, while the word-of-mouth information sharing is important, it appears to take place personally (face-to-face) rather than electronically.

Figure 22. Did you use social media networks for finding information about summer programmes? (n = 390)



The following two sub-questions were answered only by students who confirmed to be using social media networks. In order to gain better insight regarding the importance of social media networks in the decision-making process, the respondents who used social media networks were asked to state at what stage of the actual decision-making process did they use the social networks and which social media networks did they use to gain such information (Figure 23). Here, we combine the findings from one of the recent researches (Beyond the data, 2014) where the social media networks such as *Facebook*, *YouTube*, *LinkedIn* and *Instagram* turned out to play an important role for gathering information. Besides those social media networks, we added one more social media network where LSS programme is present as well – that is Twitter. Respondents were able to choose multiple options (social media networks).

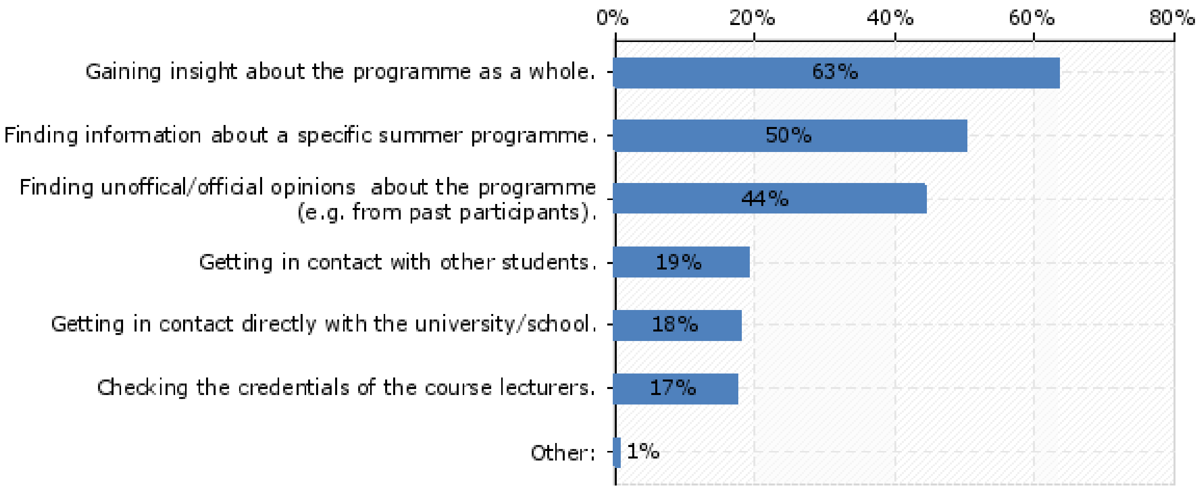
Figure 23. At what point did you use different types of social media networks to gain information regarding a specific summer programme? (n=165)



As Figure 23 shows, there are two social media networks that stand out when it comes to obtaining information regarding summer programmes. 62% of respondents used *Facebook* as their tool/source for gathering information while 37% of them were looking for information regarding the summer programmes on *YouTube*, where the LSS programme has several videos from the past summer schools. A small percentage of respondents (between 9 and 12%) used other social media networks (*Instagram*, *Twitter*, and *LinkedIn*). In general, *Facebook* and *YouTube* turned out as the important social media networks throughout the whole decision-making process, and not only in the information-gathering phase. Almost 90% of the respondents were using *Facebook* throughout the whole decision-making process while 62% were also using *YouTube*. 70% to 80% of respondents did not use *Twitter*, *LinkedIn* or *Instagram* at any stage of the decision-making process. A very small percentage of respondents (between 1% and 2%) would use social media networks, but they were not available due to different circumstances, for example: the summer programme is not present on that specific social media network, internet restrictions (China), etc.

The respondents were also asked to state in what way the information provided on social media network(s) were useful to them (Figure 24). The respondents were able to choose multiple answers.

Figure 24. In what way were the information provided on social media network(s) useful to you? (n=167)



Most of the respondents (63%) found the information on social media networks to be useful for gaining insight about the programme as whole. Besides gaining information about the programme as a whole, social media networks were also found as a good source for finding information about a specific summer programme, as well as finding official and unofficial opinions about the programme (e.g. from previous participants). They found social media networks a bit less useful for getting in contact with other students or the university/school and also for checking the credentials of the course lecturers.

The questions in the third set addressed the students' actual decision-making process which is one the most important focuses of our research. Students were asked to:

- Evaluate the importance of certain factors within their decision-making process.

- Rank specific factors that influenced their final decision to participate at the LSS programme according to importance/priority.
- Order specific factors by the level of influence on their final decision of course(s) selection.
- Rate several factors that have possibly influenced their final course(s) decision.
- Compare the courses offered at the LSS programme with the regular courses offered at their home institution.
- Express their response expectations when making an inquiry about a summer programme via email.
- Rate the LSS programme organizers by response effectiveness.
- Rate how likely they would recommend the LSS programme to their friends/colleagues.

Students were firstly asked to rate specific factors according to importance within their decision-making process. This was a matrix designed question (single choice per question and single choice with rating) on a 5-point Likert-type ordinal scale (1–lowest possible value; 5–highest possible value). The question was actually divided into two parts as we tried to minimize respondent burden. Figure 25 presents the first part and Figure 26 the second part of the obtained results.

Figure 25. Factors according to importance within the students' decision-making process, part 1 (n=331)

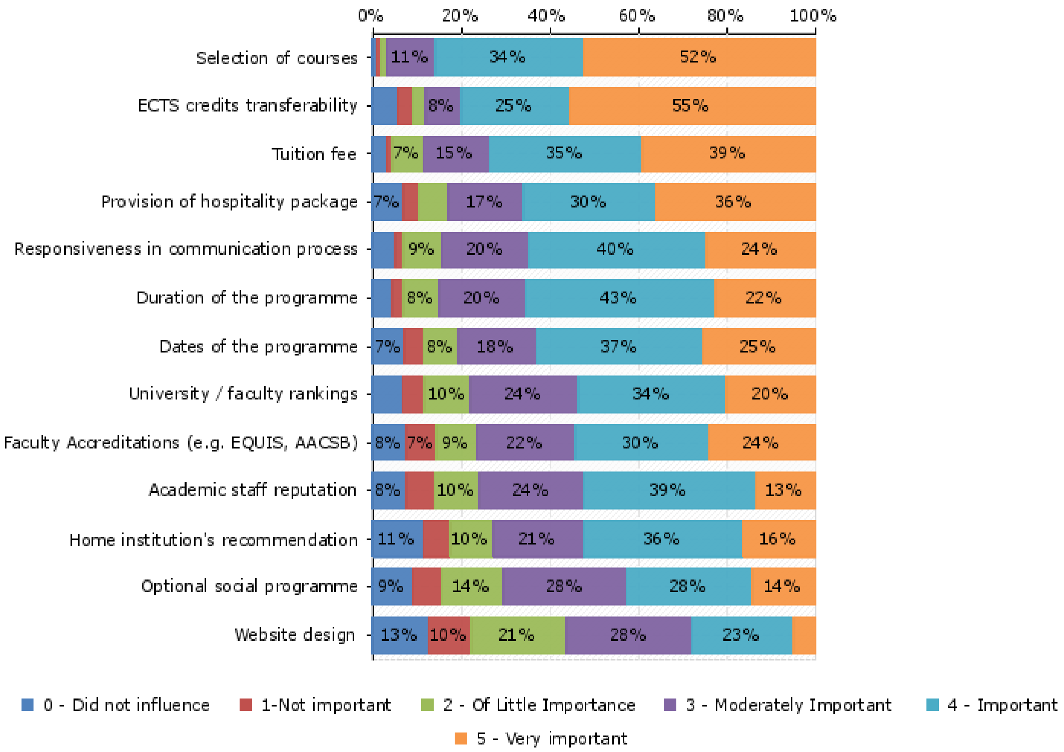
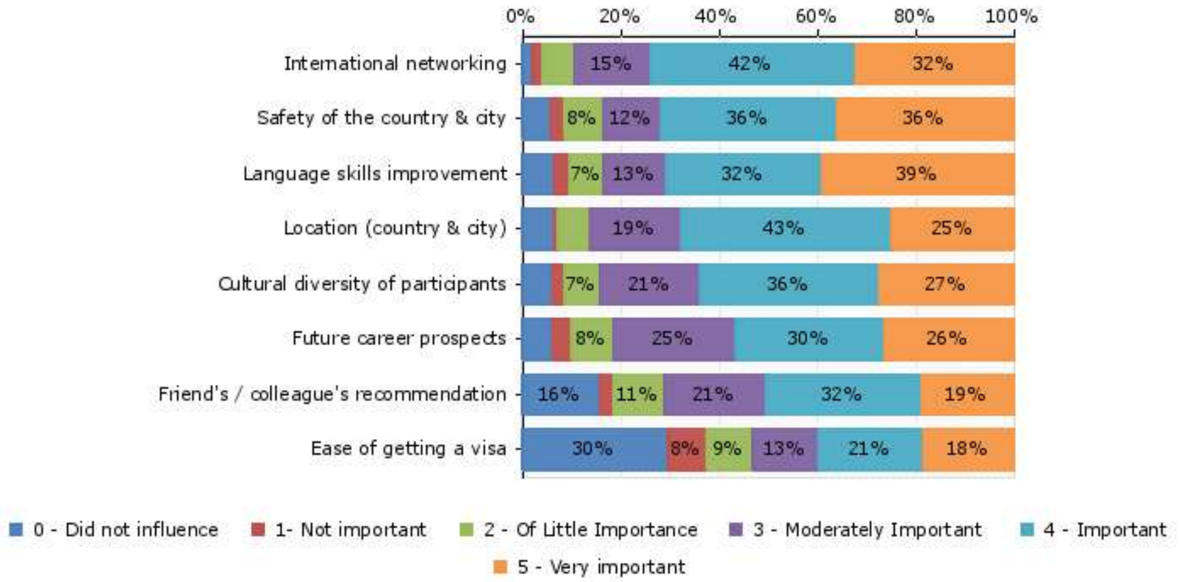


Figure 26. Factors according to importance within the students' decision-making process, part 2 (n=331)



As we can see from Figure 25, the provided selection of courses is important (value 4 on the 5-point scale) or very important (value 5 on the 5-point scale) for 86 % of the respondents, and the ECTS credits transferability for 80% of the respondents. The tuition fee (Figure 25) and international networking (Figure 26) are important or very important for 74% of the respondents. On the other hand, 38% of respondents claim that ease of getting a visa (Figure 29) did not influence or was not important at all within the decision-making process. This fact is not surprising, since most of the respondents (more than 60%) are coming from the European countries. Additionally, the website design and optional social programme (Figure 25) did not play any major role in their decision-making process. We can see the complete list of factors and their rankings in Table 10.

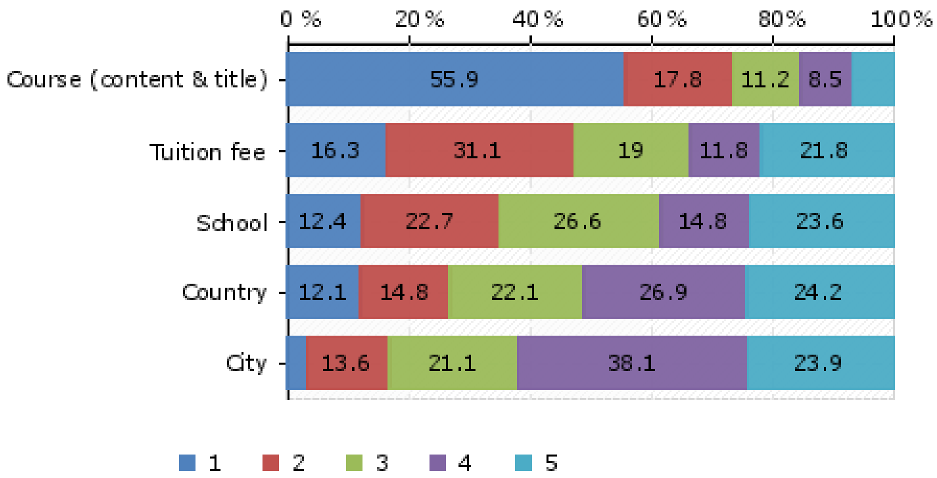
Table 10: Ranking of factors by importance in the decision-making process (n=331)

Rank	Factor	Pts	Rank	Factor	Pts
1	Selection of courses	1430	**11**	Cultural diversity of participants	1195
2	ECTS credits transferability	1352	**12**	Dates of the programme	1159
3	Tuition fee	1302	**13**	Future career prospects	1153
4	International networking	1290	**14**	University/faculty rankings	1102
5	Safety of the country & city	1249	**15**	Faculty Accreditations (e.g. EQUIS, AACSB)	1100
6	Language skills improvement	1248	**16**	Academic staff reputation	1059
7	Provision of Hospitality package	1215	**17**	Home institution recommendation	1034
8	Location (country & city)	1209	**18**	Friend's / colleague's recommendation	1013
9	Responsiveness in communication process	1196	**19**	Optional social programme	1001
10	Duration of the programme	1195	**20**	Website design	840
			21	Ease of getting a visa	809

Note: Ranking is based on the cumulative number of points assigned to each of the ranked categories (factors), where each first place ranking received the maximum number of points while each last place ranking received the minimum (just 1 point) number of points.

Respondents were asked to rank five specific factors (city, country, course, school, tuition fee) according to importance/priority that influenced students' final decision to participate at the LSS programme by placing the most important factor on the first place and the least important factor on the last place (Figure 27).

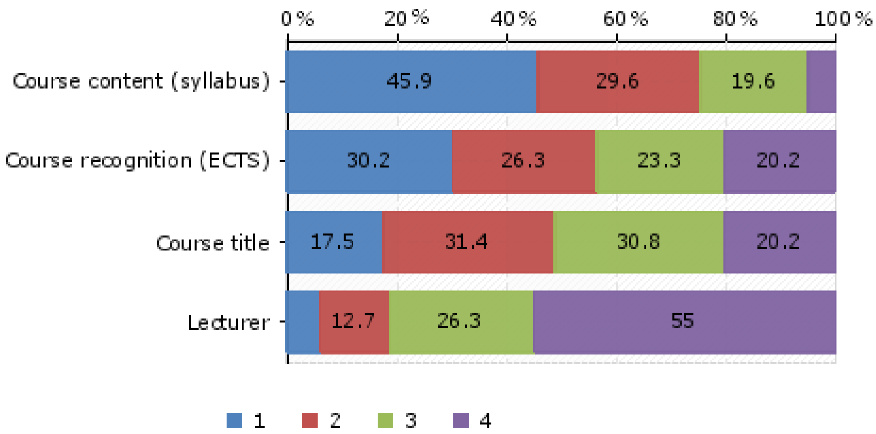
Figure 27. Ranking of factors according to importance/priority that influenced students' final decision to participate at the LSS programme (n=415)



As shown in Figure 27, more than half of the respondents (55.9%) ranked the course (in terms of content and title) as the most important factor. In addition, the tuition fee plays an important role since most of the respondents have ranked it as the second most important factor. The least important factors were the city (23.9%) and the country (24.2%), while university/school was mostly put on the third place.

It turned out that within the course selection the most important factor is the course content or the course syllabus; more than 45% of respondents placed it as first. The course recognition (ECTS) was mostly ranked as the second most important factor that influenced the selection of course(s), followed by the course title, while more than half of respondents (55%) stated the lecturer as the least important factor in reaching the final decision for the course selection (Figure 28).

Figure 28. Ranking of specific factors that influenced students' final decision of course selection (n=331)



According to Figure 29, most of the respondents (88%) agree that one of the most important reasons for choosing course(s) at the LSS programme was an interesting course content as well as their wish to learn something new (83%). 80% of the respondents agreed that the possibility for the ECTS course recognition at their home institution is also important, while 77% of the respondents stated as the reason for choosing course(s) an interesting course title and they also believe that the chosen course will increase their employability (73%).

Figure 29. Reasons for choosing the course(s) at the LSS programme (n=317)

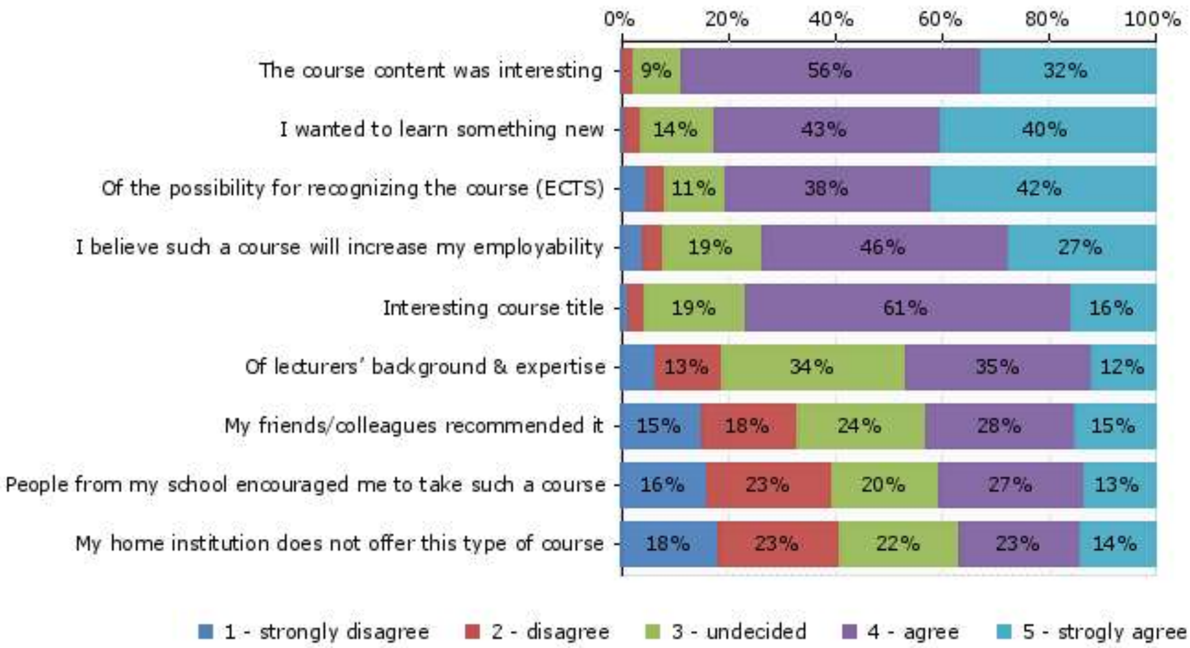


Table 11 shows a detailed ranking of reasons for choosing course at the LSS programme.

Table 11: Reasons for choosing the course(s) at the LSS programme (n=317)

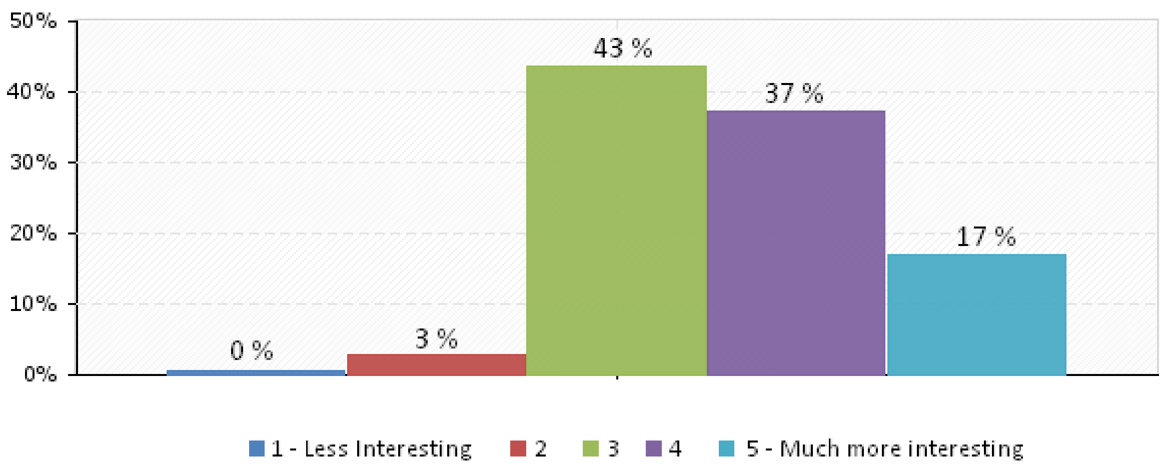
Rank	Factor	Pts
1	The course content was interesting	1327
2	I wanted to learn something new	1326
3	Of the possibility for recognizing the course (ECTS)	1298
4	I believe such a course will increase my employability	1233
5	Interesting course title	1226
6	Of lecturers' background & expertise	1056
7	My friends/colleagues recommended it	981
8	People from my school encouraged me to take such a course	945
9	My home institution does not offer this type of course	923

Note: Ranking is based on the cumulative number of points assigned to each of the ranked categories (factors), where each first place ranking received the maximum number of points while each last place ranking received the minimum (just 1 point) number of points.

As we can see in Figure 29 and Table 11, almost one third of the respondents (31%) find the fact that their home institution does not offer a similar course as well as the encouragement from other people to attend particular course (29%) to be insignificant for their course(s) choice.

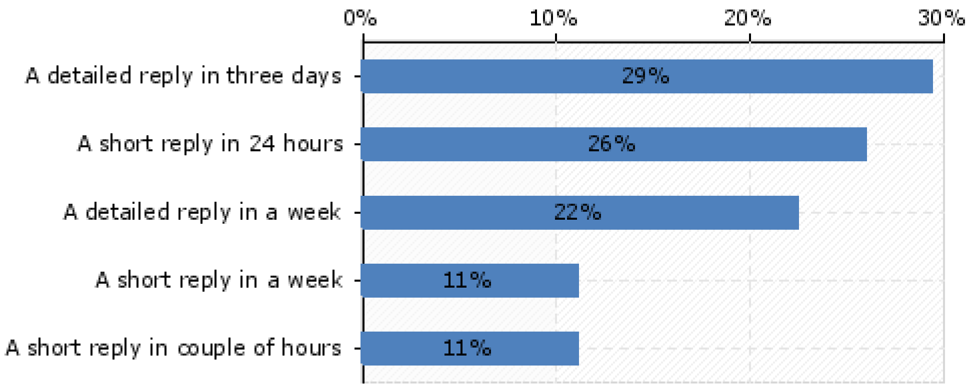
In the following 5-point Likert-type ordinal question students were asked to compare the courses offered at the LSS programme with courses offered at their home institutions. Figure 30 shows that 80% of 316 respondents have rated the courses offered at the LSS programme to be the same or more interesting in comparison to regular courses offered at their home institution. 17% rated the courses to be much more interesting.

Figure 30. Comparison of courses offered at the LSS programme and at the home institution (n=316)



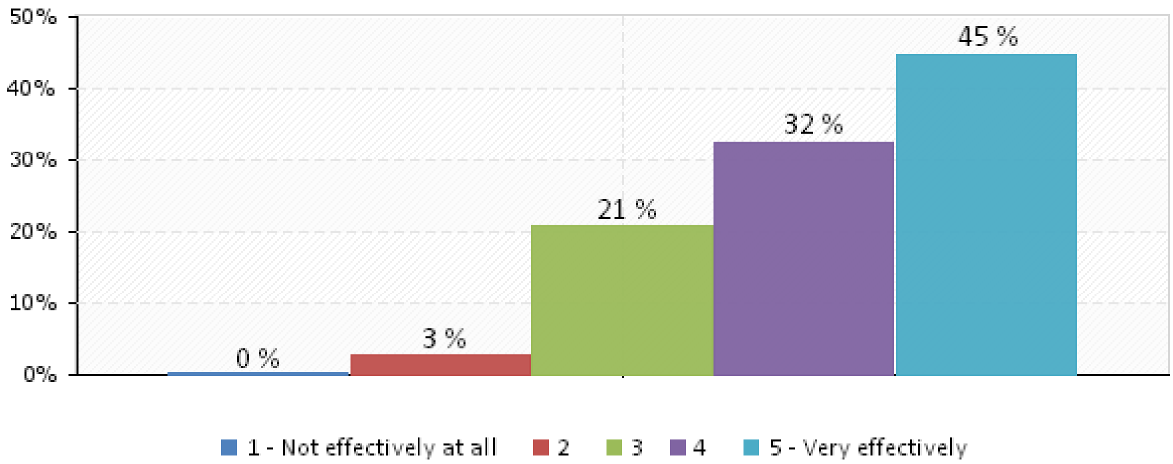
We were also interested in the response expectations of the students when making an inquiry about the summer programme by email. As shown in Figure 31, the expectations of 316 respondents vary and the replies are dispersed among all offered options. 29% of respondents expect a detailed reply in three days and 26% a short reply in 24 hours. 22% of respondents are willing to wait for a detailed reply in a week. A short reply in a couple of hours is expected by 11% of respondents and the remaining 11% expect a short reply in a week.

Figure 31. Response expectations of students (n=316)



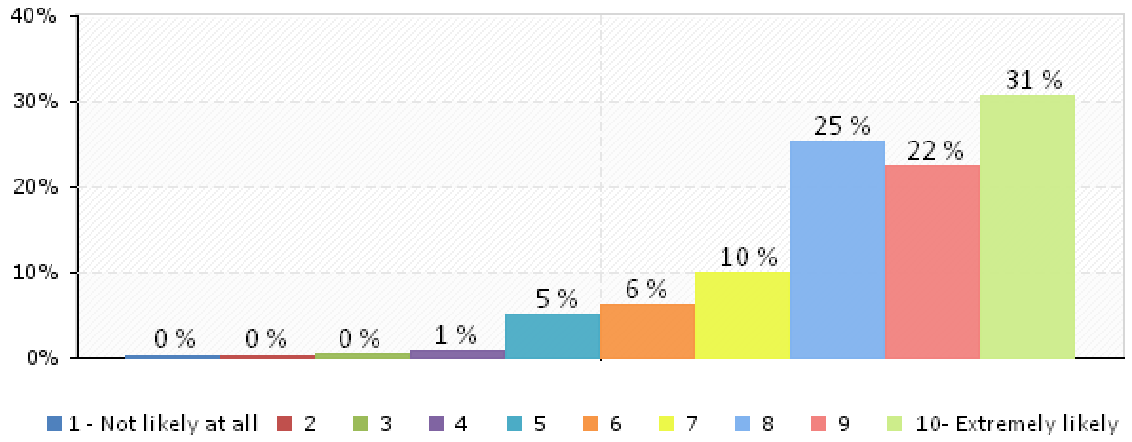
In connection with the response expectations, we asked the students to rate the response effectiveness of the LSS programme organizers. We wanted to know if their responding was fast and if the responses provided all the necessary information. Again, the 5-point Likert-type ordinal scale enabled students to rate the response effectiveness from not effective at all to very effective. 45% of the 316 respondents think that the organizers were responding very effectively and 32% think it was effective. 21% of the respondents were undecided or think that the responding effectiveness was average (Figure 32).

Figure 32. Response effectiveness of the LSS programme organizers (n=316)



For the last question in the third set, the 10-point Likert-type ordinal scale from 1 (not likely at all) to 10 (extremely likely) was used. We wanted to know how likely students would recommend the LSS programme to their friends/colleagues. 99% of the respondents selected the values from 5 to 10, and 78% of the respondents selected the values from 8 to 10. The average score assigned was 8.4, which shows that most of the respondents would be willing to recommend the programme (see Figure 33).

Figure 33. Level of likeliness to recommend the LSS programme (n=317)

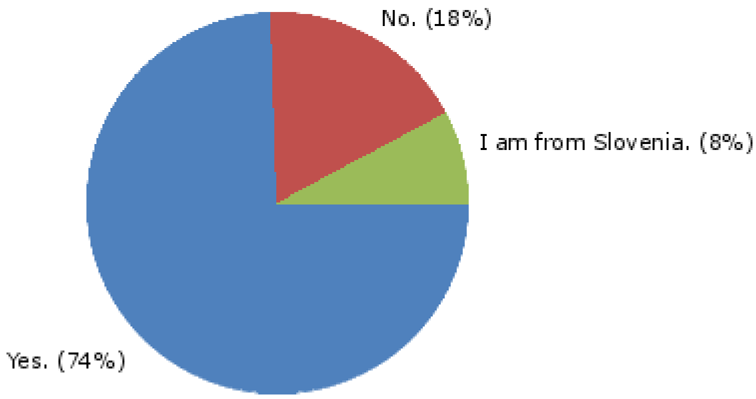


In the fourth set of questions we were interested in how Slovenia is seen as a tourism destination and to what extent the promotion of the country influence the student decision-making process in selecting a summer school programme. We wanted to gain more information about the following:

- If this was/will be their first visit to the destination (Slovenia)?
- How useful/interesting was the LSS programme website in terms of providing information about the destination (Slovenia)?
- If the promotion of the destination (Slovenia) influenced their final decision to attend the LSS programme?
- The level of importance of specific sources of information and of certain information in building their opinion about Slovenia as a tourism destination.

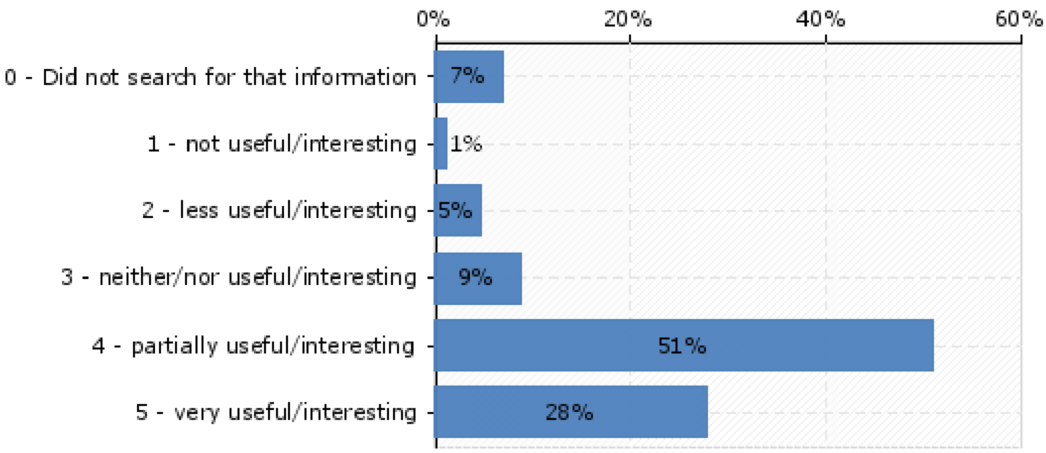
For 74% respondents this was (or was to be) their first visit to Slovenia as a tourism destination. 18% of respondents have already visited Slovenia and 8% of the respondents are Slovenian (Figure 34).

Figure 34. Will this be/was this your first visit to Slovenia as a tourism destination? (n=316)



The following two sub-questions were not shown to the respondents from Slovenia because their answers about Slovenia as a tourism destination would not be relevant. The first sub-question was about the LSS programme website in terms of providing information about the destination (Slovenia). In addition to details about the official programme, the website provides optional programme, courses and programme fees, a lot of information and promotional e-materials about the destination (Slovenia). Respondents were able to rate the website on the 5-point Likert scale from not useful/interesting to very useful/interesting. 79% of the respondents stated it was very or partially useful/interesting and only 9% of the respondents found this information neither useful nor interesting. 7% of the respondents did not search for that kind of information (Figure 35).

Figure 35. How useful/interesting was the LSS website in terms of providing information about the destination? (n=288)



61% of the respondents stated that the promotion of the destination (Slovenia) partially or completely influenced their final decision to attend the LSS programme. 17% stated that it did not really have any influence on their final decision (Figure 36).

Figure 36. Did promotion of the destination influence your final decision to attend the LSS programme?

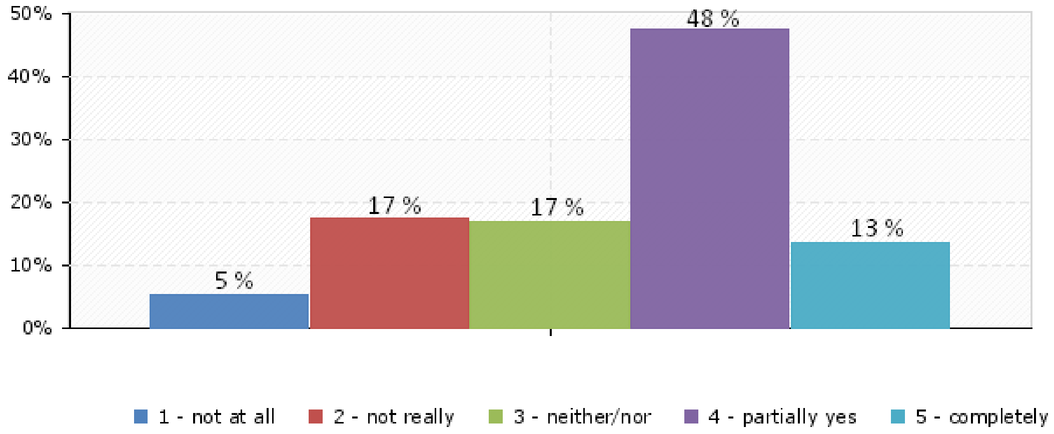
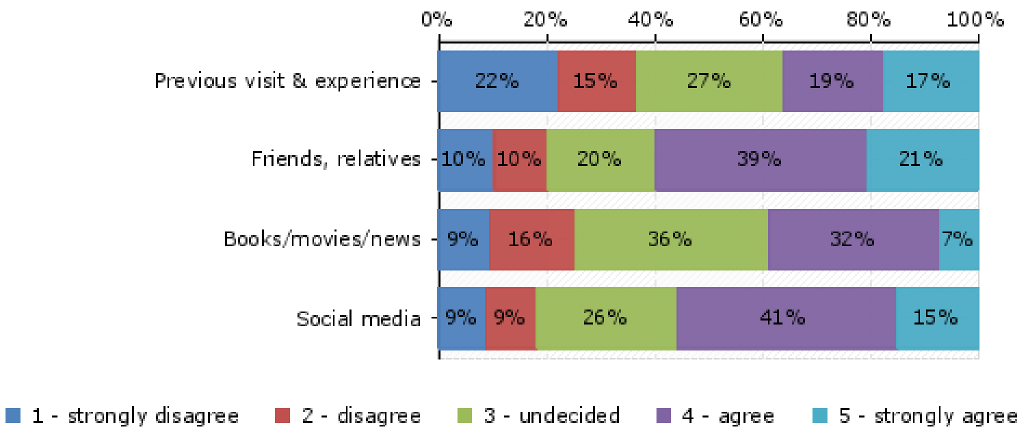


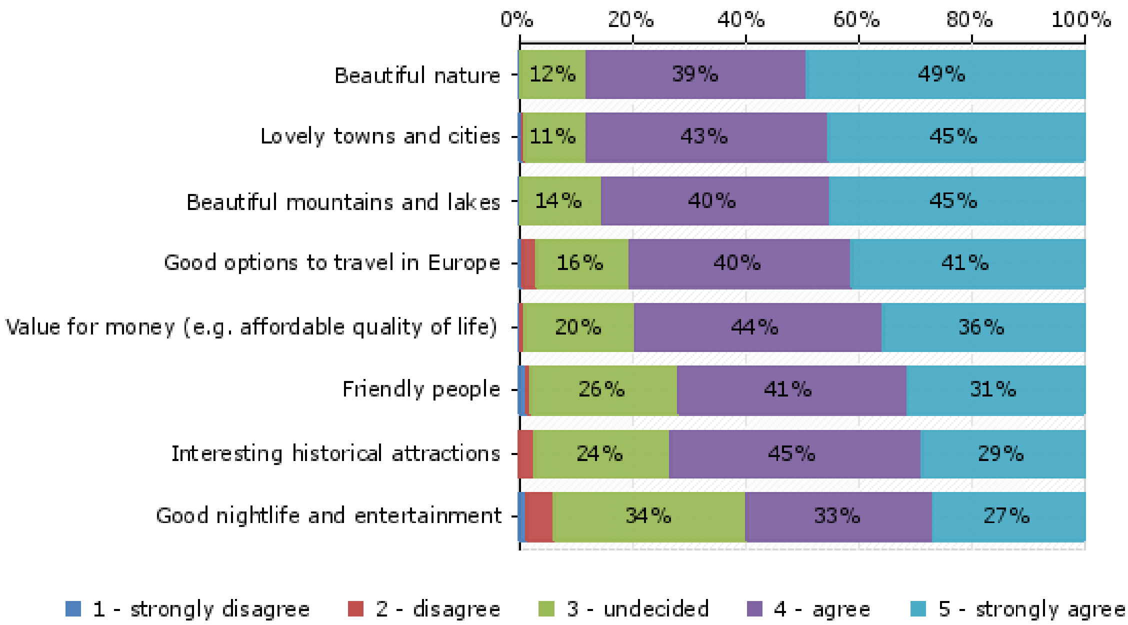
Figure 37 illustrates the importance of specific sources of information for building an opinion about Slovenia as a tourism destination for students. This was a matrix designed question (single choice per question and single choice with rating) with the 5-point Likert scale. Students were asked to express their level of agreement or disagreement with a particular source of information to be important for building their opinion about Slovenia as a tourism destination. 60% of the respondents (n=291) agreed or strongly agreed that friends/relatives were important and 56% of the respondents (n=287) agreed or strongly agreed that social media were important. Books/movies/news were important or really important for 39% of the respondents (n=287) and previous visit & experience for 36% of the respondents (n=288). 37% of the respondents (n=288) disagreed or strongly disagreed that previous visit and experience were important which is probably because they have not yet visited the country, and had, therefore, no previous experience. The obtained results show that friends/relatives and social media had a greater influence on building an opinion about Slovenia as a tourism destination than book/movies/news, and previous visit and experience

Figure 37. Importance of specific sources of information for building an opinion about Slovenia as a tourism destination



A lot of different facts about Slovenia can be obtained through different sources of information. In our question we have pointed out only some specific facts and wanted to get the students' opinion on what Slovenia has to offer. 80% or more of the respondents agree or strongly agree that Slovenia offers diverse natural beauties (beautiful nature, beautiful mountains and lakes, lovely towns and cities), good options to travel, and value for money. Figure 38 shows that more than 70% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that Slovenia offers interesting historical attractions and that the people in Slovenia are friendly. 60% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that it also offers good nightlife and entertainment. According to the results obtained, it seems that overall respondents have a good opinion about Slovenia, especially about the natural diversity and the location of the country (good position for travelling).

Figure 38. Students' opinion on what Slovenia has to offer (n=290)

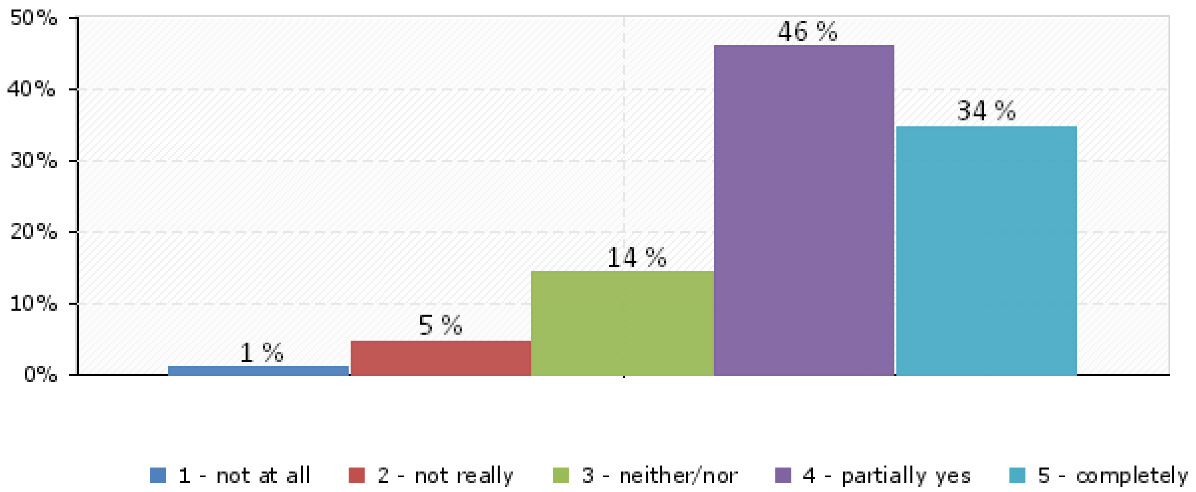


The fifth set included a few questions regarding the LSS programme fees. Students were asked to provide the following information:

- If the LSS programme is good value for money.
- If they would attend the LSS programme if the tuition fee was higher by a certain percentage.
- If they would take the hospitality package if the price was higher by a certain percentage.

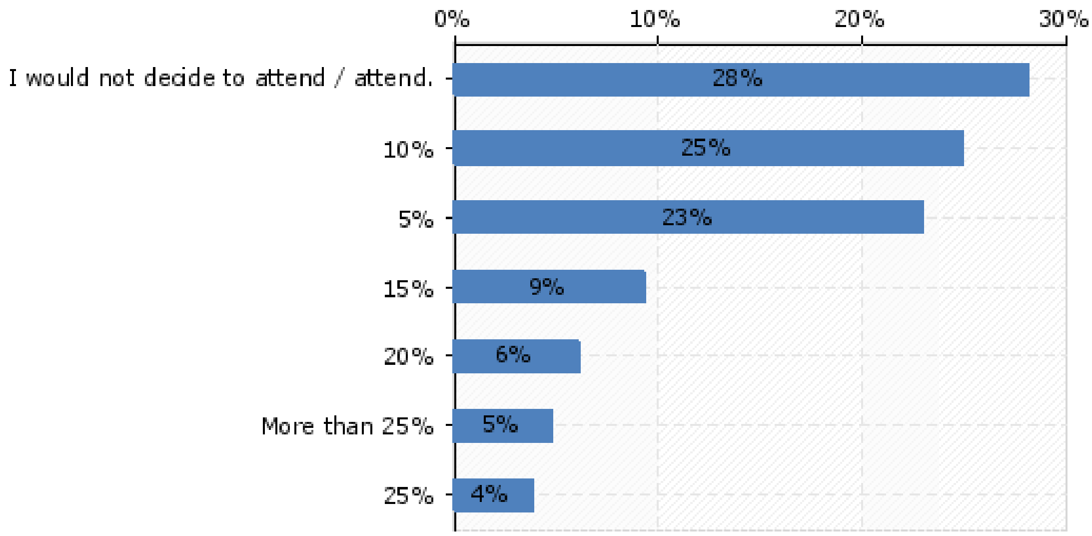
We wanted to know if students think that the LSS programme is good value for money. According to Figure 39, 80% of the respondents partially or completely agree with that statement. 14% of the respondents were undecided and only 6% of the respondents think that it is not good value for money.

Figure 39. Would you say that the LSS programme is good value for money? (n = 311)



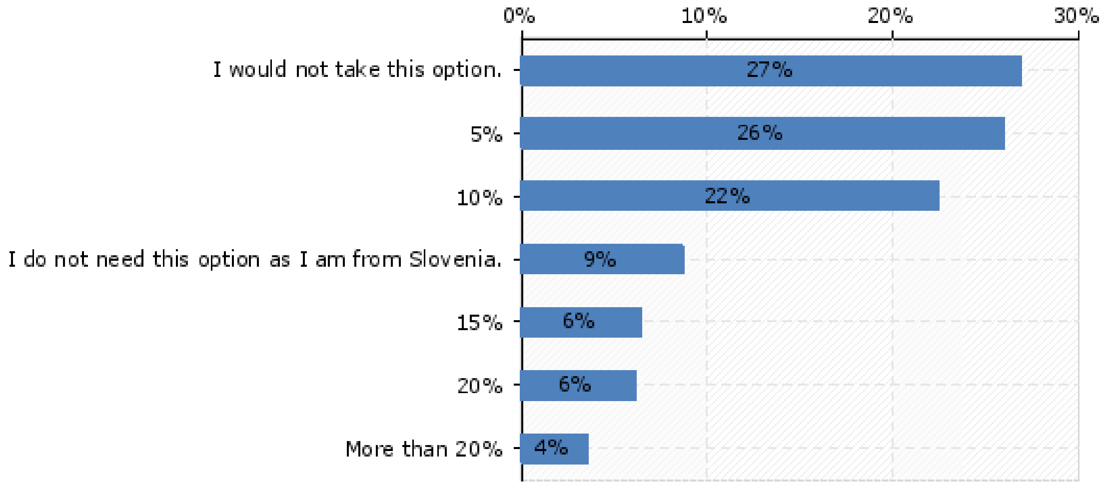
One of our main interests was also how students would react to a given increase of tuition fee for two courses at the LSS programme. The results presented in Figure 40 show that 28% of the respondents would decide not to attend (or not attended) the programme if the tuition fee for two courses increased. However, 25% of the respondents would still decide to attend (or attended) the programme if the price had increased for 10%, and 23% if it increased for 5%. A higher increase in price would be acceptable only for a smaller percentage of the respondents. For example, only 5% of the respondents would be willing to pay a 25% higher tuition fee for two courses.

Figure 40. Student's price sensitivity regarding the tuition fee for two courses (n = 313)



An important addition to the courses offered at the LSS programme is also an optional possibility of taking a "hospitality package" which is offered to students every year. This option includes accommodation and two meals per day during the three-week duration of the programme.

Figure 41. Student's price sensitivity regarding the hospitality package (n=312)



We were interested in the level of price sensitivity of the hospitality package. As shown in Figure 41, 27% of the respondents have stated that they would not take this option if the price would have increased. However, 26% of the respondents would be willing to take this option even with a 10% increase in price, and 22% with a 5% increase in price. A 20% increase in the price would be acceptable only for 6% of the respondents. 9% of the respondents answering this question were from Slovenia; therefore, this option is not relevant for them.

5.5.3 Research hypothesis testing

H1: The course, as a decision-making factor for selecting a summer school programme, is more important than either the school brand or the country (destination).

When testing the first hypothesis, we treated the ranking of the decision factor "course" as a typical 5-point ordinal scale item. We wanted to test if the ranking of this factor was statistically significantly different compared to the rankings of the remaining four decision factors (tuition fee, country, city, and school) for the LSS programme. Table 12 summarizes the overall ranking of the 5 factors according to the cumulative number of assigned points; where each 1st place ranking was assigned a maximum number of 5 points, each 2nd place ranking was assigned 4 points, and up to each 5th place ranking being assigned 1 point. Additionally, the last column also presents the mean score, calculated as the mean on the 5-point ordinal scale where we inverted the values (each 1st place was given a score of 5, whereas each 5th place was given a score of 1). Standard deviations are shown in brackets

Table 12: Ranking of factors influencing the final decision to participate at the LSS programme (n=331)

Rank	Factor	Cumulative points	Mean (rank 1-5)
#1	**Course (content & title)**	1,350	4.08 (1.27)
#2	**Tuition fee**	1,021	3.08 (1.40)
#3	**School**	945	2.86 (1.34)
#4	**Country**	873	2.64 (1.32)
#5	**City**	776	2.34 (1.09)

Note: Overall ranking (1st to 5th place) based on the cumulative number of assigned points; where each 1st place was assigned 5 points and each 5th place was assigned 1 point. Standard deviations in the last column are shown in brackets.

We then tested the paired mean score differences of the factor "course" with the factors "school" and "country" by running a paired-samples t-test. We found statistically significant differences at *p=0.000* in the case of both paired tests (please see Appendix B for the SPSS output). Thus, we were able to confirm our first research hypothesis and show that the factor "course" was statistically significantly more important in the final decision than either "school" or "country".

H2: The course content (syllabus) is more important than the lecturer of the course.

The second research hypothesis was tested similarly to the first research hypothesis. Despite the fact that the ranking for this question included only 4 factors related to various aspects of course importance (course content, course title, course recognition – ECTS, and lecturer) the variables were still assumed to be of ordinal type and were analysed accordingly. Table 13 presents the corresponding results.

Table 13: Ranking of various course-related factors influencing the final decision to participate at the LSS programme (n=331)

Rank	Factor	Cumulative points	Mean (rank 1-4)
#1	**Course content (syllabus)**	1,048	3.17 (0.91)
#2	**Course recognition (ECTS)**	882	2.67 (1.11)
#3	**Course title**	815	2.46 (1.00)
#4	**Lecturer**	562	1.70 (0.91)

Note: Overall ranking (1st to 4th place) based on cumulative number of assigned points; where each 1st place was assigned 4 points and each 4th place was assigned 1 point. Standard deviations in last column are shown in brackets.

We also tested the paired mean score differences of the factor "course content (syllabus)" with the factor "lecturer" by running a paired-samples t-test (please see Appendix C). The mean score was again highly statistically different at $p=0.000$. Therefore, we were able to confirm also our second hypothesis.

H3: Students are very price sensitive to tuition fee increases for a summer school programme.

When testing the third research hypothesis, we simply looked at the distribution of answers measuring how likely the respondents would still attend the LSS programme if (a) tuition fees for two courses and (b) hospitality package fees were to be increased by a specified percentage (please see Appendix D). Table 14 shows the distribution of answers from which we can conclude that only 28.1% of respondents would not attend the LSS programme if there would be any tuition fee increase for two courses, whereas one quarter of students would be willing to attend the LSS programme if the tuition fees increased by 5% or 10% alternatively. Having said this, we find no strong support for the third hypothesis and thus reject it.

Table 14: The LSS programme attendance sensitivity to tuition fee for two courses and hospitality package fee increases (n=331)

I WOULD STILL DECIDE TO ATTEND THE LSS PROGRAMME IF...			
Tuition fee for two courses increased by…		***Hospitality package fee increased by…***	
Level of increase	**Frequency**	**Level of increase**	**Frequency**
5%	23.0%	***5%***	26.0%
10%	24.9%	***10%***	22.4%
15%	9.3%	***15%***	6.4%
20%	6.1%	***20%***	6.1%
25%	3.8%	***More than 20%***	3.5%
More than 25%	4.8%	***Would not take this option***	26.9%
Would not attend	28.1%	***Live in Slovenia***	8.7%

H4: The image of a country (as a tourism destination) plays an important role in reaching a final decision for a summer school programme.

We tested the influence of the country (as a tourism destination) on selecting a summer school programme in two ways. First, we looked at how much the promotion of the destination influenced the respondents' final decision for the LSS programme. Measured on the 5-point ordinal Likert-type scale from 1 (not at all influenced) to 5 (strongly influenced), the average mean score for this question was 3.47 with a corresponding standard deviation of 1.08. We tested the statistical significance of the mean score by applying the one-sample t-test and setting the test value at 3.00. As we can see from the corresponding results shown in the Appendix E, the mean difference was statistically significant at $p=0.000$. Second, we also used the results of testing the first research hypothesis, where the country as a decision-making factor was ranked only fourth out of five factors; after course (content & title), tuition fee and school. Therefore, by combining these results we reject the fourth hypothesis. Generally looking, we can say that while the promotion of the country as a tourism destination plays a certain role in the final decision for a summer school programme, the country is not among the most important decision-making factors.

H5: The word-of-mouth presents the most important source of information about a summer school programme.

In testing this last hypothesis, we looked at the usage of various information channels regarding the LSS programme (for results see Appendix F). Table 15 summarizes the frequencies of the usage of the key sources of information (multiple answers were possible). As we can see, the majority of respondents have received the information about the LSS programme from their home institution (48.5%), followed by information received from their friends and colleagues (42.9%). Having said this, we find only partial support for the last research hypothesis since the information from colleagues and friends was the second and not the first most important source of information about the LSS programme

Table 15: Frequency of usage of key sources of information regarding the LSS programme (n=392)

Information source	Frequency of usage
Home institution information	48.5%
Information from colleagues & friends	42.9%
Information provided by FELU	15.3%
Information provided by past non-friend participants	12.0%
Information from specialized websites	4.8%

5.5.4 Determinants of recommendation of the LSS programme

We also wanted to test the key determinants of recommendation of the LSS programme to friends and/or colleagues, which we measured on the 10-point Likert-type ordinal scale from 1 (not likely at all to recommend) to 10 (extremely likely to recommend). For this purpose we conducted a simple OLS linear regression in SPSS by taking the 10-point recommendation intent scale as the dependent variable and a set of independent variables which could be grouped into the following three groups: (1) respondent characteristics (age at application, level of study, time taken for searching for information, and the use of social media to search for information); (2) importance of specific factors as decision-making factors (variables denoted with the prefix DF in the SPSS output, and corresponding to the section Q3 of the original questionnaire); and (3) actual choice criteria factors (variables denoted with the prefix CC in the SPSS output, and corresponding to the section Q4 in the original questionnaire). Given the myriad independent variables employed in our OLS regression analysis, we also ran the appropriate collinearity diagnostics by checking for variance inflation. As we can see from the summary of regression results shown in Table 16, multicolinearity was not an issue since all VIF values were well below the 10.0 threshold.

As we can observe from the regression results, the responsiveness of the LSS team was the single most important determinant of the recommendation intent by the respondents (β=.801; *p=0.000*), followed by the importance of international networking (β=.294; *p=0.005*), promotion of the destination (β=.286; *p=0.001*), importance of the hospitality package provision (β=.236; *p=0.001*), and – interestingly – a negative impact of the importance of the LSS programme website design (β=-.148; *p=0.024*). Overall, we can see that the analysed model produced a fair explanatory power with adjusted R^2 of 0.321 (*p=0.000*). On the other hand, the age of the respondents, the level of their education (undergraduate/graduate), their time spent searching for information, nor the use of social media did not have a significant impact on the propensity of respondents to recommend the LSS programme to their friends and/or colleagues; as did not the abundance of other decision-making and choice criteria factors in our simple OLS linear regression model.

Table 16: Determinants of the LSS programme recommendation (OLS regression)

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2,569	,963		2,668	,008		
	Age of application	,047	,042	,070	1,110	,268	,605	1,652
	Undergraduate_graduate	,219	,207	,066	1,055	,292	,611	1,636
	Time for info search	-,077	,052	-,077	-1,484	,139	,872	1,147
	Use of social media	-,123	,165	-,041	-,745	,457	,792	1,263
	DF_Dates of the programme	-,036	,071	-,035	-,513	,609	,522	1,915
	DF_Duration of the programme	-,012	,085	-,010	-,147	,883	,479	2,087
	DF_University / faculty rankings	-,117	,087	-,108	-1,350	,178	,367	2,721
	DF_Accreditations	-,014	,076	-,014	-,180	,858	,419	2,387
	DF_Academic staff reputation	,107	,096	,099	1,116	,266	,299	3,341
	DF_Selection of courses	,122	,100	,074	1,219	,224	,647	1,546
	DF_Tuition fee	-,110	,078	-,088	-1,405	,161	,600	1,666
	DF_ECTS transferability	,010	,085	,010	,122	,903	,372	2,687
	DF_Responsiveness in communication process	-,086	,085	-,073	-1,001	,318	,447	2,238
	DF_Recommendation of home institution	-,069	,068	-,071	-1,012	,313	,487	2,053
	DF_Optional social program	,061	,074	,058	,824	,411	,474	2,111
	DF_Provision of hospitality package	,236	,071	,229	3,323	,001	,498	2,008
	DF_Website design	-,148	,065	-,138	-2,278	,024	,648	1,544
	DF_Location (country)	,004	,079	,004	,051	,959	,510	1,962
	DF_Safety of country/city	,038	,084	,035	,449	,654	,399	2,506
	DF_Cultural diversity of participants	-,070	,076	-,062	-,914	,361	,508	1,968
	DF_Future career prospects	-,041	,082	-,038	-,504	,615	,412	2,428
	DF_International networking	,294	,103	,218	2,844	,005	,402	2,486
	DF_Improvement of language skills	-,133	,076	-,127	-1,748	,082	,448	2,233
	DF_Recommendation of friends & colleagues	,036	,071	,039	,505	,614	,395	2,531
	DF_Ease of getting visa	,081	,053	,104	1,530	,127	,513	1,949
	CC_The course content was interesting	,025	,133	,012	,190	,850	,615	1,626
	CC_Interesting course title	-,042	,117	-,021	-,356	,723	,677	1,477
	CC_My home institution does not offer this type of course	-,020	,062	-,018	-,329	,743	,805	1,243
	CC_People from my school encouraged me to take such a course	-,148	,094	-,128	-1,583	,115	,361	2,768
	CC_I wanted to learn something new	,046	,113	,025	,403	,687	,606	1,649
	CC_Possibility for recognizing the course (ECTS)	,070	,103	,049	,679	,498	,456	2,194
	CC_My friends/colleagues recommended it	,078	,107	,067	,729	,467	,280	3,575
	CC_Lecturers' background & expertise	,062	,096	,043	,650	,516	,534	1,871
	CC_Increased employability	-,072	,100	-,047	-,718	,473	,544	1,837
	Response expectations when making an inquiry about summer programme via email	,001	,058	,001	,020	,984	,913	1,095
	LSS team response effectiveness	,801	,098	,453	8,208	,000	,778	1,286
	Usefulness of the LSS website for destination	,101	,070	,089	1,442	,151	,628	1,591
	Promo of destination influence choice	,286	,089	,207	3,221	,001	,577	1,734

a. Dependent Variable: Recommendation intent

5.5.5 Key findings

Our analysis has shown that the course (content) represents one of the key factors which influence (international) students' decision-making when it comes to selecting a summer programme (abroad). Among the following factors: tuition fee, school, country, and city, the course (content & title) was ranked first in terms of importance. Most of respondents evaluated the interesting course content as one of the main resons for choosing a specific course at the LSS programme and more than half of them emphasized the course recognition (ECTS) as an important component when it comes to choosing the course. Beside these two factors, respondents also stated tuition fee, international networking and safety of the country and city as very important factors influencing their decision-making process for a summer school programme. This is how we reached an answer to our first research question – which key factors are influencing the (international) students' decision-making when selecting a summer programme (abroad).

Based on the fact that the course is one of the key factors which influence (international) students' decision-making, we wanted to find out how important are the quality and the content of the course offered within summer programme for the actual decision-making process. The course content (syllabus) turned out to be the most important factor, followed by the course recognition (ECTS), whereas the lecturer was the least important component when choosing the course. This is how we reached the answer to our second reasearch question – how important are the content and the quality of the courses offered within a summer programme.

In search of an answer to our third research question if tuition fees are important to all students applying for summer programmes abroad, we reached the conclusion that price sensitivity is not as high as we thought it to be. Almost a quarter of students would be willing to attend the LSS programme if the tuition fees increased by 5% or 10% alternatively, and less than 30% of the respondents would not attend the summer school if the tuition fee was raised.

Despite the fact that respondents placed the safety of the country and city among the top five key factors which influence (international) students' decision-making, a detailed statistical analysis generally showed that while the promotion of the country as a tourism destination plays a certain role in the final decision for a summer school programme, the country as a factor is not among the most important decision-making factors. Also, school (as a factor) did not score that high comparing to other factors. However, as it is important for the courses to be internationaly recognized, the school's image does play some role in the decision-making process. In Table 17 we summarize the results of our research hypothesis testing.

Table 17: Summarized results of research hypothesis testing

Research hypothesis	**Result**
H1: The course, as a decision-making factor for selecting a summer school programme, is more important than either the school brand or the country (destination).	Confirmed
H2: Course content (syllabus) is more important than the lecturer of the course.	Confirmed
H3: Students are very price sensitive to tuition fee increases for a summer school programme.	Rejected
H4: The image of a country (as a tourism destination) plays an important role in reaching final decision for a summer school programme.	Rejected
H5: Word of mouth presents the most important source of information about a summer school programme.	Partially confirmed

Having answered all the research questions driving our research, we summarize the main findings of our empirical research in the bullet points below:

- Course is one of the key factors which influence (international) students' decision-making when selecting a summer programme (abroad).
- Interesting course content (syllabus) is a key building component of the course, beside course recognition (ECTS) and course title.
- Price sensitivity for tuition fee and hospitality package is not very high, or lower than expected.
- Almost half of the respondents/students gain information about the LSS programme from their home institution, mostly provided by their administrative staff.
- Friends and colleagues also play an important role in promoting a summer programme by word-of-mouth communication.
- The obtained data show that 50% of the respondents needed less than a week or up to one week to reach a final decision to attent the summer programme, whereas 94% reached the final decision in less than a month.
- Social media networks, especially Facebook, play an important role in the information-gathering phase and the evaluation of alternatives.
- Most of respondents find social media networks useful for gaining information about the programme as whole and for gaining information about a specific programme.
- The responsiveness of the LSS team was the single most important determinant of the recommendation intent, followed by the importance of international networking, promotion of the destination, importance of the hospitality package provision, and – interestingly – a negative impact of the importance of the LSS website design.

5.5.6 Limitations of the empirical research

As one the main limitations in this research, we would point out the time component within our research. The same questionnaire should be sent to students at the end of the LSS programme in order to receive more relevant answers to particular questions. In order to obtain and analyse a bigger sample, the questionnaire was sent also to previous participants of the LSS programme in 2013 and 2014, which represented around a quarter of respondents in our sample. The perceptions of the students who have already attended the LSS programme in 2014 differ from the perceptions of students who have not yet attended the LSS programme and the students who have attended in 2013 or even in 2012 (some of them were attending the LSS programme more than once). The latter might not recall all the details/factors that influenced their decision-making process. We also believe that a standardized questionnaire given to students at the end of the summer programme each year would present a good basis for drawing conclusions regarding different groups and their behaviour (e.g., Chinese students will always take hospitality package, etc.). Apart from the time component, there is also the matter of a more specialized questionnaire or searching questions enabling us to gain better insight regarding the course(s), tuitions fees, hospitality package, and the importance of providing a full service to the student. Despite these limitation we, however, still believe that important information were obtained from our survey which will provide useful feedback to relevant stakeholders and help further improve the quality of the LSS programme.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FELU

The LSS programme is an international summer programme with some 500 participants every year, most of the participants being international students from all over the world. According to our analysis, more than half of the students come from European countries; however, the number of students from non-European countries is growing especially fast every year. The IRO and the FELU as a whole should focus on targeting those non-European markets with most potential, especially countries such as China, Korea, India and Africa. These countries very often offer scholarships for students to study abroad, and summer schools are a great opportunity to experience studying abroad for the first time for many students. Therefore, the IRO should put more effort into working more closely with universities from the above mentioned countries in order to recruit students to attend the LSS programme since information provided by the administrative staff at home institution is a key source of information for the prospective students. One main advantage of the summer school is that the cooperation with non-partner universities is possible; therefore, this is a good way to reach universities which might send prospective students but do not have any international accreditations (which is not the case with bilateral agreements). Most of the participants of the LSS programme are undergraduate students; therefore, more emphasis should be put on developing and offering courses for graduate students in order to balance the student structure. If good graduate courses (or separate) programmes would be developed, this could become a competitive advantage of the FELU and it would enable the FELU to attract prospective PhD candidates in the future. We suggest the FELU to develop more specialized short-term programmes (not only summer but also winter sessions connected to skiing) on specific topics. This kind of programmes could be developed in cooperation with established partner universities that have previous experience with specialized short-term programmes. Such programmes could be of a smaller scale, and the FELU could charge higher (premium) tuition fees for such programmes.

We both believe that it is of extreme importance to constantly nurture and continously work on strengthening the personal relations with partner universities through personal visits on a regular basis. Partner universities are the ones that most crucially promote the LSS programme to their students and our research confirms this as the majority of students have gained information about the programme from the administrative staff at their home institutions. Personal contact between the administrative staff (colleagues) from different universities is of great importance; therefore, the administrative staff at the FELU (from all departments, not just the IRO) should attend different international conferences, seminars and staff training visits in order to gain a broader understanding of what internationalization actually means, as well as to nurture existing personal contacts. In addition, the administrative staff from partner universities should also be continously invited to visit the FELU.

Students who pay tuition fees are more demanding and have higher expectations than students who pay nohing. Thus, the students attending the LSS programme require a high response and an effective provision of information at any point, as well as through different channels; especially social media networks. Students have emphasized that particular social media networks are highly important for gaining information about the LSS programme as a whole, particularly within the information seeking stage of their decision process. The importance of social media networks at the FELU is underemphasized and the usage of particular networks should be more widespread and more effectively developed. Therefore, workshops should be organized for the FELU staff in order to gain an understanding of how social media networks work and how to use them properly for engaging with main target groups and building a successful brand. Brand awareness is important at the level of the institution; however, it is also important to develop brands (of projects/programmes) within the institution. The LSS programme is a good example of a brand that was built over the years and has actually strengthened the FELU corporate brand in return. The FELU should invest more time and effort in building brands of its market oriented projects and programmes, especially the international ones. When a particular brand has a positive connotation within its target groups, then the word-of-mouth is often the most powerful tool for engaging new students, which further reduces marketing and communication costs.

Most of the students that gained information about the LSS programme through the administrative staff at the FELU have been directed to the FELU (LSS) website. However, the FELU website presents one of the major obstacles for providing detailed and clear information, as it is very standardized and opaque, and students tend to have problems with finding the right information. Most of the major market-oriented projects and programmes are not even visible on the first page of the FELU website, and without a direct link it is sometimes impossible to find information about the programmes that students are interested in. This is very disturbing and, what is more important, it may cause loosing prospective students who give up on searching for information. Therefore, the FELU should invest into creating a more flexible IT platform (website) that would provide clear information and enable more flexibility in terms of content and style, as different programmes require different and sometimes more complex ways of providing information. Market-oriented projects and programmes should be not only visible on the main FELU website, but should even have their own independent websites which would be helpful for building the project and programme brands.

Courses offered at a summer programme are one of the most important factors within the student decision-making process for attending a particular summer school programme. The IRO should keep its focus on offering interesting courses with a good content (syllabus). The possibility of course recognition is also important; however, this should not be the only focus for the FELU students who, in most cases, attend the LSS programme solely because the courses can be recognized within the regular curriculum. The FELU should educate its students from the very beginning about the importance of taking part in different activities and creating an international network for further career development; the LSS programme is only one of the many different possibilities for achieving that. The IRO and the FELU management should work more closely when it comes to the course recognition rules and course offer at the LSS programme, as sometimes some of the most important factors that influence the success of the programme are not taken into consideration (e.g., the positive experience of students with particular lecturers, previous experience of students with course recognition, etc.) and this may cause issues in the future development of the programme. The courses offered at the LSS programme were rated as more interesting than the courses offered at the home institutions of the students. Offering some of these courses as elective courses in the regular curriculum might be an idea for the FELU management and something interesting for the FELU students.

What our research showed is that responsiveness, effective provision of information and promotion of the destination (country) are of great importance within the decision-making process of students deciding for a summer school programme. All this is done and provided by the administrative staff in the IRO at the FELU. Therefore, it is highly significant to emphasize the importance of the human resource management within the FELU. Projects like the LSS programme demand a whole year of preparations with skilled and flexible employees who are willing to work 24/7 during the duration of the programme. The organizers of the programme are service providers to demanding clients; therfore, this process demands a sufficient number of employees who can provide a full-service and full support to them. The FELU should also engage more into the promotion of the programme and into understanding the importance of such successful market-orientated projects, as they are beneficial for the FELU as a whole and not only for the IRO. Internationalization should be implemented and not only written on paper; in order to do that, all employees need to understand and work in the spirit of this concept. All employes, not just those at the IRO, should be driven by an international mindset since the FELU is competing in a increasingly globalized market of higher education.

CONCLUSION

Higher education is faced with unprecedented changes and challenges due to the increasing impact of globalization and internationalization which has become a proactive strategic issue for most institutions. HEIs need to adapt to the changing needs of all stakeholders, especially students. Therefore, understanding their behaviour and their decision-making process to meet their needs is of great importance. The increasing marketization of higher education and competition is also forcing institutions to be more market-oriented in order to manage their portfolio and to search for new opportunities for growth and revenue.

Our literature overview has shown that consumer behaviour and consumer decision-making processes are some of the most studied topics by researchers and marketers today. Studies of both topics derive from different academic disciplines, especially sociology and psychology, as this enables a deeper and better insight into understanding of consumers. The overviewed authors agree that consumer behaviour is influenced by different groups of factors which cannot be controlled; however, they should be identified and taken into account when marketing strategies are being designed. They also agree that the decision-making process is very complex and it represents one of the main issues in studying consumer behaviour. To our surprise, not a lot of research on the mentioned topics has a particular focus on the specifics of the behaviour and the decision-making process of (international) students. Thus, with the changing trends and increasing importance of international students as a source of revenue, the number of studies with the mentioned focus is growing.

The literature overview also showed that researchers agree on and emphasize the importance of using marketing concepts within the higher education environment; however, a lot of them criticize the extended marketization of the HEIs. In their opinion, the marketization is destroying the essence of education since the primary goal (or business) of HEIs is often shifting from developing students with discipline-specific competences and general skills to creating revenue. Branding as a marketing management concept also became popular in higher education over the last year, since institutions are searching for ways to differentiate themselves in the highly competitive educational market. Thus, there is still a lack of theoretical models for higher education branding which would enable more comprehensive understanding of the HEI brand identity. On the contrary, student and academic mobility is nothing new in higher education as HEIs were always engaged in the exchange of knowledge and ideas to respond to the changes triggered by globalization. Therefore, there is a large amount of different studies on internationalization, and most of the authors see it as a response to the impacts of the globalization. However, the diverse definitions and different approaches to internationalization have made it quite complex, and many authors have tried to developed conceptual frameworks that would help to better understand it. One of the most important parts of internationalization are different student mobility programmes, among which summer programmes serve as the starting point in the development of exchange programmes, to maintain the balance of the exchange programmes and to generate additional revenue. Therefore, most of the universities are nowadays offering summer programmes, and the FELU is no exception.

The LSS programme has become one of the biggest summer schools in the Europe in the last few years and, consequently, one of the building blocks of the internationalization of the FELU. The programme was selected as the case study of our master's thesis as our main purpose was to gain an understanding of how (international) students decide on a particular summer programme and how certain types of decision-making factors influence their decision.

The empirical research showed that our sample was quite balanced in terms of gender, but quite heterogeneous in terms of cultural background, and that the majority of the surveyed respondents were undergraduate students. Our statistical analyses showed that the word-of-mouth presents the second most important source of information about a summer programme. the course is, as a decision-making factor for selecting a summer programme, more important than either the school brand or the country (destination). For the surveyed respondents, the course content (syllabus) has proved to be more important than the lecturer of the course. In addition, the promotion of the country as a tourism destination plays a certain role in the final decision for a summer school programme; but country is not among the most important decision-making factors. When it comes to tuition fee increases, the surveyed respondents are not very price-sensitive. The regression results showed that the responsiveness of the LSS programme organizers was the single most important determinant of the recommendation intent by respondents, followed by the importance of international networking, promotion of the destination, and importance of the hospitality package provision. On the basis of the obtained results, we have presented our recommendations for the IRO and the FELU management, and highlighted the limitations of our empirical research.

Despite the fact that the overall analysis showed that LSS programme organizers are successfully supporting the decision-making process of students, there is still room for improvement within certain areas. The obtained results will be of great assistance for the IRO, the main organizers of the LSS programme, considering the further improvement and development of the programme. In connection with this, the results will assist the FELU management in planning future strategies for its internationalization.

In the future, our analyses of the decision-making factors could be completed with a detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of the student satisfaction during and after the completion of the programme. This would create a broader image about the success of the programme as a whole. These kinds of research studies should be of strategic importance to the FELU since summer school students are potential future exchange or full-time students who develop certain expectations and opinions, not only about the summer school, but also about the FELU through their overall experience before, during and after the programme. Furthermore, these students are not only experiencing the university and the programme, but also the destination (country) and their positive experience can greatly influence the promotion of the destination to their families, friends and colleagues, which may consequently have a positive impact on the tourism development of the country. The word-of-mouth presents an important source of information and its effects, in both negative and positive way, should not be undermined.

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APPENDIXES

TABLE OF APPENDIXES

Appendix A: QUESTIONNAIRE

(LJUBLJANA) SUMMER SCHOOL CHOICE CRITERIA

INTRODUCTION

Dear students,

The LSS programme has become a very important and well established summer school over the years and the International Office at the Faculty of Economics is very keen on developing and improving the programme continuously.

As student feedback is very important for further programme development, we kindly ask you to fill in the following questionnaire which will take approximately 5-8 minutes and consists of 7 steps.

In case of any doubts, questions or comments, do not hesitate to contact us at: summer.school@ef.uni-lj.si

We thank you for your time and effort, *LSS team*

Q1 - GENERAL INFORMATION (Step 1)

1.) Which year(s) did you attend the LSS programme?
Multiple answers are possible

- ☐ 2012
- ☐ 2013
- ☐ 2014
- ☐ I will attend in 2015
- ☐ Other:

2.) At what age did you most recently apply for the LSS programme?

- ○ 18
- ○ 19
- ○ 20
- ○ 21
- ○ 22
- ○ 23
- ○ 24
- ○ 25
- ○ Other:

3.) I attended / I will attend LSS programme as a:
◌ Undergraduatestudent
◌ Master'sstudent
◌ Other (e.g.PhD):

Q2 - INFORMATION SEEKING PROCESS (Step 2)

4.) GainInfo - How did you gain information about the LSS programme?
Multiple answers are possible / Some of the questions have subquestions

☐ **1. Provided by the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana (please, specify in which way):**
☐ *---> 1.1. From administrative staff at the Faculty of Economics in Ljubljana (i.e. International office, student affairs' office etc.)*
☐ *---> 1.2. From professors/teachers at the Faculty of Economics in Ljubljana*
☐ *---> 1.3. Posters, brochures*
☐ *---> 1.4. Online/website*
☐ **2. Provided by home institution (please, specify in which way):**
☐ *---> 2.1. From administrative staff at my school (i.e. International office, student affairs' office etc.)*
☐ *---> 2.2. From professors/teachers at my school*
☐ *---> 2.3. Email (newsletter)*
☐ *---> 2.4. Posters, brochures*
☐ *---> 2.5. Online/website*
☐ **3. From colleagues / friends**
☐ **4. From previous participants who are not my close friends**
☐ **5. On specialized websites (please,specify which):**
☐ *---> 5.1. Study Portals*
☐ *---> 5.2. Summer Schools In Europe*
☐ *---> 5.3. UNICA Summer and Winter School Programmes (unicasummerschools.eu)*
☐ *---> 5.4. Other websites:*
☐ **6. Other**:

5.) Were you deciding between different summer programmes?
◌ No.
◌ Yes (please, state the Summer programmes you were also considering):

6.) How long did you spend searching for information before making your final choice?
◌ One day
◌ 2 to 6 days
◌ One week
◌ Two to three weeks
◌ One month

◌ Two to three months
◌ Half a year
◌ More than 6 months

7.) SocialMedi - Did you use social media networks for finding information about summer school programmes?
◌ Yes.
◌ No.

IF (1) SocialMedi = [YES]
8.) At what point did you use different types of social media networks to gain information regarding a specific summer programme?

	Information gathering	Evaluation of alternatives & comparisons	After acceptance	I would use it, but it was not available	I do not/did not use it
Facebook	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Twitter	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
LinkedIn	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Instagram	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
YouTube	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌

IF (2) SocialMedi = [YES]

9.) In what way were the information provided on social media network(s) useful to you?
Multiple answers are possible
☐ Finding information about a specific summer programme.
☐ Gaining insight about the programme as a whole.
☐ Finding unoffical/official opinions about the programme (e.g. from past participants).
☐ Getting in contact directly with the university/school.
☐ Getting in contact with other students.
☐ Checking the credentials of the course lecturers.
☐ Other:

Q3 - DECISION-MAKING PROCESS (Step 3)

10.) Please evaluate the importance of each factor within your decision-making process. If certain factors did not influence your final choice, please select option "0 - Did not influence".

	0 – Did not influence	1-Not important	2- Of Little Importance	3- Moderately Important	4-Important	5-Very important
Dates of the programme	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Duration of the programme	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
University/faculty rankings	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Faculty Accreditations (e.g.EQUIS, AACSB)	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Academic staff reputation	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Selection of courses	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Tuition fee	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
ECTS credits transferability	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Responsiveness in communication process	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Home institution's recommendation	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Optional social programme	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Provision of hospitality package	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Website design	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌

11.) Please evaluate the importance of each factor within your decision-making process. If certain factors did not influence your final choice, please select option "0 - Did not influence".

	0–Did not influence	1-Not important	2-Of Little Importance	3-Moderately Important	4-Important	5-Very important
Location (country & city)	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Safety of the country & city	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Cultural diversity of participants	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Future career prospects	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
International networking	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Language skills improvement	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Friend's /colleague's recommendation	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Ease of getting a visa	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌

2.) Please rank factors below according to importance/priority that influenced your final decision to participate at the LSS programme?

1= most important factor (#1 place), 5= least important factor (#5 place)

Course(content & title)	
Tuition fee	
Country	
City	
School	

13.) In what order, would you say, the specified factors below influenced your final decision of COURSE selection?

Course content (syllabus)	
Course title	
Course recognition (ECTS)	
Lecturer	

Q4 - DECISION-MAKING PROCESS (Step 4)

14.) I have chosen the course(s) at the LSS programme because:

	1–Strongly disagree	2-Disagree	3-Undecided	4-Agree	5–Strogly agree
The course content was interesting	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Interesting course title	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
My home institution does not offer this type of course	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
People from my school encouraged me to take such a course	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
I wanted to learn something new	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Of the possibility for recognizing the course (ECTS)	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
My friends/colleagues recommended it	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Of lecturers' background & expertise	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
I believe such a course will increase my employability	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌

15.) The courses offered at the LSS programme are, in comparison to regular courses offered at your home institution:

1 2 3 4 5

	1	2	3	4	5	
Less interesting	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	Much more interesting

16.) What are your response expectations when making an inquiry about summer programme via email?

◌ A detailed reply in a week
◌ A short reply in a week
◌ A detailed reply in three days
◌ A short reply in 24 hours
◌ A short reply in couple of hours

17.) Would you say the LSS programme organizers were responding effectively to your questions?

**By effective we mean fast and with all the necessary information regarding your inquiry*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not effectively at all	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	Very effectively

18.) How likely would you recommend the LSS programme to your friends/colleagues either as a past participant or as someone who is applying this year?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not likely at all	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	Extremely likely

Q5 - SLOVENIA AS A TOURISM DESTINATION (Step 5)

19.) Q6 - Will this be/was this your first visit to Slovenia, as a tourism destination?

◌ Yes.
◌ No.
◌ I am from Slovenia.

IF (3) Q6 = [YES or NO]

20.) How useful/interesting was the LSS website in terms of providing information about the destination?

0-Did not search for that information	1-Not useful/interesting	2-Less useful/interesting	3-Neither/nor useful/interesting	4-Partially useful/interesting	5-Very useful/interesting
◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌

IF (4) Q6 = [YES or NO]

21.) Did promotion of the destination influence your final decision to attend the LSS programme?

1 - Not at all	2 - Not really	3 - Neither/nor	4 - Partially yes	5 - Completely
◌	◌	◌	◌	◌

IF (5) Q6 = [YES or NO]

Q7 - PLEASE, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS, FOCUSING ON SLOVENIA AS A TOURISM DESTINATION.

IF (6) Q6 = [YES or NO]

22.) The following sources of information have been important in building my opinion about Slovenia as a tourism destination:

	1-Strongly disagree	2-Disagree	3-Undecided	4-Agree	5-Strongly agree
Friends, relatives	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Social media	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Books/movies/news	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Previous visit & experience	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌

IF (7) Q6 = [YES or NO]
23.) In my opinion, Slovenia offers:

	1-Strongly disagree	2-Disagree	3-Undecided	4-Agree	5-Strongly agree
Beautiful nature	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Beautiful mountains and lakes	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌

	1-Strongly disagree	2-Disagree	3-Undecided	4-Agree	5-Strongly agree
Lovely towns and cities	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Good nightlife and entertainment	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Friendly people	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Interesting historical attractions	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Good options to travel in Europe	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Value for money (e.g. affordable quality of life)	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌

Q8 – THE LSS PROGRAMME FEES (Step 6)

24.) Would you say that the LSS programme is good value for money?

1 - Not at all	2 - Not really	3 - Neither/nor	4 - Partially yes	5 - Completely
◌	◌	◌	◌	◌

25.) I would still decide to attend / attend the LSS programme if the TUITION FEE FOR 2 COURSES was higher by:

◌ 5%
◌ 10%
◌ 15%
◌ 20%
◌ 25%
◌ More than 25%
◌ I would not decide to attend / attend.

26.) I would still decide to take the HOSPITALITY PACKAGE if the price was higher by:

◌ 5%
◌ 10%
◌ 15%
◌ 20%
◌ More than 20%
◌ I would not take this option.
◌ I do not need this option as I am from Slovenia.

Q9 - DEMOGRAPHICS (Final step)

27.) Gender:

- Male
- Female

28.) Your age:

29.) Country (citizenship):

Appendix B: TESTING RESULTS OF H1

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Course (content & title)	4,0785	331	1,26725	,06965
	School	2,8550	331	1,34056	,07368
Pair 2	Course (content & title)	4,0785	331	1,26725	,06965
	Country	2,6375	331	1,31943	,07252

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Course (content & title) & School	331	-,040	,472
Pair 2	Course (content & title) & Country	331	-,525	,000

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Course (content & title) - School	1,22356	1,88089	,10338	1,02019	1,42694	11,835	330	,000
Pair 2	Course (content & title) - Country	1,44109	2,25872	,12415	1,19686	1,68531	11,608	330	,000

Appendix C: TESTING RESULTS OF H2

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Course content	3,1662	331	,90765	,04989
	Lecturer	1,6979	331	,91086	,05007

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Course content & Lecturer	331	-,163	,003

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Course content - Lecturer	1,46828	1,38653	,07621	1,31836	1,61820	19,266	330	,000

Appendix D: TESTING RESULTS OF H3

Tuition fee increase

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5% increase	72	12,3	23,0	23,0
	10% increase	78	13,3	24,9	47,9
	15% increase	29	5,0	9,3	57,2
	20% increase	19	3,2	6,1	63,3
	25% increase	12	2,1	3,8	67,1
	More than 25% increase	15	2,6	4,8	71,9
	Would not attend	88	15,0	28,1	100,0
	Total	313	53,5	100,0	
Missing	-5,00	170	29,1		
	-3,00	101	17,3		
	-1,00	1	,2		
	Total	272	46,5		
Total		585	100,0		

Hospitality fee increase

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5% increase	81	13,8	26,0	26,0
	10% increase	70	12,0	22,4	48,4
	15% increase	20	3,4	6,4	54,8
	20% increase	19	3,2	6,1	60,9
	More than 20% increase	11	1,9	3,5	64,4
	Would not take this option	84	14,4	26,9	91,3
	Live in SLO and do not need this option	27	4,6	8,7	100,0
	Total	312	53,3	100,0	
Missing	-5,00	170	29,1		
	-3,00	101	17,3		
	-1,00	2	,3		
	Total	273	46,7		
Total		585	100,0		

Appendix E: TESTING RESULTS OF H4

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Did promotion of the destination influence your final decision to attend LSS?	291	3,4674	1,08348	,06351

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Did promotion of the destination influence your final decision to attend LSS?	7,358	290	,000	,46735	,3423	,5924

Appendix F: TESTING RESULTS OF H5

Home institution info

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	202	34,5	51,5	51,5
	Yes	190	32,5	48,5	100,0
	Total	392	67,0	100,0	
Missing	-5,00	170	29,1		
	-3,00	23	3,9		
	Total	193	33,0		
Total		585	100,0		

Info from colleagues & friends

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	224	38,3	57,1	57,1
	Yes	168	28,7	42,9	100,0
	Total	392	67,0	100,0	
Missing	-5,00	170	29,1		
	-3,00	23	3,9		
	Total	193	33,0		
Total		585	100,0		

FELU provided info

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	332	56,8	84,7	84,7
	Yes	60	10,3	15,3	100,0
	Total	392	67,0	100,0	
Missing	-5,00	170	29,1		
	-3,00	23	3,9		
	Total	193	33,0		
Total		585	100,0		

Info from previous non-friend participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	345	59,0	88,0	88,0
	Yes	47	8,0	12,0	100,0
	Total	392	67,0	100,0	
Missing	-5,00	170	29,1		
	-3,00	23	3,9		
	Total	193	33,0		
Total		585	100,0		

Info from specialized websites

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	373	63,8	95,2	95,2
	Yes	19	3,2	4,8	100,0
	Total	392	67,0	100,0	
Missing	-5,00	170	29,1		
	-3,00	23	3,9		
	Total	193	33,0		
Total		585	100,0		

Appendix G: RESULTS OF OLS REGRESSION

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	,641[a]	,411	,321	1,23458	,411	4,561	38	248	,000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Promo of destination influence choice, Response expectations when making an inquiry about summer programme via email, Time for info search, DF_ECTS transferability, CC_My home institution does not offer this type of course, DF_Dates of the programme, LSS team response effectiveness, Age of application, CC_The course content was interesting, CC_People from my school encouraged me to take such a course, Use of social media, DF_Improvement of language skills, DF_Website design, DF_Selection of courses, CC_I wanted to learn something new, DF_Location (country), DF_University / faculty rankings, DF_Tuition fee, CC_Interesting course title, Usefulness of the LSS website for destination, Undergraduate_graduate, CC_Lecturers' background & expertise, DF_Cultural diversity of participants, DF_Recommendation of home institution, CC_Increased employability, DF_Ease of getting visa, DF_Provision of hospitality package, DF_Optional social program, DF_Duration of the programme, DF_Accreditations, DF_Future career prospects, CC_Possibility for recognizing the course (ECTS), DF_Responsiveness in communication process, DF_Recommendation of friends & colleagues, DF_International networking, DF_Safety of country/city, DF_Academic staff reputation, CC_My friends/colleagues recommended it

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	264,153	38	6,951	4,561	,000[b]
	Residual	377,996	248	1,524		
	Total	642,150	286			

a. Dependent Variable: Recommendation intent

b. Predictors: (Constant), Promo of destination influence choice, Response expectations when making an inquiry about summer programme via email, Time for info search, DF_ECTS transferability, CC_My home institution does not offer this type of course, DF_Dates of the programme, LSS team response effectiveness, Age of application, CC_The course content was interesting, CC_People from my school encouraged me to take such a course, Use of social media, DF_Improvement of language skills, DF_Website design, DF_Selection of courses, CC_I wanted to learn something new, DF_Location (country), DF_University / faculty rankings, DF_Tuition fee, CC_Interesting course title, Usefulness of the LSS website for destination, Undergraduate_graduate, CC_Lecturers' background & expertise, DF_Cultural diversity of participants, DF_Recommendation of home institution, CC_Increased employability, DF_Ease of getting visa, DF_Provision of hospitality package, DF_Optional social program, DF_Duration of the programme, DF_Accreditations, DF_Future career prospects, CC_Possibility for recognizing the course (ECTS), DF_Responsiveness in communication process, DF_Recommendation of friends & colleagues, DF_International networking, DF_Safety of country/city, DF_Academic staff reputation, CC_My friends/colleagues recommended it

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2,569	,963		2,668	,008		
	Age of application	,047	,042	,070	1,110	,268	,605	1,652
	Undergraduate_graduate	,219	,207	,066	1,055	,292	,611	1,636
	Time for info search	-,077	,052	-,077	-1,484	,139	,872	1,147
	Use of social media	-,123	,165	-,041	-,745	,457	,792	1,263
	DF_Dates of the programme	-,036	,071	-,035	-,513	,609	,522	1,915
	DF_Duration of the programme	-,012	,085	-,010	-,147	,883	,479	2,087
	DF_University / faculty rankings	-,117	,087	-,108	-1,350	,178	,367	2,721
	DF_Accreditations	-,014	,076	-,014	-,180	,858	,419	2,387
	DF_Academic staff reputation	,107	,096	,099	1,116	,266	,299	3,341
	DF_Selection of courses	,122	,100	,074	1,219	,224	,647	1,546
	DF_Tuition fee	-,110	,078	-,088	-1,405	,161	,600	1,666
	DF_ECTS transferability	,010	,085	,010	,122	,903	,372	2,687
	DF_Responsiveness in communication process	-,086	,085	-,073	-1,001	,318	,447	2,238
	DF_Recommendation of home institution	-,069	,068	-,071	-1,012	,313	,487	2,053
	DF_Optional social program	,061	,074	,058	,824	,411	,474	2,111
	DF_Provision of hospitality package	,236	,071	,229	3,323	,001	,498	2,008
	DF_Website design	-,148	,065	-,138	-2,278	,024	,648	1,544
	DF_Location (country)	,004	,079	,004	,051	,959	,510	1,962
	DF_Safety of country/city	,038	,084	,035	,449	,654	,399	2,506
	DF_Cultural diversity of participants	-,070	,076	-,062	-,914	,361	,508	1,968
	DF_Future career prospects	-,041	,082	-,038	-,504	,615	,412	2,428
	DF_International networking	,294	,103	,218	2,844	,005	,402	2,486
	DF_Improvement of language skills	-,133	,076	-,127	-1,748	,082	,448	2,233
	DF_Recommendation of friends & colleagues	,036	,071	,039	,505	,614	,395	2,531
	DF_Ease of getting visa	,081	,053	,104	1,530	,127	,513	1,949
	CC_The course content was interesting	,025	,133	,012	,190	,850	,615	1,626
	CC_Interesting course title	-,042	,117	-,021	-,356	,723	,677	1,477
	CC_My home institution does not offer this type of course	-,020	,062	-,018	-,329	,743	,805	1,243
	CC_People from my school encouraged me to take such a course	-,148	,094	-,128	-1,583	,115	,361	2,768
	CC_I wanted to learn something new	,046	,113	,025	,403	,687	,606	1,649
	CC_Possibility for recognizing the course (ECTS)	,070	,103	,049	,679	,498	,456	2,194
	CC_My friends/colleagues recommended it	,078	,107	,067	,729	,467	,280	3,575
	CC_Lecturers' background & expertise	,062	,096	,043	,650	,516	,534	1,871
	CC_Increased employability	-,072	,100	-,047	-,718	,473	,544	1,837
	Response expectations when making an inquiry about summer programme via email	,001	,058	,001	,020	,984	,913	1,095
	LSS team response effectiveness	,801	,098	,453	8,208	,000	,778	1,286
	Usefulness of the LSS website for destination	,101	,070	,089	1,442	,151	,628	1,591
	Promo of destination influence choice	,286	,089	,207	3,221	,001	,577	1,734

a. Dependent Variable: Recommendation intent