# Need identification for educational services in Albania

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**Abstract**

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This commissioned research-based thesis aimed at identifying the need for educational services in Albania. The results produced herein were accomplished through secondary and primary research. Secondary research was collected from a variety of sources published by international government agencies, and ministries and newspaper agencies in the country researched. These publications consisted of online reports, press releases, and news articles which described the need for educational services in Albania, and the action plans set to increase human capital capacity in the country. For the primary data collection, quantitative methods were used and data was collected through a structured online questionnaire. The researcher surveyed people from 13 higher educational institutions and businesses and 102 students in Albania.

Furthermore, this academic thesis includes theoretical, and empirical parts. The theoretical part covers concepts that support the research process and research methods. The empirical part applies methodologies and explains the procedures followed for the data collection.

Information collected from the secondary and primary research was analysed and listed in this report. The findings were interpreted to fulfil the needs arising from the research problem. The commissioning company can use the results produced herein as business intelligence or to determine whether further research is needed.

The research has revealed Albania's investment plans to develop the education system, the number of teachers who will undergo intensive training, the ICT infrastructure development plans, and the way that HEIs and businesses would prefer their employee training services, and students' preferred study method as well.

As recommendations for the commissioning company, we suggest further research to identify the training programmes needed in Albania. Actively seek partnerships with the Albanian government. Offer online consultation and employee training programmes to HEIs and businesses, and offer online degrees programmes to students as well. Establish brand identity through partnerships with Albanian and/or foreign universities in Albania.

| Keywords |
|---|
| Educational services. Need identification. Business intelligence. Customer value. |

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## List of abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| **HEIs:** | Higher Educational Institutions |
| **UAS:** | University of Applied Sciences |
| **INSTAT:** | Instituti i statistikave (Institute of Statistics of Albania) |
| **CIA:** | Central Intelligence of America |
| **RP:** | Research Problem |
| **RQ:** | Research Question |
| **IQ:** | Investigative Question |
| **EUR:** | Euro |
| **ICT:** | Information Communications Technology |
| **EU:** | European Union |
| **GDP:** | Gross Domestic Product |
| **ERP:** | Economic Reform Programs |
| **IPA:** | Instrument for Pre-Accession |
| **II:** | Roman numeral for number two |
| **WBC-RTI.INFO:** | Western Balkan Countries Research Technology Information |
| **SEETO:** | South East Europe Transport Observatory |
| **wiiw:** | Wiener Institut für Internationale Wirtschaftsvergleiche (Vienna Institute for International Economic) |
| **E-Learning:** | Electronic Learning |
| **i.e:** | id est |
| **HH:** | Haaga Helia |
| **e.g:** | exempli grata |

# 1    Introduction

The objective of this research-based thesis is to investigate the need for educational services in Albania. The results produced hereby, will be accomplished through secondary research, face-to-face interviews, and online survey with Higher Educational Institutions (hereinafter referred to as; HEIs), businesses (may be referred to as; organization, firm or company) and students in Albania.

The author will conduct secondary and primary research. Secondary research will be conducted for the purpose of identifying development plans in the field of education in the research country. Whereas, primary research will be conducted to identify the level of interest for partnership possibilities with HEIs and businesses, and to identify the level of interest for students in our commissioning company's offerings, as well as to understand the way, shape and/or the education services are desired in Albania by the aforementioned.

In this chapter, the author will define the background of the thesis topic, provide a thorough demarcation on the thesis topic, introduce the commissioning company, and highlight how the results will be beneficial to the case company, as well as the benefit for the author and the research country.

## 1.1 Background

Education is one of the most significant mechanisms for reducing poverty and inequity, as well as one of the core props for economic development. Students pay high prices for their education, in hopes that it will guarantee a better future. Governments and companies invest astonishing amounts of money to develop human capital, so they can improve living standards, and gain a competitive edge in global markets.

Albania as a developing country needs education services more than ever. According to the European Commission, Albania has made some progress in the field of education and culture. However, in order to develop the country's human capital, Albania needs to improve existing schools' facilities, and more importantly, it needs advanced teacher training services to enhance teachers' competences. (ec.europa.eu 2015.)

Albania's education system may not be at the wanted level. However, the country is at the turning point, and indications show that it has realized that developing human capital is the way forward. In addition to this, Albania's economy has grown in five consecutive years, and statistics show that it will steadfastly continue to grow in the upcoming years as well. According to INSTAT – National Statistics Institute of Albania (2016), Albania enjoyed a 2.15 % economic growth in 2015, and an estimated growth of about 3.4% is expected for 2016. As e results of this, the country is undergoing a major makeover, Ministria e Arsimit dhe Sportit – Ministry of Education and Sports states that among other investments, it will invest about 100 million Euros into digitalizing the country's education system, and improve schools' conditions. Moreover, Ministria e Arsimit dhe Sportit further states that is has initiated a series of teacher training programmes to strengthen the competences of teachers and schools' administration staff. (Ministria e Arsimit dhe Sportit 2016.)

## 1.2   Thesis Objective

The objective of this thesis is to identify the need for educational services from HEIs, business, and students in Albania, as well as understand the preferred way, shape and/or form that the educational services are desired.

### RP - Research problem

Need identification for educational services in Albania.

### IQ - Investigative questions

To identify the education system development plans and investments

To understand in what way, shape and/or form educational services are preferred in Albania

### Research country

Albania

## 1.3   Demarcation

The secondary and primary research will focus on investigating the need for educational services for HEIs, businesses, and students. The main focus will be on HEIs, businesses, and students in Tirana. However, some other Albanian big cities will be given some consideration. People still in primary and secondary schools will be excluded from the research, because data may be considered irrelevant to this research need. Furthermore, some statistics and market insight of neighbouring countries may be listed. Though, full prioritization will be given to Albania. Moreover, as this thesis is commissioned, the research will be limited to the specific requirements of the commissioning company.

## 1.4    Anticipated benefits

The outcome produced by this thesis will benefit five stakeholders. These stakeholders, as well as their benefits, are described in the next three paragraphs.

One of the main benefits for the commissioning company will be the identification of potential partnership possibilities with the Albanian government, HEIs, organizations, as well as the identification the interest level in for the degree programs (offered by the commissioning company) from students' perspective. Another benefit for the commissioning company will be the identification of the preferred way, shape and/or form that the educational services are desired in Albania. This need identification may potentially help the commissioning company to expand internationally, grow bigger as an educational institution with a diversified business portfolio and potentially increase its profit.

The second, third and fourth stakeholders who will benefit from the outcome of this thesis are; HEIs, organizations, and students in Albania. Their core benefit will be the fact that there is a potential UAS partner from a country with a world-renowned education system, which is willing to offer access to advanced expertise in teacher and employee training programs, state-of-the-art facilities and high-quality educational services.

The fifth stakeholder who will benefit from the outcome of this thesis is the author of this thesis. The materials studied, the research and the theories used in this thesis will enable the author to have a strong understanding of how the education industry works. Additionally, the author will further his knowledge on how to establish business relations with potential partners in the education industry. Furthermore, it will strengthen the author's professional background in business administration, data collection and data analysis, designing, planning and implementing marketing strategies.

## 1.5    Key concept

Education is perceived as a sustainable long-term investment which broadens the individual's aptitude and expertise, improves the standard of living, and it is a strong base for infrastructure development, health improvement, scientific detections, societal conduct and commercial growth. Therefore, as we seek answers to our thesis topic, we could establish how the commissioning company can attribute to Albania's human capital development, and in doing so, the commissioning company can potentially grow bigger and increase its profit.

## 1.6 Commissioning company introduction

This thesis is commissioned by Haaga-Helia - University of Applied Science (UAS). Haaga-Helia is one of Finland's largest business polytechnics ("ammattikorkeakoulu" in Finnish). Haaga-Helia is part of the Finnish public educational system. However, it is privately run but steered and co-funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. The school's primary facilities are in Pasila, Helsinki, and it has premises in Haaga, Malmi, and Vallila (all three locations are in Helsinki), as well as in Porvoo and Vierumäki. Haaga-Helia accommodates annually approximately 10 500 students and it employs about 700 employees. (Haaga-helia.fi 2015.)

Haaga-Helia's fields of education are business, hotel, restaurant and tourism management, information technology, journalism, management assistant training, sports management, and vocational teacher education. Haaga-Helia offers students a versatile choice of studies, great opportunities for specialization, and high-quality education in Finnish and English. (Haaga-helia.fi 2015.)

### 1.6.1 Haaga-Helia's export services

Haaga-Helia states that in addition to offering a variety of degree programmes and specialization track to its current students, it also exports education services abroad. Haaga-Helia's export portfolio consists of the following:

1. Tailored training programmes and modules.
2. Vocational teacher training.
3. Executive development programmes (eMBA).
4. Top-up/Joint degrees.
5. Dual degree programmes.
6. Professional developments programmes (tailored for personnel).
7. Development projects in cooperation with local companies and institutions.
8. Business consultation in fields of expertise.
9. Research.
10. Short courses.

(Haaga-Helia 2015. Export of education in Haaga-Helia.pdf.)

### 1.6.2  Haaga-Helia's vision

Haaga-Helia has actively exported education service since 2009, and it plans to open 2-4 units abroad by 2018. As primary target countries, it considers countries with high purchasing power such as; China and Gulf Region. Countries with ongoing education reform; Chile, Brazil, Malaysia, Russia and Ukraine. Countries where the possibility of tuition fees exist; Malaysia. And selective developing countries: Estonia, Albania, Poland and South Africa. (Export of education in Haaga-Helia. 2015.)

**Haaga-Helia's vision by the year 2018:**
1. 2-3 units abroad
2. Degree programme cooperation with tuition fees in 2-4 countries
3. Degree programmes in Finland with tuition fees
4. Short courses offerings

**Haaga-Helia's target group**
1. **B2C markets** – offerings to the actual students and student groups
2. **B2B markets** – offerings to the universities, UASs, polytechnics, colleges, schools, partners, etc.
3. **B2G markets** – offerings to governmental bodies, ministries, third parties, etc.

(Haaga-Helia 2015. Export of education in Haaga-Helia.pdf.)

## 1.7   Research Country Introduction

Albania is a small country located in South-Eastern Europe, bordering with Italy to the West. Greece to the South, Macedonia to the East, and Montenegro and Kosovo to the North. According to CIA's The World Factbook (2015) it has a population of 3,029,278, with a median age of 32 years old. The World Bank (2015) classifies Albania is a developing country with upper middle income.

As illustrated in Table 1, according to INSTAT (2015) there were over 173 thousand registered students in the country in the academic year of 2013/14, who study in various fields. Statistics show that the number of enrolled students has increased each year reaching a 28.8% increase in enrolled students from 2010/11 to 2013/14.

Table 1. Enrolled students by year in Albania. (Instituti i Statistikave 2015)

|  | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 60 159 | 70 451 | 76 202 | 75 527 |
| Female | 74 718 | 88 512 | 96 359 | 98 292 |
| **Total** | **134 877** | **158 963** | **172 561** | **173 819** |

As we can see in Table 1, the number of students has increased by 28.87% in only four years. One factor explaining this increase can be the fact that Albania has a young population. According to CIA's The World Factbook (2015), close to 60% of Albania's population is between the ages of 15-54. This fact may represent a good opportunity for Haaga-Helia to market its services in Albania. Additionally, the general perception in Albania about Finland's education is that Finland's education is good.

## 1.8 Albania's education administration and education structure

According to UNESCO, the education structure in Albania, as well as the education policies, are decided by the Albanian government and the Parliament. They formulate and pass laws and other regulations and execute other activities in the field of education as envisaged by the law. (UNESCO World Data on Education 2015.)

As illustrated in Figure 1, Albania's education structure starts with preschools, which are nurseries and kindergartens meant for the age of 0 to 6. A primary school in Albania is nine years, and it is compulsory for everyone. After nine years of compulsory studies, students can choose to go to secondary, vocational or art schools. Secondary schools offer a general education that is a four-year study programme, but it doesn't lead to any specific specialization. Vocational schools on the other hand offer specific specialization programmes and art school are meant for people with certain competencies. Lastly, comes the Higher education, which is university studies, followed by post-graduate and doctoral studies.
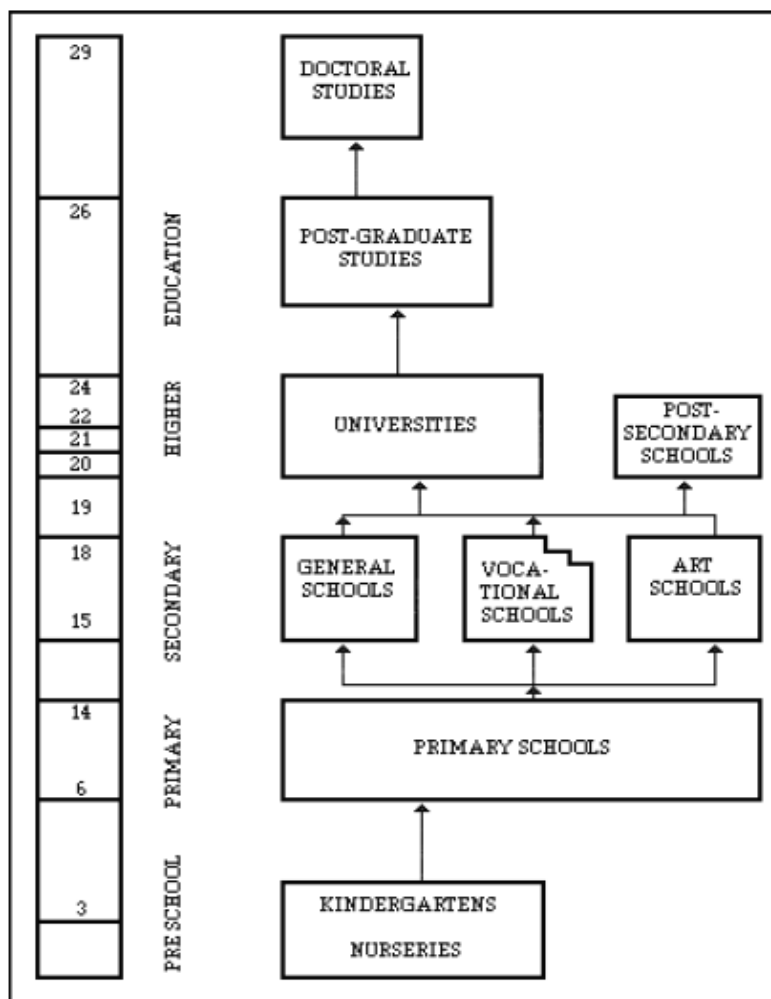


Figure 1. Structure of education in Albania. (UNESCO 2015)

## 2   Theoretical framework

Preliminary studies indicate that the need for development of Albania's new curricula, facilities' improvement and teacher training in Albania is increasing. Additionally, the number of students studying in Albania has increased by 28.8% from 2011 to 2014, and this number is expected to grow in the upcoming years. Further, the higher education in Albania is tuition based for which a portion of this is compensated by the Government. So, these indications have led us to seek answers to our research topic.

Therefore, we turn to literature studies to give us an overview of the need identification philosophies, research process, and research methods. The author of this thesis will study theories from Principles of marketing 2012, 14th Edition, written by Philip Kotler & Gary Armstrong. Research Methods in Business Studies 2010, 4th Edition written by Ghauri Pervez & Kjell Grønhaug. Research Methods for Business Students 2012, 6th Edition written by Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis & Adrian Thornhill. Research Methods in Education 2011, 7th Edition, written by Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion & Keith Morrison. As well as other various books, journals and articles. The study outcome will be used to support need identification philosophies, the research process, and data collection methods and analysis which will be chosen for this study.

### 2.1   Need identification

The process of identifying customer needs can be extensive and challenging, but when it is done with customers in mind and executed correctly, it can be rewarding. In many cases, customers themselves don't know what it is that they need, or is it even possible. So, the question is: "why do we need to identify customer needs?" Kotler & Armstrong state that we identify customer needs to capture value from customers. Capturing value from customers is the act of fulfilling customer demands through market offerings. In doing so, can potentially lead to organizational and profit growth. Therefore, it is important for companies to monitor markets development, and constantly conduct market research to identify existing or latent customer needs. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 6.)

According to Simpson W. A. – a Technical Analyst at Cogo Labs, customer needs identification is the process of determining what and how a customer wants a product or a service to perform. Simpson W. A. further states that customer needs identification has two major goals: to keep the product/service focused on customer needs, and to identify not just the explicit needs of the customer, but also the hidden needs. (Anders Simpson-Wolf 2015.)

Regardless of what country or society people live in, it is apparent that everybody has needs. However, we also should understand that there are different customer needs categories, and they differ from country to country, or even regionally within a country, and influence the purchasing decision.

"Customer need are basic physical needs, social needs and individual needs" (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 6). Basic physical needs are for; food, clothing, warmth, and safety. Social needs take the form of wanting to belong somewhere and seek affection. People's individual needs are for; knowledge and self-expression. Whereas, wants are shaped by a culture or by personality. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 6.)

As noted in the first paragraphs this sub-chapter, in order for companies to be successful they need to constantly monitor markets development, and understand what customers want. While we established why we need to identify customer needs the question still remains "how do we identify customer needs?" Kotler & Armstrong suggest that in addition to marketing intelligence information, companies must conduct formal market research to identify customer needs (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 103).

Market research refers to secondary or primary data collected through observation, survey, and experiment. Secondary data is defined as information which may have been collected for another purpose, whereas primary data is information collected for a specific purpose. Organizations can interpret and analyse the data collected from market research to draw conclusions about marketing strategies. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 122.)

> *Market research is the systematic design, collection, analysis, and reporting of data relevant to a specific marketing situation facing an organization. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 103)*

Additionally, Kotler & Armstrong state that there are two research instrument choices. In research, data can be collected through questionnaires or mechanical devices. Questionnaire seems to be the most used instrument, and it can be completed in person, by telephone, e-mail or online. Whereas, mechanical instruments are used to monitor customer behaviour without questions asked. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 109 & 117.)

Similarly, Ghauri & Grønhaug state that primary data is information that is relevant for the research and is collected specifically to answer given research questions. Further, primary data normally includes observations, experiments, surveys (questionnaires) and interviews. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010, 99.)

One of the main advantages of primary data is that it is collected for a particular issue. Primary data is perceived as a suitable way for providing consistent results to the research objective. However, as a disadvantage to collecting primary data is the timing. It takes quite a long time to secure interviews with decision makers, as they tend to be busy and it costs quite a lot of money to travel to their sites for the interviews. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010, 99-100.)

It may be so that for a particular problem, either primary or secondary data can provide the answers. However, according to Ghauri & Grønhaug, firms should conduct both. Secondary data is very useful, though it needs to be reviewed carefully as the research may have been conducted for a different purpose. Secondary data can be, books, newspapers online publications (articles, statistics, and reports). (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010, 90 & 91.)

The benefit to collecting secondary data is that it is quite affordable or in some cases free, and it is quite easy to get. Usually, data published by most international organizations and governments can be high quality and reliable as they utilize experts to gather and compile the data. However, there are also disadvantages to secondary data. One disadvantage is the data relevance, as it might have been collected for a different study with a different objective. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010, 94 – 96.)

When conducting market research, it is important to understand the research philosophies. According to Ghauri & Grønhaug, in research, two common research philosophies are inductive and deductive. Inductive is the process of drawing conclusions from observations to finding to theory. Whereas, in inductive philosophy we come to conclusions based on logical reasoning. We use existing information to draw conclusions, and the research results can be accepted or rejected. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010, 15.)

A similar explanation for the research philosophy is given by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012, 161) who state that research approach is usually associated with a deductive approach, where the focus is on using data to test theories.

## 2.2 Research process & design

Customer needs identification requires careful planning, and it requires the collaboration of various departments and competent people. As illustrated in Figure 2, Kotler & Armstrong state that market research process generally starts with an organization defining the research problem and the research objective. Once an organization knows what it needs to research, it should focus on developing a research plan for the collection of data, followed by implementation of the research plan, and collect data for analysis purposes. Collected data doesn't have much value before it is analysed or interpreted. In order to draw conclusions, and make decisions, companies should analyse, interpret, and report the research findings. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 103 & 122.)



Figure 2. Market research process. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 103)

A quite similar to Kotler's & Armstrong's research approach is suggested by Ghauri & Grønhaug, illustrated in Figure 3, who state that in addition to the systematic process, information is collected regularly. However, it can be modified or changed over time. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010, 29.)
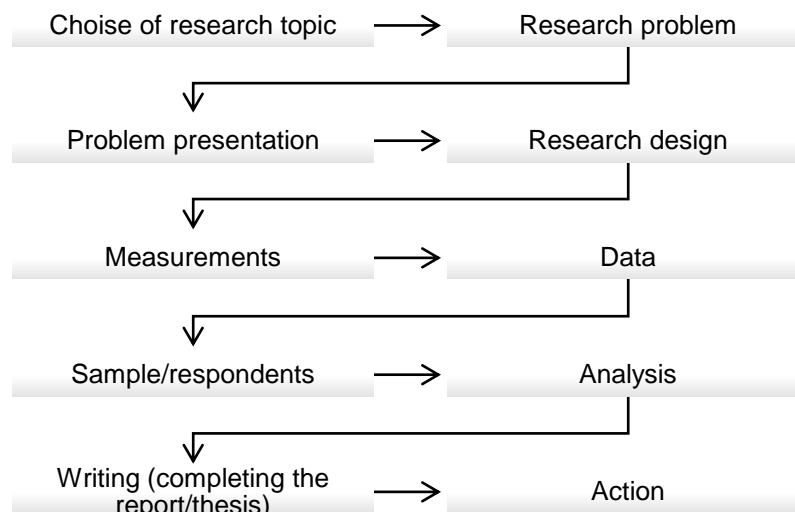


Figure 3. Research process

Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill state that the research process is a multiple-stage process that must be followed. Furthermore, they also suggest that the number of stages varies, however, they usually include formulating and clarifying the topic, reviewing the literature, designing the research, collecting data, analysing data and writing up. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012, 12.)

Understanding the research design, and research types are quite important. As noted in the previous paragraphs of this chapter, the research process is the framework that guides us through the steps to be taken from defining the research problem to reporting the findings. Whereas, research design according to Ghauri & Grønhaug, refers to the overall strategy to get the information we need. The research design is an important element to data collection as it is the definition of the research plan and the timeframe for the data collection and analysis. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010, 54.)

Furthermore, Ghauri & Grønhaug state that the research design reveals the type of research as well as the priority for the researcher. Research types can be exploratory, descriptive or casual. Exploratory research is unstructured research. The main aim of this research type is to approach the problem from a flexible viewpoint. In descriptive research, the problem is well structured and understood. For this research type researcher can use specific, close-ended and open-ended questions. And finally, the casual research main task is to isolate the cause and tell whether or not to what extent the cause results in effect. Moreover, Ghauri & Grønhaug state that sometimes it is stated that structured quantitative research may be more suitable methods as it is designed to collect data on from specific groups of people for a specific topic. However, in their view, this method is not only suitable because of this fact. They state that better suited research method is the type of data collected which would be more consistent and applicable to the research topic. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010, 54 -57 & 104.)

A similar research design is suggested by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill who state that research design is the general plan where data collection proposal explains the sources used to collect the data and defines the timeframe for the data collection and analysis. There are a lot of research theories designed for various research purposes. However, companies should select a process that best fits their research topic. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012, 159 – 160.)

## 2.4    Research method and data analysis

In addition to understanding the research philosophies and research process, organisations also should understand the research methods. More importantly, an organization should distinguish whether qualitative or quantitative research is needed, followed by the definition of the data collection methods.

Literature suggests that organizations need to determine whether qualitative or quantitative research will answer their problem.  "Normally, the basic distinction between quantitative and qualitative research is that quantitative researchers employ measures and qualitative researchers do not" (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010, 104). Basically, the difference between qualitative and qualitative methods and approach is not just a question of quantification, but also a reflection of different perspectives on knowledge and research objectives. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010, 104.)

Quantitative methods usually is a process oriented designed to generalize by comparison of properties and contexts of individual organism. This approach emphasizes on exploring, and focuses on understanding respondents' viewpoints. In this method, we use interpretation and rational approach. Whereas, quantitative methods are results oriented methods, emphasizing on testing and verification of hypothesis. The main focus are facts or reasons, it uses a logical and critical approach, and in this method, controlled measures are used.  (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010, 104 & 105.)

Ghauri & Grønhaug state that data collection methods refer to the techniques used to collect data. This is basically the research process conceptualization. In other words, it is the overall process of defining the type of data to be collected, and how to collect the data. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010, 54 & 70.)

As illustrated in Figure 4, Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill state that the collection method depends on the research topic. Additionally, they further state that the questionnaire is one of the most used data collection form. Because respondents are asked the same set of questions. This approach provides an efficient way of collecting data prior to quantitative analysis. Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012, 14 & 417.)

| Data collection method | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sampling | Secondary data | Observation | Semi-strustured in-depth and group interviews | Questionnaires |
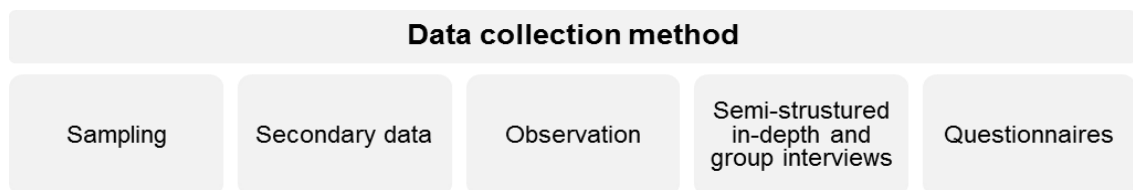
Figure 4. Data collection method. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012)

As Figure 5 below demonstrates, according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, the design of the questionnaire differs according to how it is delivered, returned or collected, and the amount of contact with respondents (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012, 419 & 420).
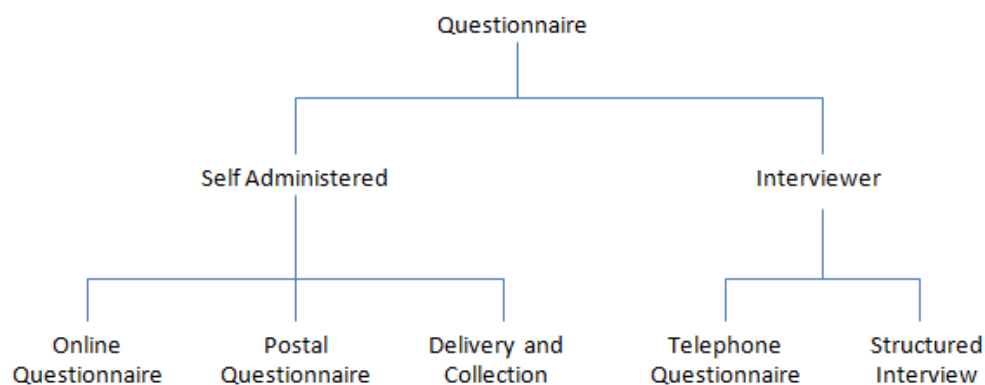
Figure 5. Research method. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012)

The method suggested by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill can be effective data collection method, and to some extent, we see this method used almost every day in our lives. However, this method can also present some issues. Particularly the semi-structured self-administered questionnaire as the respondents may not fully understand the questions however, still input their answers for the sake of filling the questionnaire, respondents may not have the time to complete the questionnaire or the respondents may be illiterate but still fill out the questionnaire as they don't want to come across as such. To avoid such scenario, researcher should carefully screen the respondents, construct the questionnaire in a descriptive way so the respondents can comprehend what it is asked of them, allow enough time to respond, send reminder to respondents to encourage them to complete the questionnaire because they may forget, and if possible avoid sensitive data collection. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012, 419 & 420.)

Ghauri & Grønhaug recommend that firms should collect secondary as well as primary data, and additionally note that in order to produce relevant results to the research objective, quantitative data may be better suited. This type of data is collected from specific groups, and it would be more consistent and applicable to the research topic. Ghauri & Grønhaug (2010, 104.)

An effective method for data collection, particularly in education can be as illustrated in Figure 6. Cohen, Minion & Morrison, among other data collection methods, suggest what they call "*snowball sampling*". The snowball concept refers to the researcher identifying and contacting a small group of people who fulfill the characteristics of the research. These people can be used as contact links to put the researcher in touch with other people who qualify for the inclusion. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011, 160.)
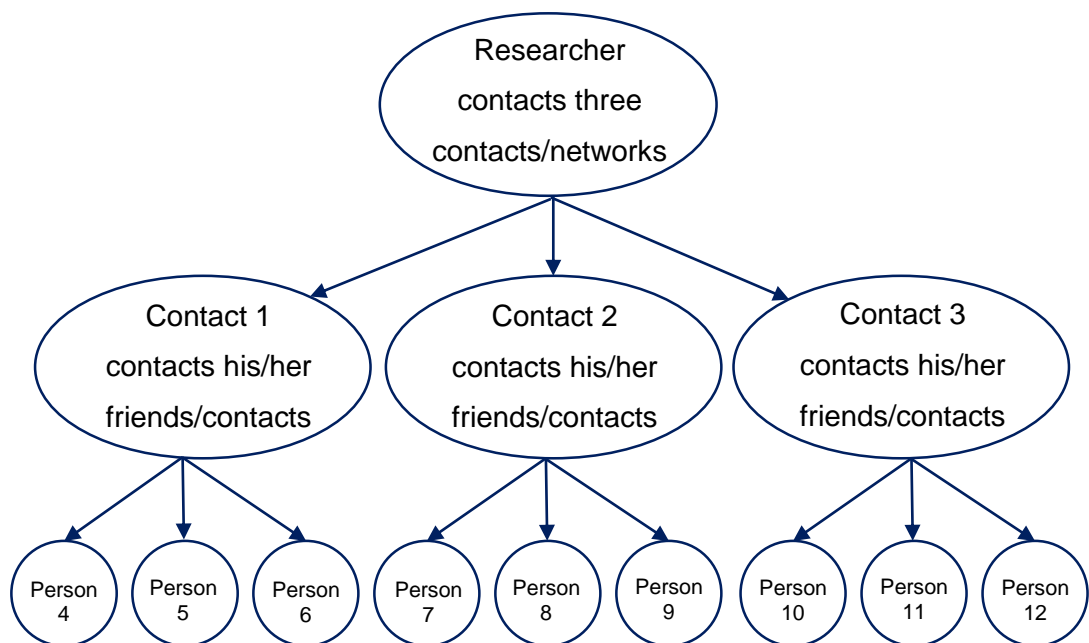
Figure 6. Snowball sampling. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011, 160)

While the snowball sampling method can be an effective method for data collection, this method can also represent some issues. Since the respondents may be connected and know each other, it may be that the responses are biased or the respondents' answers in the manner that the answers are the Researcher's desired results. However, the nature of this issue can be avoided by carefully selecting the respondents and reminding them the purpose of the research and the impact that the final results may have. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011, 160.)

Data collection processes, particularly when using the online option, should be monitored, to understand whether or not we get enough respondents to answer our questionnaire. Once we know that enough responses have been collected, the data analysis process can start.

Usually prior to data analysis, we need to edit the information collected to give it meaning. Editing refers to the questionnaire or observation inspection, coding, and correction - if necessary. Editing the data collected can also help us identify conflicting information, and determined the respondents' seriousness level in their answers in such case we can discard information that we see "not fit" for the research problem. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2012, 150.)

The process of data analysis requires careful attention, especially when using interpretive methods. According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, qualitative research is related to interpretive philosophy. Information that can't be coded and can't be given a value, are analysed using the interpretive method. Such information can be; interviews, images, videos, etc. Whereas, quantitative method is generally associated with positivism, and it is structured data collection technique used for statistical data analysis. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012, 161 & 162.)

For statistical analysis, we can utilize computers and available software designed for this purpose. There is a variety of software available, and no single software can be categorized as the best one. Data analysts can choice what computer and software type they see as a better tool for them (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2012, 163 & 164).

## 2.5 Concept theory

As illustrated in Figure 7 the research process starts with defining the problem and the objectives. Then, we need to determine whether secondary or primary data is needed for the research or both. If secondary research is conducted, data needs to be reviewed to determine the relevance to the research problem, then we need to analyze or interpreted the data, and report the findings. If the research requires primary data, we need to determine whether to conduct qualitative or quantitative research. Then, we need to decide whether data is collected by questionnaire or interview. Next step would be to decide whether to use structured, semi-structured or unstructured methods. Once we are done with the research planning, we can then determine the data collection method. For data collection method, we need to determine whether to conduct face-to-face interviews, online survey, e-mail or send the questionnaire by mail. Once data is collected, we should focus on analyzing the data using statistical or interpretive methods, and finally report the findings.
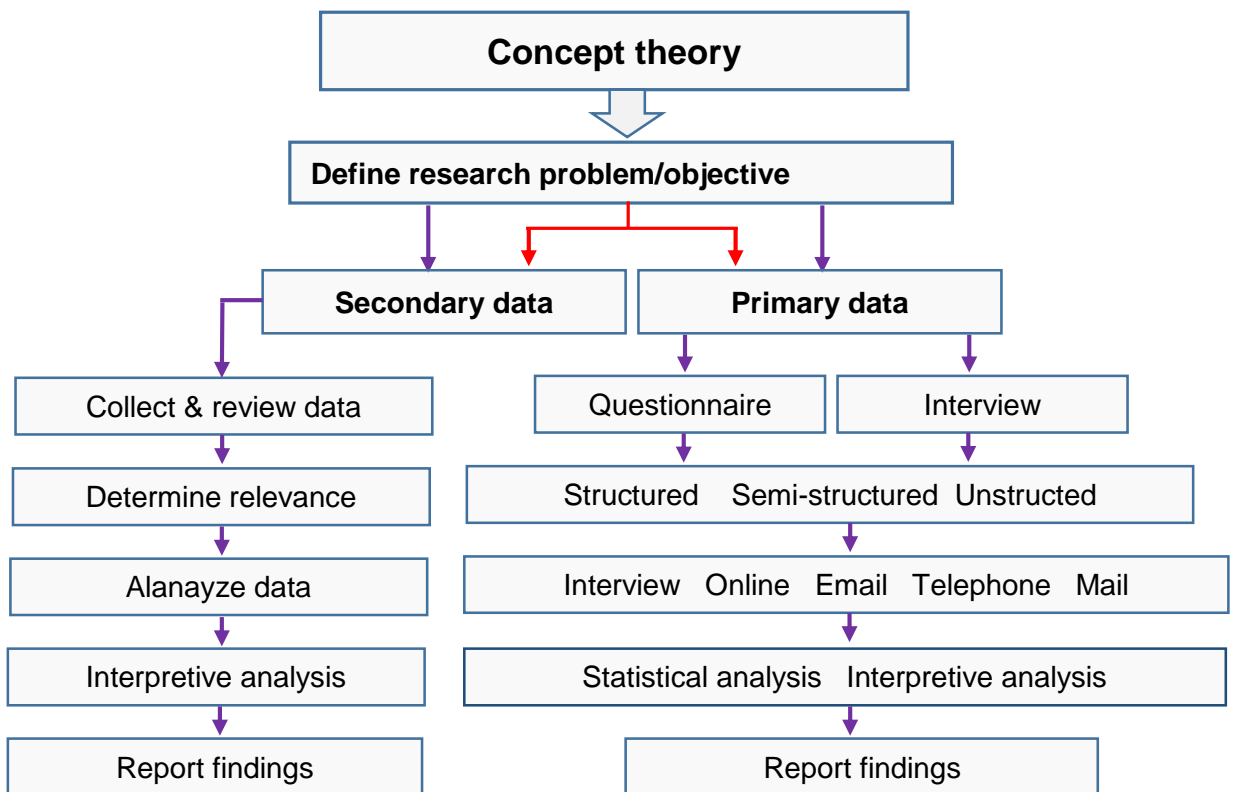
Figure 7. Concept theory. (Author 2016)

# 3   Empirical research

In this chapter of the thesis, the author discusses the research approach used for the data collection. The empirical part of the thesis is focused on research method, interview design, and data collection methods. Research finding and data analysis are covered in the following chapter. Additionally, for the need identification, the researcher will follow the methods discussed in the theoretical part of this thesis.

## 3.1   Research approach

As illustrated in Figure 8, prior to starting the research process, the first step of the research process was consulting with the commissioning company to determine the research problem and objective. After the literature review, we determined that for this particular research need, secondary as well as primary data would be of value. For the primary data, we elected the quantitative method, and data was collected in the form of an online structured questionnaire. Secondary data was collected from online publications, reports, and articles.
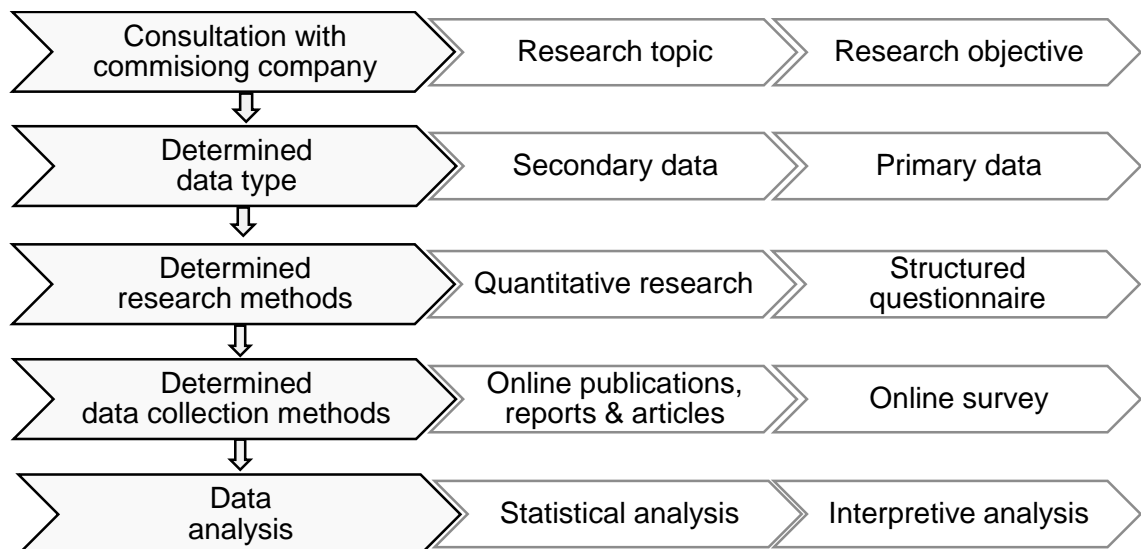


Figure 8. Research approach

According to (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010, 104; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012, 417; Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 109&117.), primary quantitative research may be a more suitable method as quantitative research focuses particularly on facts and reasons related to the research topic, it uses a logical and critical approach, and it uses controlled measures. Furthermore, structured questionnaire one the most used instrument because respondents are asked the same set of questions. This approach provides an efficient way of collecting data prior to quantitative analysis.

Although the literature suggests that particularly structured and descriptive primary data collected online or through self-administered questionnaire is good and reliable data, however, there are some disadvantages when collecting primary data. Ghauri & Grønhaug note that one disadvantage is that in addition to the time it can take, it may also be costly. Furthermore, it may be difficult to find people who are willing to respond to the survey because they may not have the time, can be concerned with the negative consequences if they are honest in their answers and may feel embarrassed in delicate cases. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010, 100.)

Secondary research was collected from online publications, news, reports and articles from various sources. The researcher screened the internet for publications, reports and news about the market development in the research country. Primarily, the researcher collected secondary data from government websites and prominent newspapers in the research country, and from the European commission website. After reviewing the date, the researcher selected the relevant information for this thesis's objective and included it in the report.

As noted in (sub-chapter 2.1), this type of secondary data collection approach is also recommended by Ghauri & Grønhaug who state that secondary information can be collected from literature, journals, online publications, reports, and article. Further, advantages for collecting secondary data in addition to its affordability, and easy to get, is that if collected from trusted sources, it can also be reliable and high quality as it is collected and put together by experts. However, one major disadvantage to secondary data is that it may have been collected for a different study with a different objective Therefore, it requires critical and careful review before making it part of the report. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010, 94 – 96.)

## 3.3 Research phase

In total, there were three phases to the data collection. These three phases were; secondary data collected from online publications, reports, news and articles, face-to-face interviews and the online survey with HEIs, organizations, and students. An illustration of the research phases and research is demonstrated in Figure 9.

```
                        ┌─────────────────────────┐
                        │  Data collection phases │
                        └─────────────────────────┘
        ┌───────────────────────┬───────────────────────┐
        ▼                       ▼                       
┌─────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
│ Secondary data  │   │ Online survey   Face-to-face-     │
│   collection    │   │                 interviews        │
└─────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────────────┘
        ▼                  ▼                    ▼
┌─────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
│ Screened online │  │    Published     │  │ Prepared         │
│ publications    │  │  questionnaire   │  │ questions        │
│ (reports, press │  └──────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
│ releases &      │           ▼                    ▼
│ articles)       │  ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
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        ▼            │ questionnaire    │  │ interviewees     │
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│ Reviewed        │  └──────────────────┘           ▼
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        ▼            │ Posted survey    │  │ meeting          │
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│ Selected        │  │ page             │           ▼
│ relevant        │  └──────────────────┘  ┌──────────────────┐
│ information     │           ▼            │ Conducted        │
└─────────────────┘  ┌──────────────────┐  │ interviews       │
                     │ Sent reminders   │  └──────────────────┘
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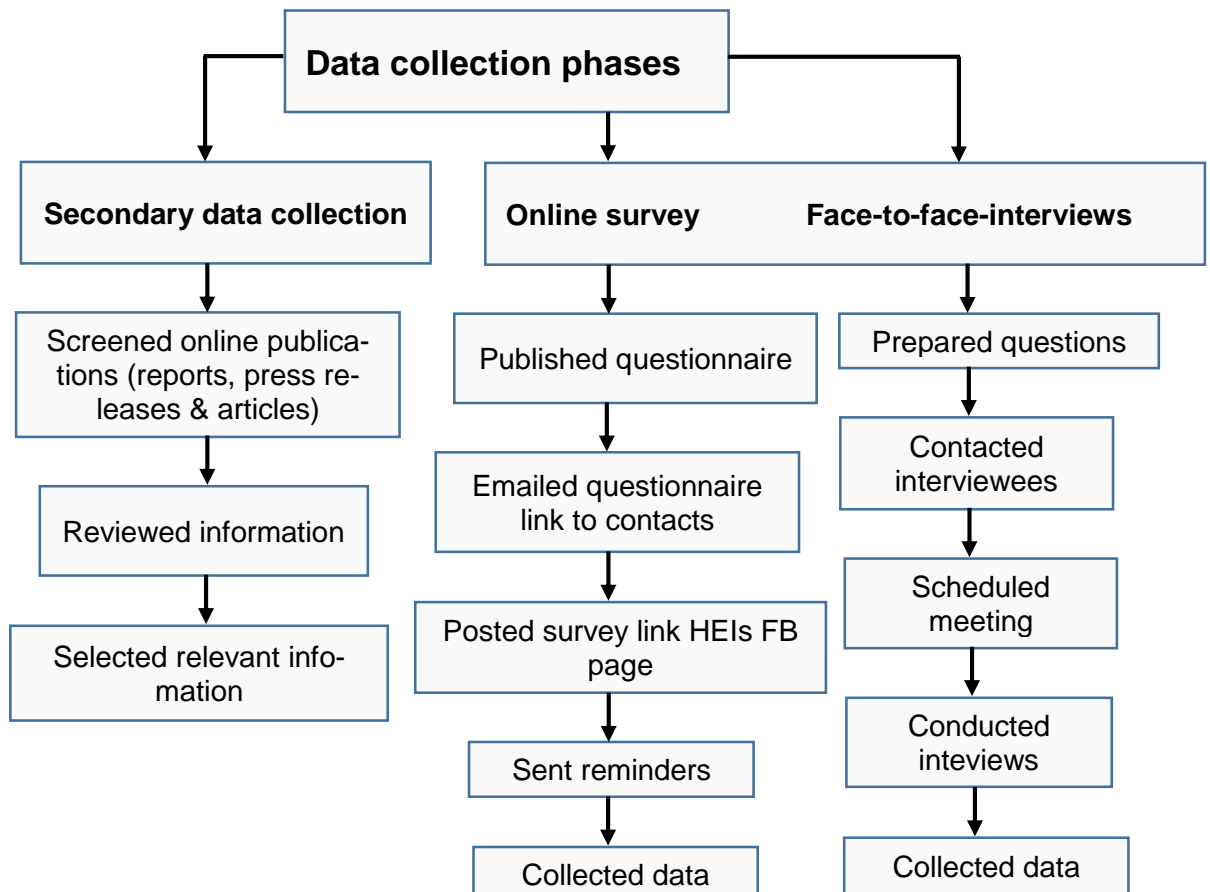
Figure 9. Data collection phases

The researcher started the data collection process at the end of December 2015. The online questionnaire was published precisely on December 29, 2015, and it remained open until February 15, 2016. During the online data collection period, the researcher collected two face-to-face interviews, and collected data from online sources, reviewed it and selected the relevant information for interpretation. It is worth mentioning at this point, that the secondary data collection continued until this thesis was finalized.

The secondary data collection process started with screening websites for publications, articles news, and reports. Once data sources were found, the data was reviewed carefully to determine the data relevance to the research objective. Once the data was qualified as "fit data" for the report, it was selected for inclusion.

The online questionnaire (HEIs/organization questionnaire & student questionnaire) were created using Google Docs™. For the collection of primary data, the researcher used the "snowball sampling" recommended by Cohen, Manion & Morrison Cohen (2011, 160). Once the questionnaire was prepared and published, the researcher sent the survey link to selective business contacts and students via email and Facebook™ messaging system, asked them fill in the survey and also to distribute the survey link to other people that fulfill the characteristics of the research. Moreover, the researcher selected the HEIs from which to collect data and published the questionnaire link, with a clear description on their Facebook™ pages, as well as contacted the administrators of these pages to ask for encouraging their member to fill in the survey.

According to Cohen, Minion & Morrison, "snowball sampling" can be a good and effective way for collecting data from people who fulfill the characteristic of the research. However, there can be some problems with this data collection method. One problem can be that respondents might be acquaintances, and therefore provide answers that may not necessarily be admissive. Thus, the respondents should be chosen carefully and reminded the purpose of the research. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011, 160.)

For the face-to-face interviews, the data collection process consisted of preparing questions, contacting interviewees to schedule meetings, conducted the interview and collected the data.

Primary online data from was collected from Universiteti Politeknik i Tiranes, Universiteti Politeknik - Fakulteti i Inxhinierise se Ndertimit, University of New York in Tirana, Universiti i Shkodres Luigj Gurakuqi, Ministry of Education and Sports, and Universiteti i Tiranes. Whereas the face-to-face interviews were conducted with one Bar Restaurant chain owner, and one political editor from "Relindja Demokratike Newspaper". The face-to-face interviews were conducted at their premises, and the interviews lasted about 45 minutes each.

## 3.4    Data analysis process

As notated in (sub-chapter 3.1) secondary data was collected from various sources to seek answers to our research objective. Online publications and reports were downloaded to the computer. Online articles and news were carefully reviewed on the published websites, and all the unique redirecting links were saved for future reference. For the publications and reports that could be downloaded, the researcher opened them on his computer and reviewed the data carefully to determine the data relevance to the research objective. As Figure 10 demonstrates, once the data was qualified as "fit data" for the report, data interpretation started. For secondary data analysis, we used the interpretive philosophy. This method is also recommended by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012, 161) who state that in data that can't be coded (non-numerical data) we apply the interpretive philosophy to draw conclusions and make decisions.

For the primary data, the total number of responses were; 11 online interviews with key people from various businesses and HEIs, two face-to-face interviews, and 102 online interviews with students. It is worth mentioning at this point that the face-to-face interviews were later on added manually into the data analysis software for the data analysis purpose.

Once data collection period ended, the responses were exported from Google Docs™ to Researcher's laptop. As data analysis software we used Microsoft Excel™. Prior to data analysis, the first step was data editing. Data was reviewed to see if there are any conflicting information. Certain responses were given the numerical value to simplify the data analysis process. After making the necessary editing, we started the statistical analysis, translated and corrected the meaning of results and started the data reporting process.

As noted in (sub-chapter 2.3), various authors recommend this approach e.g. Ghauri & Grønhaug; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill who state that before analyzing, the data should be inspected, coded, organized in a way that it is meaningful, and corrected if need be. This process can help us detect conflicting information, identify the importance of the responses (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2012, 150; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012, 161.)

According to Ghauri & Grønhaug and Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, the purpose of analyzing data is to reveal themes, patterns and relationship which, having been verified, will be important to the report. Furthermore, Ghauri & Grønhaug state that data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. Research-

ers use analysis to manipulate data to gain understanding, clarify the problem and test hypothesis. No single, agreed-upon approach to quantitative or qualitative data analysis exists. (Ghauri & Grønhaug. K. 2010, 199; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012, 563.)

After data set was prepared and organized, the data analysis process started to describe the results. For primary data analysis, we utilized the statistical approach. Secondary data was analysed using descriptive analysis. The data analysis methods are suggested by Ghauri & Grønhaug and Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, who state that in numerical data, usually we perform statistical analysis, where we apply descriptive method so we can summarize and report data in a comprehensive way. Secondary data is usually analysed using interpretive philosophy. In data that can't be coded (non-numerical data) we apply the interpretive philosophy to draw conclusions and make decisions. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2012, 151; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012, 161.)
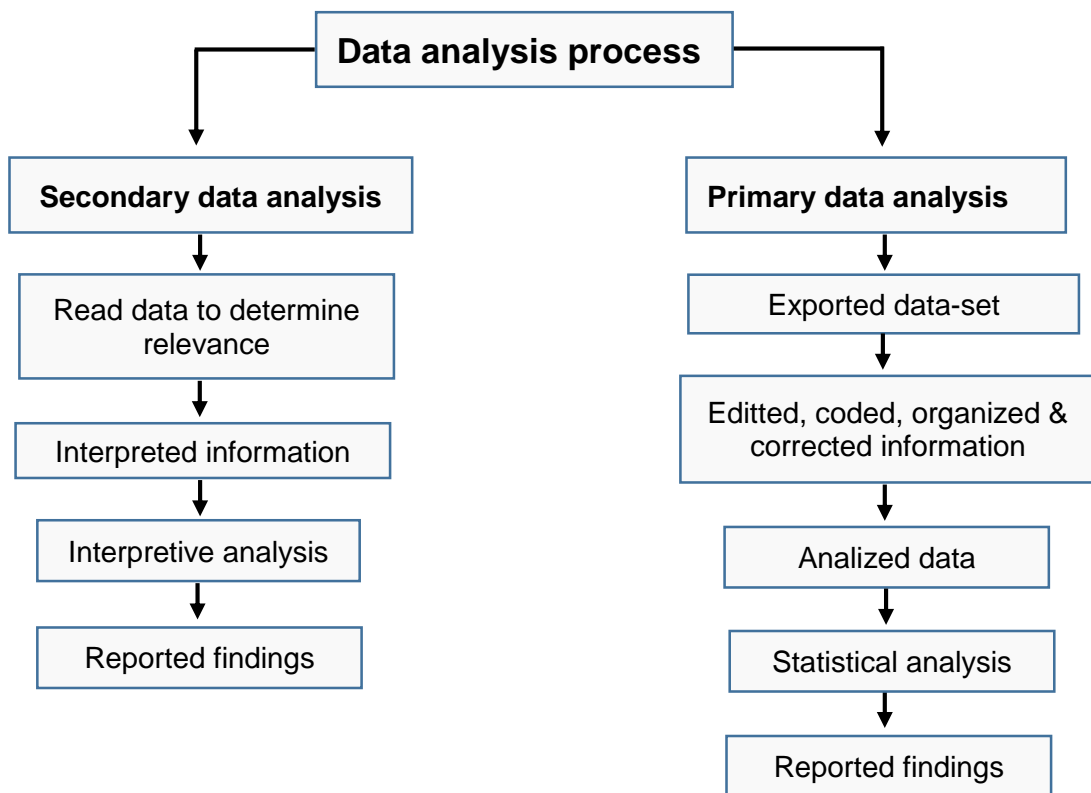


Figure 10. Data analysis process

## 3.5   Validity and reliability

The reliability and validity have been assured over careful research planning and research methods, as well as cautious data collection procedures. Both, primary and secondary references have been listed properly, and all data is presented and illustrated in an academic and integrity manner. As guidelines, to ensure the reliability, we fully utilized the research approach and research methods recommended by various credible books written for this purpose. All possible appendices and other related documents have been attached at the end of this thesis.

During the secondary research, we came across a lot of online information. However, to ensure the data validity we carefully selected data from trusted sources. The data was collected from reliable government publications (report and official statements). The official reports were made public only after the necessary government bodies had approved and passed laws to enforce the national development strategy. Therefore, this information found from the reports is deemed valid and reliable. Further, information collected from official statements is also deemed to be very reliable as these statements are made after the official approval of the national development and integration strategy

Additionally, we screened news and articles from prominent newspapers to find relevant information. Usually, prominent newspapers tend to pre-screen their online publications prior to making them public, as they want to maintain their reputation intact. Therefore, ensuring a reliable data source.

Primary research was collected online through a structured questionnaire. The research target group was mainly people who either working in the education field, people who are in key positions within organizations, and people who are currently studying The researcher selected carefully what HEI, organizations. All HEIs and businesses were asked the same set of questions. The same procedure applied to students' interview. Thus, the information provided by them can be deemed reliable and valid. However, it can not be guaranteed that a similar research may produce the same results, due to the fact the development process has already started and needs may change over time. Data was collected through Google Docs™, which can be perceived as a suitable and trustworthy data collection channel. The collected data was statistically analysed using Microsoft Excel™.

# 4   Research findings

The aim of the research was to identify the need for education services in Albania. This need identification can provide the commissioning company with insight to determine what possibilities are there to target. Additionally, we wanted to investigate in what way, shape, and/or form Haaga-Helia's education services are desired. For this research, we created a questionnaire, with a set of questions designed to extract information that will give us an overview of the need. As mentioned in sub-chapter 3.3, the researcher conducted two face-to-face interviews, 11 online interviews with key people from various businesses and HEIs, and 102 online interviews with students. In total, we asked 11 questions from HEIs and from businesses, and 12 questions were asked from students. The face-to-face interviews were then manually inserted into the spreadsheet for data analysis purposes. The translated version of the questionnaire and the original questionnaire are included in the appendices of this thesis (Appendix 1 - 4). Further, we organized the data, and gave numerical values to each question for referencing purposes within this thesis. For the numerical value of questions see (Appendix 5).

## 4.1   Secondary research findings

**Albania's education expenditure and student tuition fees**
Ministria e Arsimit dhe Sportit – Albania's Ministry of Education and Sports states that Albania's annual expenditure on higher education accounts for 4 % of country's GDP. This 4 % is comprised of 3.1 % of public spending and 0.9 % of private spending. (arsimi.gov.al 2016.)

**Tuition fees**
Student tuition fees in Albania depend on HEIs and their implemented programs. According to Ministria e Arsimit dhe Sportit student tuition fees are proposed by Ministria e Arsimit dhe Sportit and decided by the Council of Ministers. The tuition fees are classified as cikel i pare – first cycle and cikel i dyte – second cycle. In the first cycle, students receive a Bachelor Degree. In the second cycle, students receive a Master Degree. Prices vary for part-time and full-time students as well as for each cycle the tuition fees are different. For full-time students studying at state-owned universities, depending on the specialization track, student tuition fees are an average of 250 euros, which is 20% of the total fee per academic year. The remaining fee is covered by the state budget. (arsi-mi.gov.al 2016.)

Private universities charge on tuition fees anywhere between 1250 - 2500 euros per academic year. There are universities that have higher tuition fees, and those fees are subject to the specialization track. However, the maximum tuition fees that universities can charge the students, are set by the Council of Ministers of Albania.

**Examples 1**

Students electing to study at the Universiteti Europian i Tiranes would have to pay on tuition fees EUR 2500 per academic year (Universiteti Europian i Tiranes 2016).

For the academic year of 2013/2014, there were 4751 students enrolled at Universiteti Europian i Tiranes (instat.gov.al 2016)

**Examples 2**

Students electing to study at the University of New York in Tirana, depending on the degree program, would have to pay on tuition fees anywhere between 3510 – 5500 euros per academic year (University of New York in Tirana (2016). For the academic year of 2013/2014, there were 732 students enrolled (instat.gov.al 2016).

**European Commission publications**

As part of the Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training the European Commission organized the 4th Ministerial meeting on July 15th, 2015 in Vlora, Albania. State members of this platforms are; Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia. During this Ministerial meeting, each Minister stressed that higher education in their countries is one of the top priorities, and they showcased their developments in education and revealed the future action plans. There were multiple agreements signed be-tween participating countries, and the other European Union States present on teacher training and efficiency, quality of education, investments in higher education for innovation, learning mobility and transparency. (ec.europa.eu 2016.)

As Albania aims to become a full EU-member State by 2020, it is has initiated a wide range of reforms to transform the country so it can meet the EU requirements. According to the European Commission (2016), during the Vienna Western Balkans Summit organized on August 27th 2015 - a Summit initiated by the European Union and the Western Balkan countries as part of EU-enlargement programme, EU has launched an inter-regional economic development programme in cooperation with the following countries; Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as Croatia, Slovenia.

> *Western Balkan countries will be further enhanced through the preparation of annual Economic Reform Programs (ERPs. In this context, the participating States agree on the need of sectoral structural reforms, aiming to improve physical and human capital, industrial structures, the business environment and trade integration in order to boost competitiveness, employment and long-term growth in the Western Balkan countries* (ec.europa.eu 2016).

European Commission further states that there are plans in place for transport connectivity project between the Balkan countries. The projects are to be implemented by 2020. The European commission report for the implementation of these plans further states that these investments will be approximately EUR 1 billion from the IPA II - (Instrument for Pre-Accession) program available as potential co-financing for key connectivity related investments over the 2015-2020 period. (ec.europa.eu 2016.)

> *The South East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO) has estimated that it would cost EUR 7.7 billion to implement the priority projects. Findings of a study by the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (wiiw) show that such a comprehensive infrastructure investment package could lead to an additional growth push of up to one percentage point per year for the countries of the region over a period of 15 years. Some 200.000 new jobs could be created in the region* (ec.europa.eu 2016).

As measures for capacity building in the youth sector, the Western Balkan countries have agreed to increase their spending to over 3% of countries' GDP to support higher education particularly in Science and Research – including youth education, dual vocational training, and teacher training programs. The Erasmus+ program was established in 2015, and all the participating States have agreed and committed themselves not only to financially support public universities but to also encourage their universities in offering an applicable number of collaboration programs and studying opportunities for students from the Western Balkans under the Erasmus+ program. (ec.europa.eu 2016.)

**Albania's Council of Ministers publications**

One of the main challenges in Albanian education is the quality of teaching. Albania's Council of Ministers has drafted "Albania's National Strategy for Development and Integration 2014-2020" published in June 2013 which among others, it has a strong focus on developing the country's education system. This strategy will financially support the improvement of pre-university education curricula. It will implement reforms and financially support the professional development of teachers and managers to intensify their competences. It plans to increase the financial support for education to 4.5% of GDP by 2020 for public education, as well as Implement a new financing formula and increase public funding of higher education to 6.8% of GDP by 2020. (shtetiweb.org 2016.)

Furthermore, Albania's Council of Ministers state that it has created a strategic development fund to support HEIs' infrastructure development, and it will finance annually on average of two projects from each public HEI to train all full-time academic staff with new teaching methods. There are currently 16 public universities alone that qualify for the projects. Finally, Albania will focus on strengthening international cooperation with HEIs. (shtetiweb.org; instat.gov.al 2016.)

**Albania's Ministry of Education and Sports publications**
As part of Albania's National Strategy for Development and Integration 2014-2020, In a statement issued Ministria e Arsimit dhe Sportit on September 25, 2014 states that it has already invested about 43 million Euros into digitalizing Albania's education infrastructure to support the need for talent development. Further, it plans to increase this invest to over 53 million Euros. The aim is to create a full platform of "E-Learning" for 60 high schools as a pilot project, thereafter a full-scale implementation is expected to take place where 60 laboratories will be equipped with a minimum of 40 tablets each, and 5840 tablets will be installed in classrooms to enhance students' learning experience. (arsimi.gov.al 2016.)

As part of the new curricula implementation in Albania, in 2015 Albania's Ministry of Education and Sports conducted a series of test to identify the training needs for teachers and administration staff in public education. According to Ministria e Edukimit dhe Sportit press release issued on May 16, 2015, the findings revealed, that after testing 17 613 teachers across the country, only 25% of teachers in Albania are highly skilled and possess advanced teaching knowledge. 64% of teachers possess satisfactory skills and teaching knowledge, however, require further training. Whereas 12% of teachers are in need of necessary training. As a result of; in a statement made by the Minister of Education and Sports of Albania - Lindita Nikolla in May 2015, the Ministry of Education and Sports of Albania, has started a nationwide teacher-training program with the objective of training 11 000 teachers across the country. The project started in 2015, and thus far it has trained over 1 500 teachers. (arsimi.gov.al 2016.)

The increased market demand for skilled workers has left Albania with little choice but invest into improving the countries education system. However, that is not the only concern that Albania has. Students don't wait for "hand-outs", and they are seeking other study opportunities from alternative universities abroad. According to an article published on September 25, 2013, by Shqiptarja – a prominent newspaper in Albania, there are 3000 – 4000 students who pursue their study ambitions abroad annually (Shqiptarja.com 2016).

**Newspapers publications**

In an interview for Gazetashqip, during an official visit in Tirana on April 03, 2016, the Finnish Ambassador Pauli Antero Mäkelä stated that there is a specific project between Albania and Finland which consists of bilateral cooperation in the field of forestry.

> *As far as I know, you have a forestry school in the city of Shkodra, which deals with the training of youth in forest issues. Finland has more forest. So we will start cooperation in this regard. Albanian students studying in this school will be trained in Finland. That's for sure. This project will start soon.* (Pauli Antero Mäkelä 2016)

In an article published on March 30[th], 2016, by shekulli – an Albanian newspaper, during the Finnish Ambassador's visit in Albania, he met with the Minister of Social Welfare and Youth, Mr. Blendi Klos, where the focus of discussion was about the possibility of starting twinning vocational schools between Albania and Finland. The Albanian Minister expressed that these projects will provide the opportunity to exchange experiences in Vocational education, and training of teachers. This campaign to promote Finnish education system across the Albania is expected to be launched this year. (shekulli.com 2016.)

In an article published on April 16[th], 2010, by arkivalajmeve - another prominent Albania newspaper. In efforts to seek expertise in the field of education from Finland, during an official visit in Helsinki, the Minister of Education and Science Mr. Myqerem Tafaj, expressed that education is a major priority of the Albanian government, and as Finnish education system is an elite system, it is being closely studied by Albanian experts. (arkivalajmeve.com.com 2016.)

During the visit in Helsinki, the Albanian Minister met with Mrs. Henna Virkkunen, the Minister of Education and Science of Finland, who stated that this is the beginning of a concrete cooperation, between the two countries, and she expressed readiness to support the Albanian institution with assistance on specific aspects of education reform, particularly in the preparation of university and continuous training of teachers. During this meeting, both Ministers expressed their willingness to start negotiations for the preparation of cooperation protocol between Albania and Finland. (arkivalajmeve.com 2016.)

In addition to the education system, the judicial system in Albania is undergoing a major makeover, and Albania once again has turned its eye on Finland for expertise. According to a published article on November 12[th], 2015, Ministria e Drejtësisë – Ministry of Justice of Albania states that Finnish experts are working on an EU-Twinning project to support the development of alternative dispute resolution in Albania. The project aims to enhance the efficiency and independence of services for alternative dispute resolution in Albania

and support further development of mediation and arbitration services in Albania. This project started on November 12ᵗʰ, 2015 and it will be implemented over the period of 18 months, in cooperation with Albania's Ministry of Justice, the National Chamber of Mediation in Albania and the National Institute of Health and Welfare in Finland, in partnership with German Mediation Service and Probation. (drejtesia.gov.al 2016.)

## 4.2 Primary data findings

The aim of the primary research was to identify the need for Finnish education services in Albania, and what way, shape and/or form Haaga-Helia's education services desired from HEIs, organization, and students. For this research, we created a questionnaire, with a set of questions designed to extract this information. The total number of interviewees were 13 HEIs and businesses, and 102 students. The questionnaire contained 11 questions from HEIs and from businesses, and 12 questions were asked from students.

### 4.2.1 Research findings (Businesses and HEIs)

With (Question 1) respondents from businesses and HEIs were asked to provide their title. The reason for this was that understanding their position within the company, it can help us determine their in-depth knowledge of a company's internal procedures and decision-making processes. Respondents' titles are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Title of interviewees

| Title of respondents | Number of responses |
|---|---|
| Director | 4 |
| Business owner | 4 |
| Office Administrator | 2 |
| Business Manger | 1 |
| Tour guide Manager | 1 |
| Political editor | 1 |
| **Total** | **13** |

Data in Table 2 shows that 4 respondents are Director, 4 respondents are business owners. 2 respondents are office administrators. 1 business manager, tour guide manager and Political Editor respectively.

In (sub-chapter 2.3) we made reference that defining the target audience should be one of the priorities for organizations. Therefore, to help us distinguish whether the respondents are from HEIs or businesses, and gain insights on this particular matter, in (Question 2) respondents were asked about the business category they are in. Identifying the business category can help us determine who our audience is. The results to this question are demonstrated in Table 3.

Table 3. Business category.

| Business category | Number of responses |
|---|---|
| Hotel & Tourism | 5 |
| Education | 3 |
| Wholesale | 2 |
| Sole trader | 1 |
| Media | 1 |
| Furniture and carpentry | 1 |
| **Total** | **13** |

Data in Table 3 shows that out of 13 respondents, 5 respondents are in the hotel and tourism business, 3 out of 13 respondents are from educational institutions, and there was one respondent from wholesale, sole trader, media, furniture and carpentry respectively.

In addition to identifying the target group, market segmentation should be just as important. An explanation of the importance of market segmentation was referenced in (sub-chapter 2.2). Therefore, in (Question 3) we asked the respondents about their location. Knowing the home-base of the respondents can help a company identify where the highest interest is in the country, therefore, helpful to segment the market which to serve. Location results are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Location of businesses and HEIs

| Location of respondents | Number of responses |
|---|---|
| Tirane | 10 |
| Shkoder | 3 |
| **Grand Total** | **13** |

Data in Table 4 above shows that 10 out of 13 businesses and HEIs are located in the capital of Albania, whereas, 3 out of 13 are located in the city of Shkoder. Shkoder is a relatively big city located in North-West Albania.

It is argued that customer needs depend on a lot of different factors such as; country, culture, traditions, social status, etc. Further, to identify customer needs, organization commit a lot of financial means and human resources. However, we should also understand that business needs are different from consumer needs. Thus, (Question 9) was created to understand better what training programmes businesses and HEIs currently need. The respondents were given the options that are offered by the commission company. Results to this question are illustrated in Figure 11.
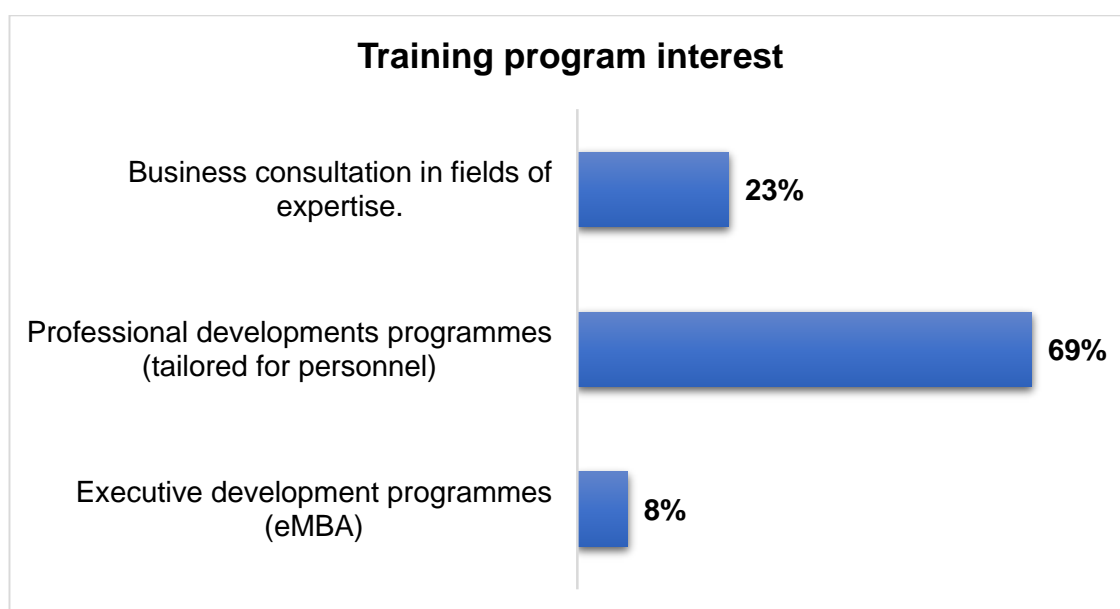


Figure 11. Training programmes interest

Results in Figure 11 show that 23% of the respondents are interested in business consultation and field of expertize. Professional development programmes (tailored made for personnel) leads with 69% interest. Whereas Executive development programme received and interest of 8%

Figure 12 demonstrates the results to (Question 8). We asked the interviewees "*Are you interested in working with Haaga-Helia (UAS) for your employee training*?" The responses to this particular question can help us identify whether or not the respondents are interested in Haaga-Helia offerings.
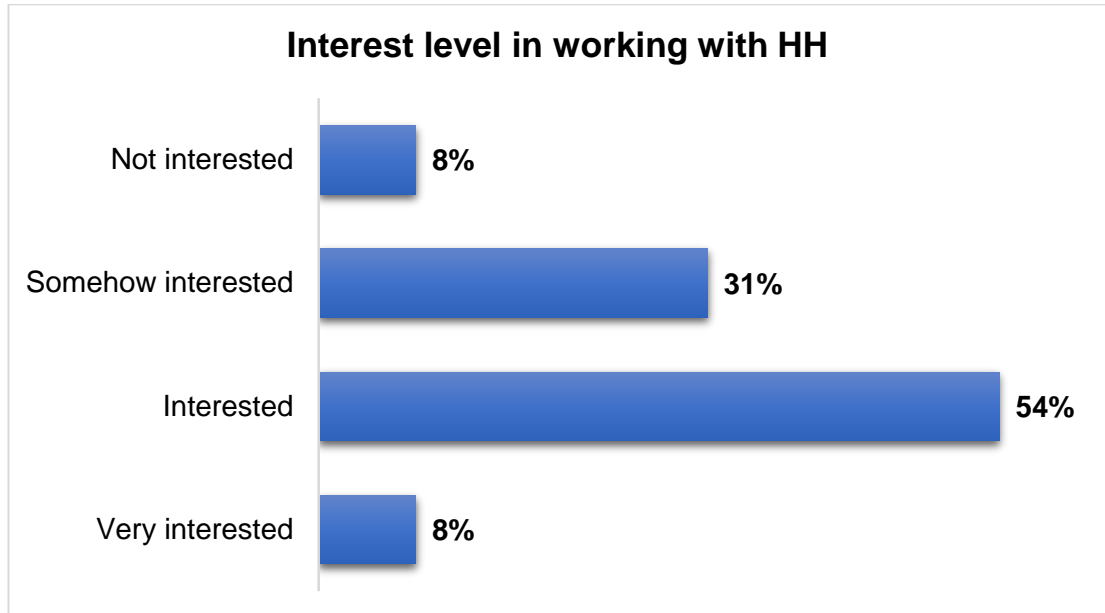
**Interest level in working with HH**

| | |
|---|---|
| Not interested | 8% |
| Somehow interested | 31% |
| Interested | 54% |
| Very interested | 8% |

Figure 12. Interest in working with HH

As data in Figure 12 shows, the response to (Question 8) was that; 8% are not interested in working with Haaga-Helia for their employee training. 31% of the respondents are somehow interested in working with Haaga-Helia. 54% expressed interest in working with Haaga-Helia for their employee training. Whereas, 8% of the respondents are very interested in working with Haaga-Helia for their employee training.

Customer need identification may not be just about what customers want, but also how they want a product or a service. In (sub-chapter 2.2) we made reference that market research should be focused on identifying not only what customers want, but also how. It is important to note that in addition to high quality and affordability, customers may also value e.g., proximity to the service, service diversification, flexibility of the service provider, diversified delivery channels, etc. Therefore, to identify how the respondents would like to get their employee training service, in (Question 10) we asked the respondents about their preferred place and/method for employee training services. The results to this question are illustrated in Figure 13.

**Preferred place/methods**

- Own premises (Albania) — **69%**
- Online — **23%**
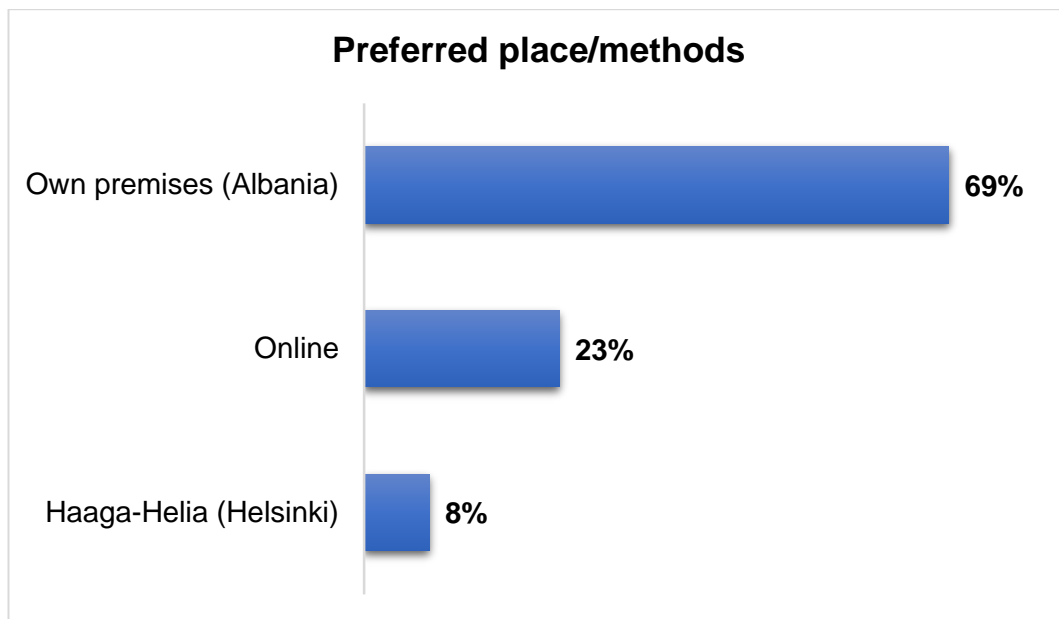- Haaga-Helia (Helsinki) — **8%**

Figure 13. Preferred place/method

Results in Figure 13 demonstrate that 69% of the respondents would prefer their premises for the employee training. 31% of the respondents prefer the online option. Whereas, 8% expressed that they would prefer to train their employees at Haaga-Helia in Helsinki.

Previous questions were designed to understand what customers want, and how. Moreover, we wanted to understand the market segmentation and the target group. However, expressing interest for cooperation doesn't necessarily mean that the outcome can be profitable for the service provider. Therefore, to get an overview of current spending on employee training programmes that interviewed HEIs and organizations invest in, interviewees were asked how much do they spend annually on employee training. The results are illustrated in Table 5. It is worth mentioning that this is the average of the total respondents, not the actual figure for each HEIs and business.

Table 5. Average annual spending on employee training

| Average spending on employee training |
|---|
| 12 500 |

Table 5 shows that businesses' and HEIs' current annual spending on employ training is an average of 12 500 euros. This is rather a low figure spent on employee training, which may explain the reason why Albania lack human capital.

The online survey for businesses and HEIs concluded with asking their mailing address and contact details, as well as thanking them for responding to the survey.

### 4.2.2  Research finding (Students)

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, in addition to businesses and HEIs, we set out to identify students' need for Haaga-Helia education services as well. Overall, 102 students were interviewed. Out of 102 interviewees, 56% of the respondents were male, and 44% female. The first page of the survey included a statement of purpose, and students' consent to use the data for analytical purposes.

As we referenced in (sub-chapter 2.1), understand the marketplace is an important element for organizations. Understanding the marketplace in our case means understanding not only customer needs, but also the demographics and geographics. Therefore, for this purpose, we analysed two questions (Question 2 & Question 4). Interviewees were asked to list their age and their location. The results are illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6. Student age by city

| City | Age group | | | | | Total by city (All ages) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 15-17 | 18-20 | 21-23 | 24-26 | 27-30 | |
| Tirane | | 11 | 60 | 11 | 4 | 86 |
| Shkoder | 1 | 1 | 7 | 5 | | 14 |
| Durres | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Lushnje | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| **Total by age group** | **1** | **13** | **67** | **17** | **4** | **102** |

Data in Table 6 shows that the total number of respondents from Tirana is 86 out of 102. Out of which, 11 respondents are 18 to 20 years old. A total of 60 respondents are 21 to 23 years old, 11 respondents are 24 to 26 years old, and 4 respondents are 27 to 30 years old.

The second highest responses came from the city of Shkoder. The total number of respondents from Shkoder was 14 out of 102. Out of which, 1 respondent belongs to the age group of 15-17. 1 out of 14 respondents belongs to the age group of 18 to 20 years old. Whereas 7 out of 14 respondents are 21 to 23 years old, and 5 respondents are 24 to 26 years old.

Durres and Lushnje (cities located in Central Albania) received one response each, which belong to the age group of 24 to 26 for Durres, and 18 to 20 for Lushnje.

In addition to understanding the demographics and geographics, we wanted to understand what degree programmes interest students the most. Therefore, in (Question 11) respondents were asked what study choice interest them the most. The option given were related to Haaga-Helia's offerings. The results illustrated in Figure 14 were quite interesting, as many students expressed interest in diversified degree programmes.
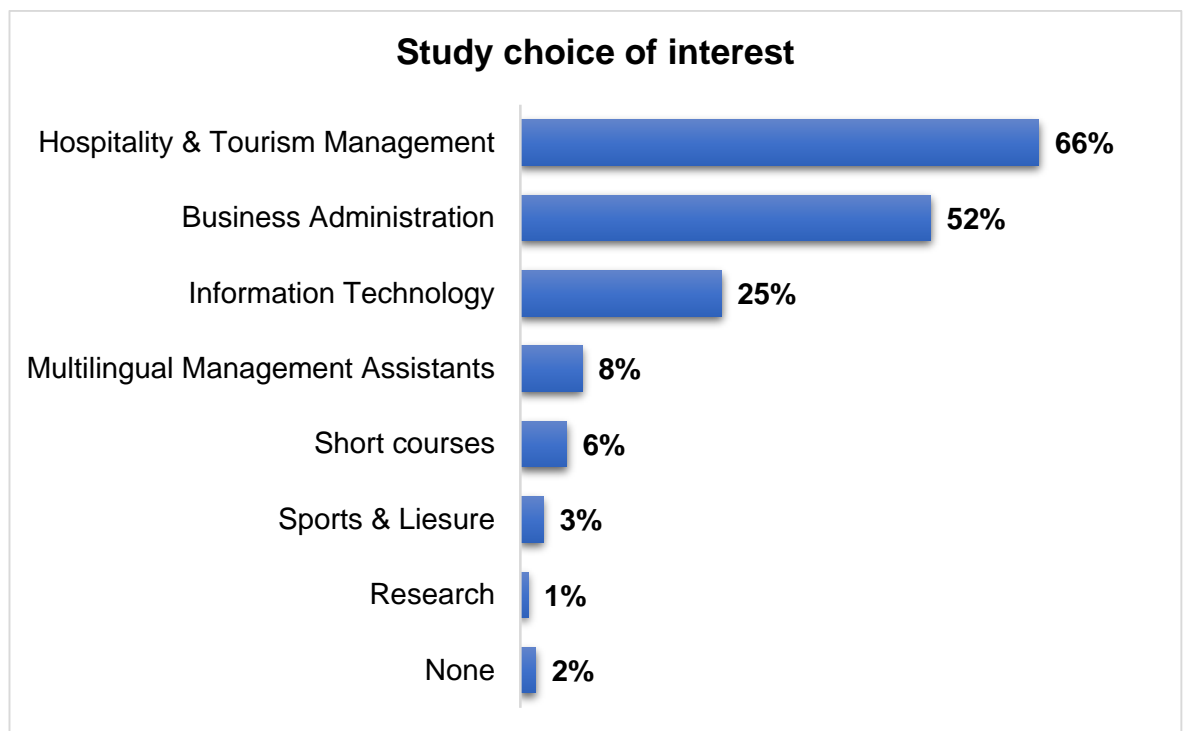
**Study choice of interest**

| Study choice | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Hospitality & Tourism Management | 66% |
| Business Administration | 52% |
| Information Technology | 25% |
| Multilingual Management Assistants | 8% |
| Short courses | 6% |
| Sports & Liesure | 3% |
| Research | 1% |
| None | 2% |

Figure 14. Study choice of interest

**Note**: For this questions, students could select more than one option. Therefore, each category is calculated individually against the total number of respondents.

As data in Figure 14 shows, the highest interest among students of study choice ranks Hospitality and Tourism Management with 66%, followed by Business Administration with 52%. Information Technology ranks third with an interest of 25%. Multilingual Management Assistant received an interest of 8%. Short courses came fifth with 6%. Sports and Leisure received and interest of 3%. Research option was the second last with the interest of 1%, whereas 2% of the respondents answered none of the above.

Reputation is a valuable asset, and it can be one of key elements for success in the global markets. Therefore, in regard to reputation, in (Question 10) students were asked about their perception about HH. The perception results are demonstrated in Figure 15.
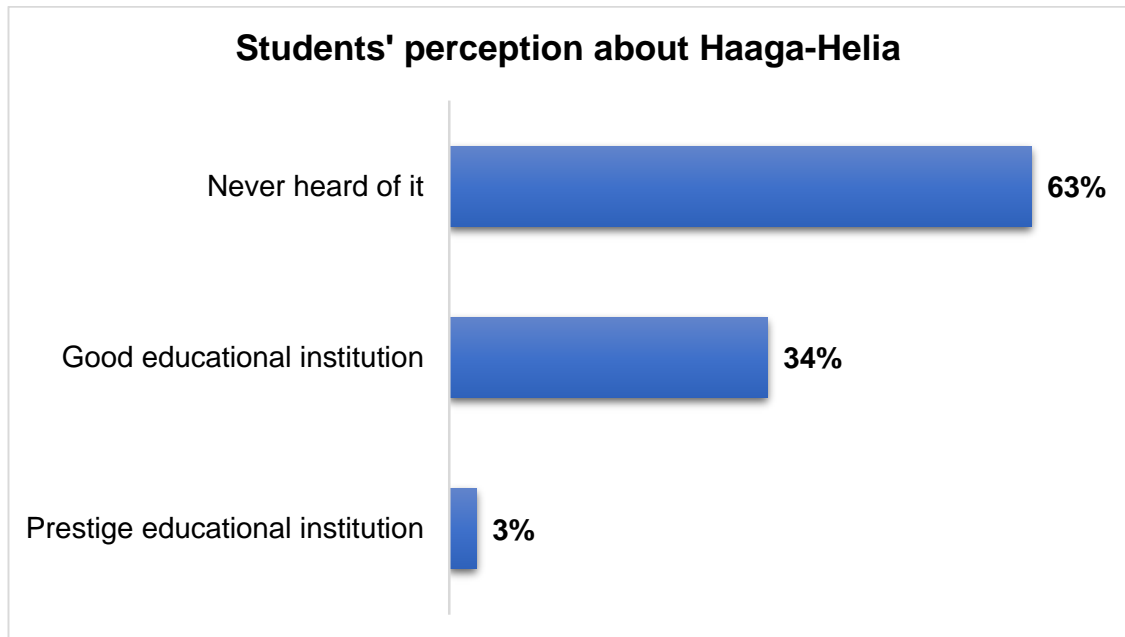


Figure 15. Students' perception about HH

Data in Figure 15 shows that 63% of the respondents have never heard of Haaga-Helia. 34% of the respondents think that it is a good educational institution, and 3% of the respondents think that Haaga-Helia is a prestige educational institution. The perception results are not surprising, as Haaga-Helia is inactive in Albania. However, as secondary findings reveal, campaigns across the country are launched to promote Finnish education, thus people are becoming more and more aware of Finland's educational institutions.

Secondary data show that Albania has launched a nationwide campaign to increase awareness of the Finnish education system. Although this campaign is still in the early stages, we can expect that students' interest level in studying in Finland may increase. Therefore, in (Question 9) students were asked how interested they are in studying in Finland. The option given were; "Not interested, Somehow Interested, Interested and Very Interested". The results are demonstrated in Figure 16.
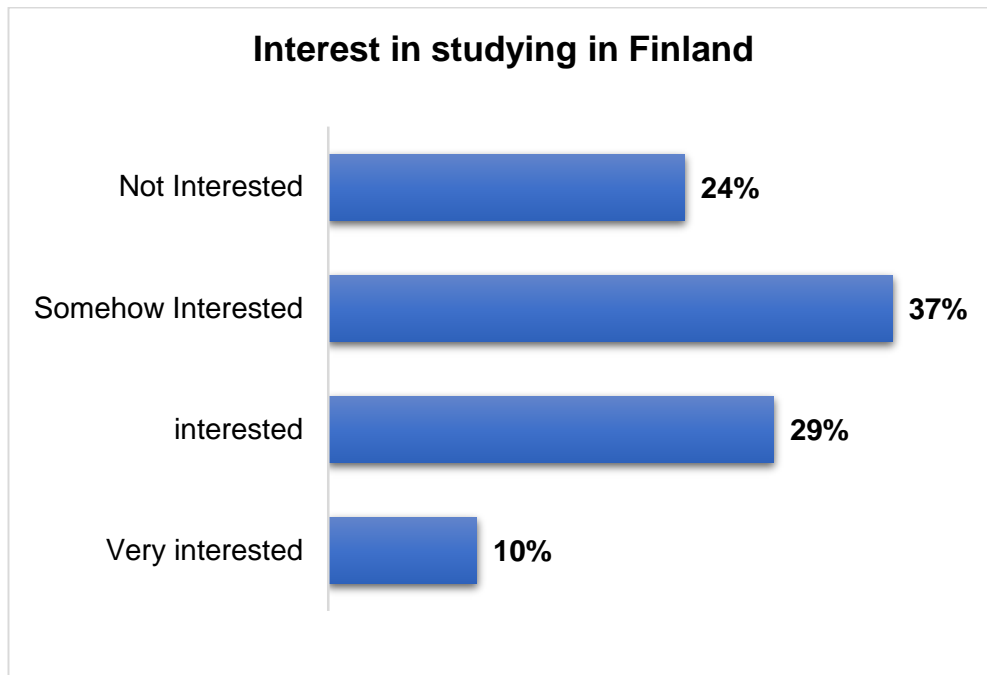


Figure 16. Interest in studying in Finland

The results in Figure 16 show that 24% of the respondents expressed no interest in studying in Finland. 37% of the respondents said that they are somehow interested. 29% of the respondents said that they are interested in studying in Finland, and 10 answered that they are very interested in studying in Finland.

Services nowadays can be provided in many ways. Particularly in education, the old fashion way of learning is still considered as the primary choice. However, with technology changing the way we live our lives, in (Question 12) we wanted to understand in what way students prefer to study. Therefore, students were asked; if HH would offer its degree programmes, what would be students' preferred method for studying Haaga-Helia's offerings. The results are illustrated in Figure 17. For this question, students were give three options; Online, in Albania or Haaga Helia campus
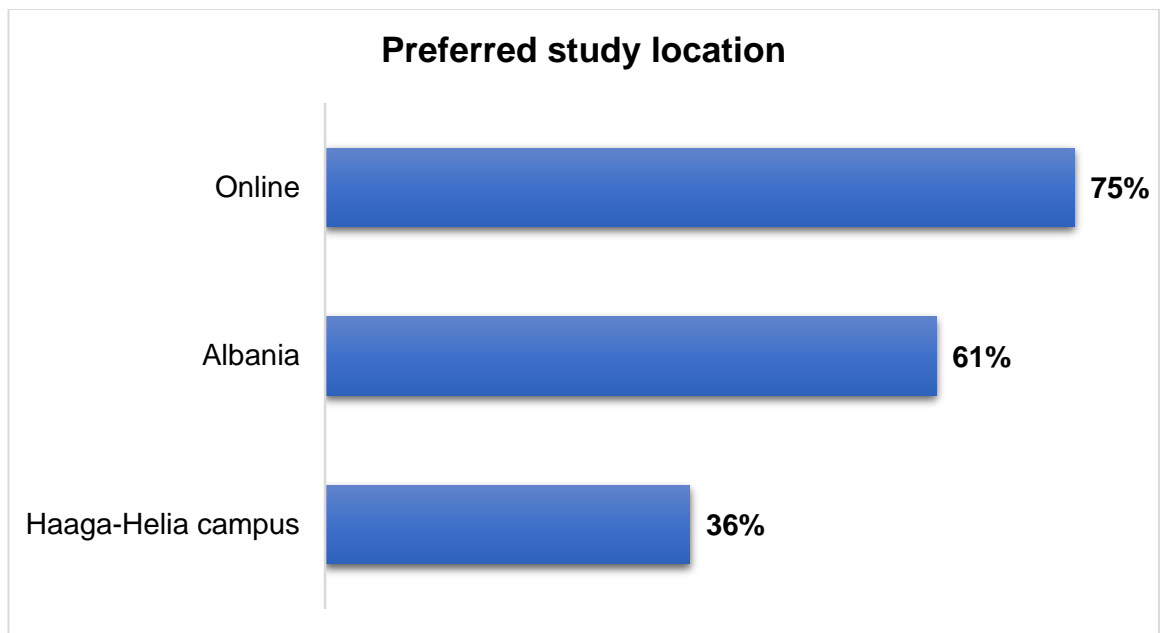


**Preferred study location**

| Location | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Online | 75% |
| Albania | 61% |
| Haaga-Helia campus | 36% |

Figure 17. Preferred study location

**Note**: Each category is calculated individually against the total number of respondents.

Data illustrated in Figure 17 demonstrates that the online seems to be the most preferred option with a lead of 75% interest. Albania received an interest of 61% as the preferred study location, whereas 36% chose Haaga-Helia campus as their preferred location for studying Haaga-Helia's degree programmes.

Referring to Figure 17, data showed that 75% of the respondents would prefer to study online. Since online seems to be the preferred option to study, we analyzed the following; for those who prefer to study online, what study programmes interest them most? The results are illustrated in Figure 18.
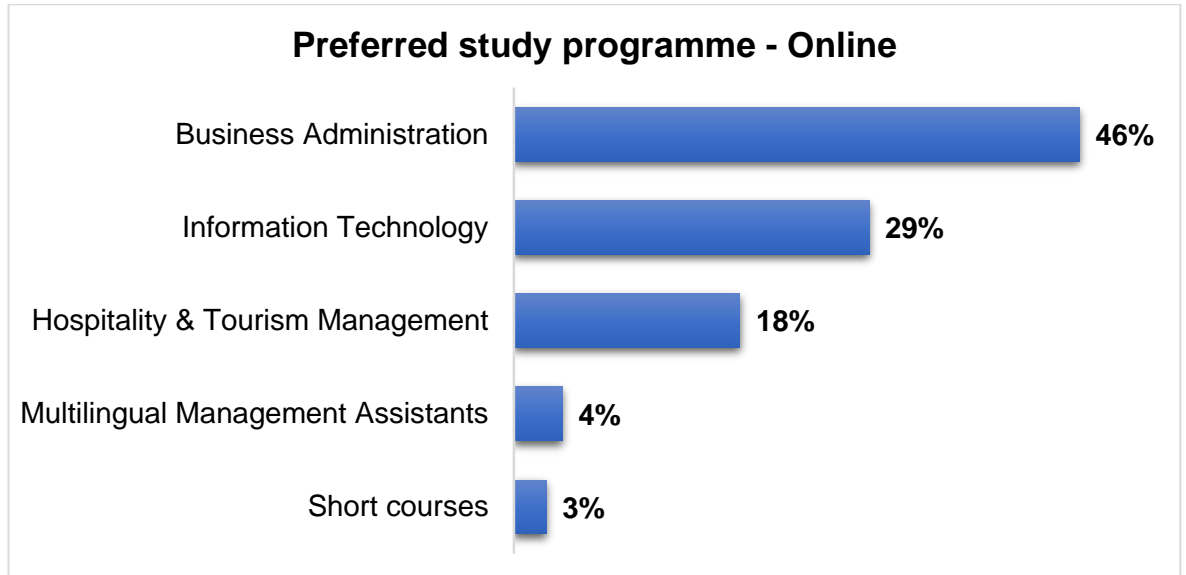


Figure 18. Preferred study programme - Online

Results in Figure 18 shows that 46% of the respondents would like to study Business Administration online. 29% would like to study Information Technology. 18% would like to study Hospitality & Tourism Management. Multilingual Management and Assistant received a 4% interest. Whereas, 3% would like to study short courses online.

## 4.3 Research discussion

Throughout the research process, we screened information online to find relevant and reliable information that can be included in our research. Further, we conducted secondary research until this thesis was finalized. During the primary data collection period, we followed the data collection advancement and actively sent reminders to our research target audience to encourage them to fill in the online questionnaire.

### 4.3.1 Secondary research discussion

Secondary data and statistics show that it is the renaissance era for Albania. Albania's ambitions to become a full EU-member State, backed up by country's economic growth in five consecutive years, have seen the country undergo major reforms. As education is the main pillar for developing human capital, the reforms highly prioritize the development of the education system. **There are three elements that we should pay attention to; "economic growth, reforms, and ambitions".**

Economic growth creates demands. When people have more money to spend, they demand better quality products and services. Further, wealth creates the need for diversified products and services as well.

Generally, reforms are designed to improve certain things. Improvements require knowledge and expertise. Since Albania is particularly in "*knowledge and expertise*" need, this can mean that such services would have to be imported. Therefore, reforms open new doors to new opportunities

Ambitions are desires to achieve something. In this case, Albania wants to succeed and show its determination of fulfilling all the necessary requirements to become a full EU-member state.

Secondary data show that in addition to other sectors, reforms concerning the development of the education system have already started and will continue to be implemented throughout the next four years. The main focus of these reforms is; **development of the new curricula, facilities and ICT infrastructure improvement, teacher training, and support for research and development.**

In the matter of the new curricula development, experts with extensive knowledge and expertise in this aspect are utilized. The reason why curricula are renewed is because applicable, effective, better or new teaching methods are required. Because this phenomenon would be quite new to everybody usually, the experts are selected from countries with high success rate in this matter. It would be very appropriate to state that Haaga-Helia fulfils this criterion.

In regards to the ICT infrastructure improvement, it would be quite safe to say this is not a job that anyone can do. Therefore, installation and configuration of hardware and software requires people with adequate skills. Albania has a limited time to achieve its set targets, this means that heavy outsourcing is required.

More importantly, teacher training is an ongoing service that will always be required. As technology develops, new teaching methods and techniques are developed as well. The general pattern in teacher training is that, experts with extensive knowledge are brought in to pass on the new teaching methods and techniques.

In addition to Albania's government actively seeking to establish new cooperation partnerships with international HEIs, and strengthen the existing cooperation between the country and other European HEIs, **it is studying the Finnish education system in particular as a model for adaptation.**

This indicates that HEIs from Finland may be given priority when it comes to partnerships. These partnerships are the doors that can lead to profitability. Although we should keep in mind that negotiations are not instantly converted into contracts. However, the possibility exists.

The Ministry of Education and Sports has launched the teacher training program **with the aim of training over 11 000 teachers and schools' administration staff**. The teacher training programme has already started and it will be a continuous training process.

Training of such large number of people indicates that the need for expertise is vast. The teacher training is a continuous process which means that long-term partnership possibilities are available.

Highways, inter-regional railroads, and domestic port terminals will undergo major modernization. **As a result of, the infrastructure development is expected to create some 200.000 new jobs.**

Although the number of new jobs represents the Western Balkan countries. However, this indicates that the market demand for skilled worker is increasing, and rapid investments are being made to boost talent development. In regard to infrastructure development, particular demand for skills is expected to increase for architects, engineers, designers, managers, supervisors, people with ICT skills, construction workers, and more. The demand for skilled workers indicates that the demand for educational services will noticeably increase.

**Albanian Government plans to increase its financial support for students studying abroad and financially support universities that provide to students the opportunity of studying diversified degree programmes under the Erasmus + and Horizon 2020 programmes in Albania.**

One of the oldest concept in marketing is "***the rule of seven***". This concept does not imply the number of steps, but the amount of times that potential buyers have to hear or see and add in order to purchase it. Therefore, it would be advisable to design a marketing strategy to inform students in Albania about Haaga-Helia offerings, as well as partner with Albanian HEIs. Entering the market through partnership is cost-effective, and strategic move to establish brand identity. Visibility and positive reputation are some of the key elements to getting customers.

As potential contact reference for the commissioning company, we have collected secondary information about Finnish expertise presence in Albania for certain ongoing projects. This information can be useful as the experts involved in these projects can provide first-hand market insight.

### 4.3.2 Primary research discussion

Regarding the HEIs and businesses, research shows the respondents were mainly from the capital of the country and the city of Shkoder. The results in Table 4 demonstrate this fact. Among the training programmes offered, results in Figure 11 show that the highest interest is for **professional development programmes** (**tailored for personnel**), followed by **business consultation in fields of expertise, and executive development programmes** (**eMBA**) **in that order**.

The results were not surprising. Mainly organisations want to develop their staff competences. Having competent employees is a competitive advantage which provides a strong base for success.

Results in Figure 12 showed that the majority of the respondents are interested in Haaga-Helia's training programmes. However, the most of the respondents as shown in Figure 13 would prefer their **own premises** as the service provision location**. The online** option being the second most preferred way of getting the training.

These results were expected because it would be cost-effective for companies to have their employees trained at their own premises. Moreover, on-site training reduces the employee absence and does not decrease the productivity as much as it would if employees were to travel for their training.  Although online training seems to be the trend at this moment.

In terms of current employee training expenditures shown in Table 5, the number is relatively low. This should not be overlooked. The data indicates that employee training may have not be the top priority for HEIs and businesses. However, this may have been the case until now. As secondary data shows, Ministria e Arsimit the Sportit (2016) sates that the government will implement a series of teacher training programmes over the next 5 years, and that it will financially support especially HEIs to enhance the competences of their staff with an average of two employee training programmes per year. Further, Albania's national development strategy stresses that it will increase the cooperation, and finance private businesses to boost their employees' business knowledge and business innovation, which can help gain a competitive advantage in the domestic and international markets.

In regard to students, research results in Table 6 showed that the majority of the respondents are between the ages of 21 to 23 and live in the country's capital city. Although there were quite a few respondents from the city of Shkoder as well.

Among the given study choice options, results in Figure 14 showed that the majority of the students would like to study **Hospitality and Tourism Management.** This degree programme accumulated the interest of 66% of the total respondents. Additionally, the results showed that there is also quite high interest in studying **Business administration** which received the interest of 52% of the total respondents. **Information Technology** received a considerable interest of 25%. Whereas **short courses** and **research** received some interest, however, the percentage was quite low.

Although the responses were quite diversified, we can assume that since Albania is a country where tourism is one of the main sources of income, most people would pursue a degree programme in this field. However, business administration received a considerable interest. The general assumptions among students seem to be that a degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management or Business Administration can improve their chances for success in their professional career.

In regard to **perception**, the results in Figure 15 revealed the quite a large number of the respondents don not have an opinion about Haaga-Helia, as 63% of the respondents reported that they have never heard of it.

This did not come as a surprise because up until recent, Haaga-Helia has concentrated within the domestic market. However, 34% of the respondents reported that they have heard of Haaga-Helia and their perception is that Haaga-Helia is a good educational institution. As secondary data show, Albania and Finland are officially in cooperation negotiations. Albania is carefully studying the Finnish educational system, and it has started a nationwide promotional campaign to increase awareness about the Finnish education system. This fact can be one reason why a considerable amount of respondents have heard about Haaga-Helia.

**In regard to the interest in studying in Finland results in Figure 16 showed that some of the respondents are not interested in studying in Finland.**

One possible explanation could be that the high cost of living in Finland which it may have some impact here.

Referring to Figure 16, 37% of the respondents reported that they are **somehow interested** in studying in Finland. 29% or the respondents said they are **interested**, and 10% or the respondents reported that they are **very interested** in studying in Finland.

There can be two options explaining these result. One possible option can be the results of the promotional campaign launched by Albania's government to increase awareness of the high-quality of the Finnish education system, and the second option can be the attention that the Albanian media dedicates to the Finnish education system. Higher education in Albania is tuition based. These are quite positive results, and represent some good opportunity to attract students to study in Finland.

Research results in Figure 17 showed that the majority of the students would prefer the **online** option as their primary method of studies**.** The online option came in first with the interest of 75% of the respondents. Albania came in second with the interest of 61% from the total responses. And finally, Haaga-Helia campus in Helsinki received a considerable interest of 36% out of the total respondents.

The results were quite surprising. The expectations were that Albania and Helsinki would come either first or second. However, technology has become a huge part of our life and it has changed the way we conduct business, travel, communicate and study. Online studies are quite flexible, students can study at their own pace, and at their own comfort. Additionally, online studies are affordable, and students don't have to pay for travel expenses or accommodation fees during their studies.

Results in Figure 18 showed that out those who prefer to study **online**, 46% would prefer to study **Business Administration. Information Technology** came in second with an interest of 29%. **Hospitality & Tourism Management** received an interest of 18%. Out ot the total 4% of the respondents reported that would like to study **Multilingual Management Assistant programme**, and 3% of the respondents reported that they would like to study some type **short courses.**

These results were very surprising. Since Hospitality and Tourism Management received the highest interest from the respondents, we were expecting this to be in one of the top choices among students who would like to study online. A logical explanation here can be that young people associate "Tourism studies" with the opportunity to travel to new, interesting and exciting places. Business Administration can be easier to study online as a lot of information is already available from online sources, whereas Hospitality & Tourism and

Management may require some practical or fieldwork. As far as the interest in studying Information Technology is concerned, one possible explanation could be that students feel that they can learn more by using computers during their learning, as computers can be used for testing their learning at the same time.

## 4.4    Recommendations

Secondary and primary research revealed some great answer to the research problem. Particularly, secondary research shows that teacher training is needed in the country, and action plans are already in motion. Further, Albania is proactively working towards developing country's education system, the judicial system, infrastructure, and much more. Therefore, we recommend the following for the commissioning company.

**Further research**

Further market research should be conducted to identify the training programmes needed in Albanian. This information can help Haaga-Helia understand what is needed in Albania, and prepare an attractive service portfolio which meets the market needs and demands.

**Actively seek business partnerships with Albanian government agencies**

In the matter of seeking business partnerships with Albanian government agencies, we firmly recommend to actively follow new development plans, trends and social shift in the country. Contact Government agencies and offer them expertise and training services, which are not only much needed, but the government is paying substantial amounts of money for.

**Offer online consultation, training and Degrees/courses**

It would be wise to offer either "Trial" recorded or live online consultation sessions for HEIs and business. Similarly, offer online courses for students as well. Online training/studying is quite affordable, and this seems to be the trend in Albania now. Offering online service will not only generate business, but it will also help establish brand identity in the country.

**Establish brand identity through partnerships with Albanian or foreign universities in Albania**

We recommend to partner with HEIs in Albania. These HEIs in Albania already have business intelligence about the country's needs, they have the implementation platforms set up, existing marketing channels, and clients to whom Haaga-Helia can appeal to though partnering with HEIs.

# 5   Conclusion

Globalization and technology, combined with economic growth and strong ambitions, have resulted in demand increase for goods and services other than one's own country's goods and services, and education is no exception. In fact, education is arguably one of the most demanded commodity for which students, companies, and especially governments are paying incredibly high prices.

As we sought answers to a fundamental human capital development phenomena, this thesis has identified Albania's national strategy to increase human capital capacity through the education system development. The average number of annual training projects for academic staff for each public university that the government will finance. Albanian's government investment plans towards improving the country's infrastructure. The number of teachers that need training in Albania. The degree programmes that students would like to study. Finally, this thesis has identified HEIs' and organizations' preferred location and method for employee training, and students' preferred location and method for their studies

Albania is a country with a young, dynamic and mobile population, where major reforms are being implemented, and heavy investments are made to develop capital capacity. Thus, we conclude with a quote: "Need identification is only worth if one has value capturing ambitions".

## Learning experience

The author's anticipated learning expectations were to gain a deeper understanding of how the education industry works. Further, to expand his knowledge on customer needs identification strategies, and to strengthen the expertise in research processes, data collection, and data analysis methods.

However, throughout the research process, some minor issues arose. The initial plan was to conduct face-to-face interviews with students. This proved to be a challenge, as most of the students were not willing to spare a few minutes of their busy schedules to give face-to-face interviews. This fact had us seeking alternative solutions for the data collection. Prior to data collection, books and online articles study suggested that the internet can be a very effective way to collect information. Therefore, we learned that utilizing technology can help us get the information we needed without having to spend days standing in the front of universities in hopes to get a few interviews.

For the data collection, we used Google Docs™. While this tool is quite user-friendly and effective, it has some limitations. Although not a major issue, but the built-in data analysis options are quite limited and data collected requires a lot of manual editing and coding.

The overall learning experience was positive and rewarding. Literature studies provided some great information about needs identification strategies, research processes, data collection and data analysis methods which extended the author's knowledge and expertise in this field. Statistical data analysis and interpretation helped to further develop skills in data analysis and presenting the results in a professional manner. The study of secondary data provided the opportunity to learn about understanding the market needs, identifying market challenges and market opportunities. Challenges provided the opportunity to learn about other effective alternatives and tools to completing the research.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1. Structured Questionnaire for HEIs & organizations – Albanian translation

| | |
|---|---|
| **Prezantimi dhe leja për të përdorë të dhënat për analizim dhe prodhim statistik** | Qëllimi i kësaj interviste është për të të identifikuar nivelin e interesit për mundësi partneriteti mes biznesit tuaj dhe Haaga-Helia Universiteti i Shkencave të Aplikuara (USHA).<br><br>Autori me këtë rast kërkon miratimin e të intervistuarit që të përdorë të dhënat këtu për analizim dhe prodhim statistik te ketyrë informacioneve, të cilat do të jenë të dobishme për të dyja palët.<br><br>Duke iu përgjigjur pyetjeve në vijim, i intervistuari, konfirmon se ka lexuar dhe kuptuar plotësisht marrëveshjen e mësipërmë dhe autorizon autorin për përdorimin e informacioneve. |

| **Pyetjet** | **Opcionet** |
|---|---|
| Në ç'farë kategorië të biznesit jeni ju? | |
| Sa punëtorë punëson kompanija juaj? | |
| Ç'farë programesh trajnimi keni në dispozicion të punojsvë tuaj? | |
| Sa arrijnë shpenzimët e trajnimit të punëtorevë në vit? | |
| Me te cilët institucione bashkëpunoni momentalisht për traijnimin e punëtorëvë? | |

| | |
|---|---|
| A jeni të interesuar të bash-këpunoni për traijnim te punëto-rëvë me Haaga-Helia:n (Universi-teti i Shkencave të Aplikuara)? | ☐ Shumë i interesuar<br>☐ I interesuar<br>☐ Disi i interesuar<br>☐ Jo i interesuar |
| Haaga-Helia ofron një shumëllojshmëri shërbimesh: Cila nga shërbimet e mëposhtmë ju interesojnë më shumë? | ☐ Programet e trajnimesh<br>   Programet e zhvillimit ekzekutiv (eMBA)<br>☐ Programet e zhvillimet profesionale (të përshtatura për personelin)<br>☐ Projekte zhvillimi në bashkëpunim me kom-panitë dhe institucionet locale<br>☐ Konsultim biznesi në fushën e ekspertizës<br>☐ Research<br>☐ Kurse të shkurtra. (Përshtatur për nevojat specifike të kompanisë) |
| Cili është vend i preferuar për marrjen e këtyrë shërbimeve? | ☐ Në objektin tonë në Shqiperi<br>☐ Në objetin a Haaga-Helia:s në Helsinki<br>☐ Online, me anë të internetit |
| Cili është vendbanimi juaj? | |
| Cilat jane nformacionet për kon-taktim me ju? | |
| Cili është titulli juaj në këtë instuti-cion? | |
| **CLOSING** | **Form submitted – Thank you!** |

**Appendix 2. Structured Questionnaire for Students – Albanian translation**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Prezantimi dhe leja për të përdorë të dhënat për analizim dhe prodhim statistik** | Qëllimi i kësaj interviste është për të të identifikuar nivelin e interesit për të studiuar në Haaga-Helia Universiteti i Shkencave të Aplikuara (USHA), Finlande.<br><br>Autori me këtë rast kërkon miratimin e të intervistuarit që të përdorë të dhënat këtu për analizim dhe prodhim statistik te ketyrë informacioneve, të cilat do të jenë të dobishme për të dyja palët.<br><br>Duke u përgjigjur pyetjeve në vijim, i intervistuari, konfirmon se ka lexuar dhe kuptuar plotësisht marrëveshjën e mësipërmë dhe autorizon autorin për përdorimin e informacioneve. |

| **Pyetjet** | **Opcionet** |
|---|---|
| Ç'farë programi studioni aktualisht? | |
| Ku deshironi te studioni jashtë vendit apo në Shqipëri? | |
| Nësë jashtë vendit: Cili shtet ju intereson më shumë? | |
| A jeni i intërësuar të studioni në Finland? | ☐ Shumë i interesuar<br>☐ I interesuar<br>☐ Disi i interesuar<br>☐ Jo i interesuar |
| C'farë përshtypjesh keni për instuticionin e arsimit Haaga-Helia (Universiteti i Shkencave të Aplikuara)? | ☐ Së kam dëgjuar asnjëherë<br>☐ Institucion arsimor i mire<br>☐ Institucion arsimor prestigjoz |

| | |
|---|---|
| Haaga-Helia ofron një shumëllojshmëri studimesh: Nga programët e mëposhtmë, të cilët ju interesojnë më shumë?<br><br>(Mund të zgjidhni më shumë se një opcion) | ☐ Teknologji dhe informatike<br>☐ Administrim Biznesi<br>☐ Programet me shkallë të dyfishtë. (Turizëm dhe menaxhimi)<br>☐ Programët gjuhësorë<br>☐ Sport dhe argetim<br>☐ Research<br>☐ Kurse të shkurtra<br>☐ Asnje nga keto |
| Në qoftëse jeni të intërësuar që të studioni në Haaga-Helia; cilet nga vende apo metodat e mëposhtmë ju pështatën më teper?<br>(Mund të zgjidhni më shumë se një opcion) | ☐ Shqipëri<br>☐ Kampusi Haaga-Helia në (Helsinki)<br>☐ Online |
| Si e keni emrin? | |
| Sa vjeç jeni? | |
| Cila është gjinia juaj? | |
| Ku jetoni? | |
| Ne ç'vit jeni? | |
| **CLOSING** | **Form submitted – Thank you!** |

**Appendix 3. Structured Questionnaire for HEIs & organizations – English translation**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Introduction and permission agreement to use the data for statistical analysis** | The purpose of this interview is to identify your level of interest to study at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (USHA), Finland.<br><br>The author in this case requests your approval to use the information for statistical analysis.<br><br>By answering the following questions, you confirm that that you have read and completely understood the agreement and authorizes the author to use the information for statistical data analysis |

| **Questions** | **Answers** |
|---|---|
| What category of business are you in? | |
| How many employees does your business employ? | |
| What employee-training programmes do you currently have available? | |
| How much do you spend on employee training? | |
| Who are your training partners/institutions? | |
| Are you interested in working with Haaga-Helia (UAS) for your employee training? | ☐ Very interested<br>☐ Interested<br>☐ Somehow interested<br>☐ Not interested |

| | |
|---|---|
| Which of the following Haaga-He-lia programmes interest you the most? | ☐ Tailored training programmes and modules<br>☐ Executive development programmes (eMBA).<br>☐ Professional developments programmes (tailored for personnel)<br>☐ Development projects in cooperation with local companies and institutions<br>☐ Business consultation in fields of expertise<br>☐ Research<br>☐ Short training courses (tailored for personnel) |
| What is the preferred place/method for training your employees? | ☐ Own premises (Albania)<br>☐ Haaga-Helia (Helsinki)<br>☐ Online |
| Where is your business based? | |
| What are your contact details? | |
| What is your title? | |
| **CLOSING** | **Form submitted – Thank you!** |

**Appendix 4. Structured Questionnaire for Students – English translation**

| Introduction and permission agreement to use the data for statistical analysis | The purpose of this interview is to identify your level of interest to study at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (USHA), Finland.<br><br>The author in this case requests your approval to use the information for statistical analysis.<br><br>By answering the following questions, you confirm that that you have read and completely understood the agreement and authorizes the author to use the information for statistical data analysis |
| --- | --- |

| **Questions** | **Responses** |
| --- | --- |
| What degree programme do you currently study? | |
| Where do you prefer to study – abroad or in Albania? | |
| If abroad, what country interests you the most? | |
| Are you interested in studying in Finland? | ☐ Very interested<br>☐ Interested<br>☐ Somehow Interested<br>☐ Not Interested |
| What is your perception of Haaga-Helia (UAS)? | ☐ I have never heard of it<br>☐ Good educational institution<br>☐ Prestige educational institution |

| | |
|---|---|
| Haaga-Helia offers a variety of degree programmes – which of the following interests you the most?<br><br>(Please select all that apply) | ☐ Information Technology<br>☐ Business Administration<br>☐ Dual degree programmes. (Hospitality and Tourism Management)<br>☐ Language courses<br>☐ Sports and Leisure Management<br>☐ Research<br>☐ Short courses<br>☐ None of the above |
| What is your preferred method/location of obtaining Haaga-Helia educations services? | ☐ Albania<br>☐ Haaga-Helia in (Helsinki)<br>☐ Online |
| What is your name? | |
| How old are you? | |
| What is your gender? | |
| Where do you live? | |
| What year of your studies are you in? | |
| **CLOSING** | **Form submitted – Thank you!** |

**Appendix 5. Questions for HEIs, businesses, and students – reorganized**

**Questions for HEIs and Businesses:**
1. What is your title?
2. What category of business are you in?
3. Where is your business based?
4. How many employees does your company employ?
5. What employee-training programmes do you currently have available
6. How much do you spend on employee training?
7. Who are your training partners/institutions?
8. Are you interested in working with Haaga-Helia (UAS) for your employee training?
9. Which of the following Haaga-Helia programmes interest you the most? (See sub-chapter 1.6.1 for options of the degree programmes that Haaga-Helia offers).
10. What is the preferred place/method for training provision?
11. What are your contact details?

**Questions for students:**
1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. What is your gender?
4. What city do you live in?
5. What year of your studies are you in?
6. What degree programme do you currently study?
7. Where do you prefer to study – abroad or in Albania?
8. If abroad, what country interests you the most?
9. Are you interested in studying in Finland?
10. What is your perception of Haaga-Helia (UAS)?
11. Haaga-Helia offers a variety of degree programmes – which of the following interests you the most? (See sub-chapter 1.6.1 for options of the degree programmes that Haaga-Helia offers).
12. What is your preferred method/location of obtaining Haaga-Helia educations services? (Options given were, Albania, Haaga-Helia campus in Helsinki or online)