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STUDY ON THE MARKETING STRATEGY OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION INSTITUTION (CASE COMPANY SAMK  
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS)

Degree Programme in International Business  
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Study of Marketing strategy of higher educational institution (case company SAMK International business)

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The purpose of conducting this thesis was to study on the marketing strategy of an educational institution. The aim of this thesis was to study on current marketing strategy and suggest the case company with new and effective ideas for marketing.

The theoretical part of this thesis hold three main elements with basic knowledge of marketing. Along with marketing mix, this thesis also covered segmentation as well as marketing strategy. For the time being, SWOT approach was utilized to analyze the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat of case company. Furthermore, along with the importance of marketing in education the importance of social media as well as digital media was enclosed in the thesis.

The background information and practical data for the marketing strategy was reunited from both primary as well as secondary data. Those can be found not only from academic books, official websites, articles and journals but also from the writers own observation while studying in case company and the interview with the communication and marketing specialist of SAMK.

For the empirical part of the thesis, the overview on Satakunta university of applied science has been shaped with its different faculty in different cities as well as various educational and non-educational facilities. In the second part, marketing strategy of case company was researched and analyzed in detail. With the above study and research, the writer was able to produce several recommendations for the case company which will help case company to extend its strategy in new areas.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

Degree program in International business is one of many faculties included in the study programs of Satakunta university of applied science situated in Rauma campus. Degree program in international business is all about problem based learning which helps to inspire as well as challenge students to learn. In addition, the specialty of international business is learning in an international environment. Students from various parts of the world with distinct cultures, traditions, values, lifestyle gather together at Rauma campus and share learning activities with each another.

My connection with case company is that I am one of the International Business student at Rauma campus. On autumn 2016, I participated for the project called YouTube marketing where we were supposed to prepare YouTube video which would help SAMK to attract new international as well as national students to study international business program in Rauma. While working in that project the idea of this thesis was generated.

The purpose of this thesis is to acknowledge the marketing and promotional activities of international business SAMK. Meanwhile, it will also try to find out the focus area while doing the promotion. This study will try to find out effective channel of promotion which has been used in the past and try to expand it to the new areas in future. The goal of this thesis is to provide detail view on marketing strategy and provide SAMK with some suggestions and innovative ideas which will be gathered during this study.

## 1.2 Aims and objective

Finland was the country which used to provide free education to the students from all over the world. However, the current situation is different. After the change in rules by the government of Finland, student outside EU country should pay certain amount

of money for the study placement. In this scenario, there might be doubt that the student outside EU countries may not apply for study placement. Additionally, there are so many universities in Finland with similar faculties and facilities. To sustain in such competitions, the case company must have a very effective marketing strategy to attract new students. Furthermore, this thesis will also try to find out the effective medias, students are using to know about the case company which will help case company to reach their new international and national students.

To reach to the outcome of the thesis it is very necessary to answer following question:

1. What are the promotional strategy of international business SAMK?
2. What are the effective channels to reach new national and international students?
3. What are the medium students are using to apply in SAMK?

### 1.3 Limitation of the thesis

This thesis is made to understand the strategies, the case company is implementing in marketing activities. Because the case company is a very big educational institution there are some limitation and boundaries which I must maintain and these limitations are stated below:

- Case company is a very big educational institution with many facilities and degree program. So, to have efficient result of the thesis, this thesis will only study and research about one degree program i.e. Degree Program in International Business.
- The purpose of this thesis is to have better understanding on marketing strategy so, other areas such as market analysis, competitors and other issue of the case company will not be covered.
- While doing the research, survey and interview, the normal flow of work will not be hampered.
- All the information and theories in this project will be sourced from academic books and journals, articles, industrial website and research paper. The information from non-reliable sources will not be used.

## 1.4 Conceptual framework

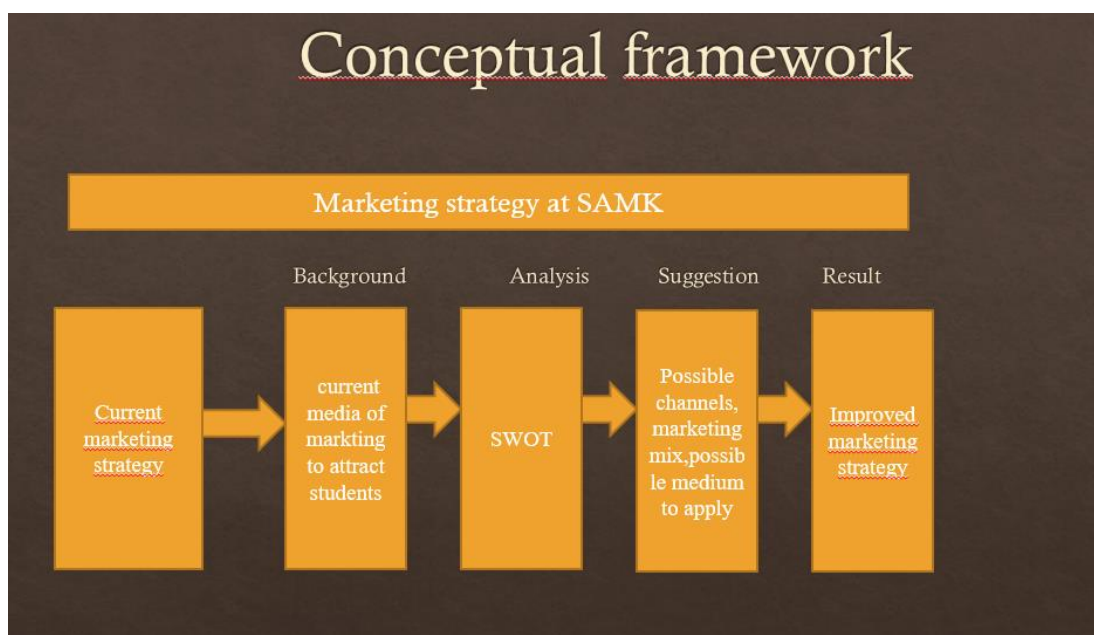


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of thesis

A conceptual framework is a theoretical assumption, principle and the rules that hold together the ideas comprising a broad concept. (Website of business dictionary) It is based on the purpose and objective of thesis. The whole idea of making conceptual framework is to receive the best possible outcome. For this thesis, it is very essential that the marketing strategy of the case company is researched which ensures analysis and possible suggestion could be offered.

In the first part, this thesis will cover the current situation of marketing strategy of the case company. Meanwhile, it will cover the current media of marketing which has been successful to attract students. Secondly, SWOT will be used to analyze the situation of this case company. After implementing all the above activities, this thesis will find out the possible channels to attract more student and will provide possible suggestions about marketing strategies. Because of this thesis, we will be able to create the improved marketing strategy for this case company.

## 2 CASE COMPANY



Figure 2. SAMK Rauma campus

Founded in 1997, Satakunta university of applied science is a non-profit public higher education institution located in Satakunta region. Officially recognised by ministry of education and culture, Finland SAMK is a medium sized (6000-6999 students) co-educational higher education institution. SAMK offers courses and programs leading to officially recognised higher education degrees such as bachelor and master's degrees in several areas of study. This 20-year-old higher education institution has a selective admission policy based on entrance exams and students past academic records and grades. SAMK also provides several academic and non-academic facilities and services to students including library, sport facilities/activities, study abroad and exchange programs, online courses and distance learning opportunities as well as administrative services. (website of Unirank 2017)



While at the starting of this thesis, SAMK has five campuses in four cities. The Tiedepuisto and Tiilimaki campuses are in Pori, the SAMK campus in Rauma, the fine arts campus in Kankaanpää and the Kuninkainen campus in Huittinen. Social service and healthcare teaching including the English language degree programme in physiotherapy are in Tiilimaki and technology, IT and engineering, business and tourism in Tiedepuisto. The campuses in Rauma was updated in 2016. International Business, logistics and maritime management, maritime engineering is in Rauma. The Fine Arts offer Bachelors and Master's degrees in Fine Arts. The Kuinkainen campus in Huittinen is the home of the popular adult education programmes in public administration and the legal aspects of business administration SAMK online education concept HILL was developed here and the studying mostly happens online. Now from May 2017, all the courses in Pori will be gathered together in new building and new learning environment. The new campus facility has been designed completely new perspective for variation acoustically functional class rooms with different ways to learn and to teach are possible (Website of the Satakunta University of Applied Sciences)

The vision of SAMK is that all the students of SAMK will be employed. Students are provided with the best possible skills for employment by education customised to the needs of the area, comprehensive co-operation with the employment market and an entrepreneurial attitude. The task of SAMK is to provide experts and developers for the required employers and promotes internationally and entrepreneurship in Satakunta. (Website of the Satakunta University of Applied Sciences)

### 3 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this thesis is to study the marketing strategy of this case company as well as to figure out the possible medium to improve the marketing strategy for future. For this, it is very necessary for the writer to use qualitative as well as quantitative research approaches. The nature of this thesis is such that it needs a lot of interviews and surveys as well as behaviour of students and staff. This method will provide the exact information about international business SAMK's strategy and help the writer to

do further study. As the writer studies in the case company some of the things will be on writers point of view and observation of the case company.

Qualitative research is used predominantly as a synonym for any data collection technique such as an interview, group discussion or data analysis procedures such as categorizing data that generates or use non-numerical data. (Sunders & Lewis 2009. 151). The benefits of qualitative research are that using open ended questions and interviews allows researchers and practitioners to understand how individuals are doing, what their experiences are, and recognize important antecedents and outcome of interest that might not surface when surveyed with pre-determined questions. (Website of the Chronicle 2014)

Quantitative research is largely used as a synonym for any data collection technique or data analysis procedure that generates or uses numerical data. (Sunders & Lewis 2009. 151). Survey is one of the technique of quantitative research. Surveys are popular as they allow the collection of a large amount of data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way.

The qualitative and quantitative approach to research allows a different prospective of situations or occurrences. These two main approaches to research a highly edifying, especially if used in combination. Each approach has its benefits and detriments, and being aware of methods used to gather information can help practitioners and policy maker understand the extent to which findings can be applied. (Website of the Chronicle 2014)

### 3.1 Validity and reliability

Reliability estimates the consistency of the measurement or more simply the degree to which an instrument measures the same way each time. It is used under the same condition with the same subjects. Reliability is all about consistency. If we are measuring something so many times and the outcome is always the same then we can say that the result is reliable. While, validity is the strength of our conclusions, inferences or propositions. It involves the degree to which you are measuring what you are supposed to,

more simply, the accuracy of your measurement. Researchers must ensure that the data gathered while conducting the study should be reliable, up-to-date as well as logical and persuasive. (Adams &Khan, 2007 235-237)

For this thesis, validity and reliability of the theory and research is ensured by using up-to-date materials that was available. The theory part of this thesis is from the academic books journals and official websites. Background information of this case company is taken from the official website as well as from the research conducted by trusted institution. In terms of empirical part, the information is collected from the survey conducted within the students. While, the interview for this research were collected from the different people who have each of their own role in marketing strategy for the case company.

### 3.2 Data collection and analysis

There are two principle method of collecting data. One is primary data collection method and second is secondary data collection method. The difference between these two approach is that primary data collection method collects data from direct occasion while secondary data are those kinds of data which are collected from reliable and valuable sources. (Adams 2007, 107)

In primary data collection, the data is collected using methods such as interview and questionnaires. It is important to prepare tabulation plan and based on its design the questionnaires to make sure that no table will be left out. The main method of collecting primary data include:

- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Focus group interview
- Observation
- Case studies
- Diaries
- Critical incidents
- portfolios

(website of Arab institute for training and statistical research 2014)

Secondary data are those kinds of data which are collected through books and internet. These data are collected, researched and analyzed officially from the reliable sources. Secondary data can be used as the main source for your research or as a supplement to data you collect. Secondary data are often used to validate your sample. This way it is easy for students, researchers and even specialist to explore and utilize the information together with verifying its authenticity. There is some problem with secondary data that must be considered, such as, is it valid to your study and is it representative?

For the theoretical part of the thesis, the secondary data were collected through some literature from school library and some related website to provide a reliable background for this thesis. To gather the exact and more detailed information about marketing strategy of degree program in international business SAMK, the primary data were also used. I interviewed Elina Valkama, communication and marketing specialist of SAMK. The survey which was conducted within the students who are currently studying degree program in International Business at SAMK Rauma. The questions for interview and survey were mainly focused on marketing mix strategy and marketing environment of SAMK.

#### 4 MARKETING IN EDUCATION

Today education management is considered a survival condition as well as condition of modern society development. Competitive institution is called only those which in the easiest way, adapt to change of the environment and first adapt innovations. Application of a marketing strategy enables quality improvement in the system of higher education through synergic application of marketing mix to create that correspondents to the expectations of target market and deliver a superior value. (Gajic 2012, 30)

Communication of a higher education institution with target market requires a specific approach, since the decision on the choice of faculty is made once in a lifetime. It is defined by time and the decision-making process depends on the family, friends,

school, and media and therefore it should be created in a way in which a mixture of marketing communication influences stated segments of target public. (Gajic 2012, 32)

When defining the marketing mix for educational institution, special attention must be paid to service distribution. It is necessary to predefine attractive geographic frame, in which service delivery will be in accordance with the needs and requirements of the target market, respecting the factors acting in a background.

The main goal of marketing higher education institution is to define quality education system, market oriented, whereby one cannot ignore the institution prime role and function, which is to provide a specific type of service of general social benefit in accordance with its needs. Marketing strategies and activities of business marketing in education system are limited, much more than in other service and production industries, due to the direct influence of state regulation defining the educational system, with established control mechanism of accreditation bodies prescribing the evaluation system as well as control system. (Gajic 2012, 32)

Basic role of a marketing strategy is to combine competence and other strategies of an educational institution, to coordinate challenge and constrains of the environment and to find best way to realize its mission and vision. Therefore, in order for the organization to be able to meet contemporary requirement of ever changing business requirement, it is necessary that it itself become subject to change and initiate them on its own. (Gajic 2012, 30)

Formulation of higher educational institution marketing strategy includes decision about:

- The institution's current program and markets whether to maintain build or drop them.
- Future new program and market opportunities.
- Analysis of competitors.
- Positioning of institutions in relation to competitors
- Selection of target market and designing of the marketing mix. (Kotler and keller, 2009)

The increasing global marketisation of higher education institution has led many higher education institutions to develop international marketing strategies for international student requirement while previously the focus of the educational marketing was largely domestically focused, in recent years, there has been an exponential growth in the interest of higher educational institutions in international marketing as they reach out to potential students across their national boundaries. This interest in international has not been limited as an individual institutional level but has also been adopted at a national level in many countries where national governments realizing the export earning potential of education services, are prompting the benefits of studying in their respective countries. (Naidoo & Wu 2011)

The elements of globalization in a higher education are widespread and multifaceted and the higher education market is now well established as the global phenomenon especially in major English speaking nations. In parallel, as the response to these global dynamics the value, effectiveness and potential benefits of using marketing theories and concepts which have been effective in the business world, are gradually now being applied to many universities with a view of gaining a competitive edge. (Durkin, McKenna & Cummins 2012)

## 5 MARKETING STRATEGY

### 5.1 Marketing

Marketing, more than any other business function deals with customer. Building customer relationship based on customer value and satisfaction is at the heart of very modern marketing. Marketing is managing profitable customer relationship. The two important qualities of marketing are to attract new customers by promising superior value and to keep and grow current customer by delivering satisfaction (Kotler, Armstrong)

Many people think that marketing is all about selling and advertising. There is no doubt, we only see lots of television commercials, newspaper advertisements, direct mail offer, sales call and internet pitches. However, selling and advertising are only the small part of marketing strategy. In today's world, marketing must be understood not as an old point of view as only selling and telling but in new and modern sense as satisfying customer needs and demands. If the marketer become able to understand customer needs, develop product or service that provide superior value and prices distributes and promotes them and effectively these product or service will be successful in the market. (Kotler, Armstrong)

Beside these above points, there are many other important benefits of marketing. Research is the key element of the company where marketing research help the company to know about the customers, the target market, industry as well as product -and service you develop and offer. Similarly, the company may have best product or service which provides the greatest solution to the problems but without marketing no one will know about it. The promotional component of marketing is the key in getting the word out to target customers that you have something beneficial to offer. Furthermore, marketing will help the company or organization to interact with their customer. Through various digital media as well as social media companies can get more direct audience with its customer. (Kotler, Armstrong)

## 5.2 Marketing mix

Marketing mix refers to the set of actions and tactics that company uses to promote its brand or product in the market. The typical 4ps of marketing include product, price, place, promotion. However, now a days marketing mix include several other p's process, physical evidence, people. All the element of marketing mix influence each other and if these marketing mix are handled rightly, it can provide tremendous success in business.

### 5.2.1 Product

A product refers to an item that satisfy the customer's needs and wants. The product can be tangible such as goods and intangible such as service, idea and experience. The choice of what product or service and benefits should be offer to the group of customers is known as the product decision. (foundation of marketing, jobber & Fahy). The key point is that what people buy. buying is not product itself but the value it offers which just meets people

Today, as the product and service become more and more commoditized, many companies are moving to new level in creating value of their customers. To differentiate their offers they are developing and delivering total customer experience. Whereas, product is tangible and service are intangible, experiences are memorable. Similarly, products and service ae external and experience are personal and take place in the mind of individual consumer. Companies that market experiences realize that customer are really buying much more than just product and service. (Kotler & Armstrong)

Service product lie at the heart of firms marketing strategy. If the product or service is poorly designed it won't create meaningful value to the customer even if the rest of the elements of marketing mix are well executed. Planning the marketing mix begins with creating the service concept that will offer value to target customer and satisfy their needs better than competing alternative. Service product consist of core product that meets the customer's primary needs and variety of supplementary service elements that are mutually reinforcing and added value to help customer to use core products more effectively. (lovelock & wirtz ).

When it comes to education as a product Kotler refers to as curricula and services. Offering service special challenge because most services are intangible, inseparable, variable and perishable. Educational service is such kind of service which do not exist until the service provider performs the service usually in the presence of the customer. The professor can expect responses from students their puzzle look during their lecture or their vague answers on a quiz and modify the course content and explanations. (Gajic 2012, 32)



The most crucial decision, when considering marketing mix in educational institution is which curriculum and services are to be offered to the students, partners and other public. An institutional program/service mix contains of all the programs and services that the institution makes available. For example, many universities offer educational program, such as classes, library, and information services, computer laboratory, campuses lecture etc. similarly, recreational program like athletic facilities, and clubs, dances, movies etc. personal growth program and services like counseling center and advisors. Curative service and future planning programs and services like health service career counseling, placement service etc. (Gajic 2012, 32)

The case company, SAMK is providing quality education in International Business to its students as their best product. This is one of the most popular degree program SAMK is offering to their students. In this degree program, most of the international students from all over the world is enrolling. This degree program will prepare students to work on broad scale on task in the international business environment. After studying International Business at SAMK, students will be able to gain competence in international business with the focus on marketing logistics, distribution management, business analysis and service design. (Website of the Satakunta University of Applied Sciences)

### 5.2.2 Price

In a narrow sense, price is the amount of money charged for the product or service. More broadly, price is the sum of all the values that consumer exchange for the benefits of having or using the product or service. Historically, price has been the major factor affecting buyer choice. This is still true in poorer nations, among poorer groups, and with commodity products. Price is the only element in the marketing mix that produces revenue, all the other element represent cost. Price is also one of the most flexible elements of the marketing mix. Unlike product feature and channel commitments price can be changed quickly. At the same time, pricing and price competition is the number one problem facing many marketing executives. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 345)

A company's pricing decisions are affected by both internal company factor and external environmental factor. Marketing objective is one of the internal factor affecting pricing decision. Before setting a price, the company must decide on its strategy for the product. If the company has selected its target market and positioning carefully, then its marketing mix strategy including price will be straight forward.

Similarly, many company use current profit maximization as their pricing goal. They estimate what demand and cost will be at different prices and choose the price that will produce the maximum current profit, cash flow or return on investment. Other companies want to obtain market share leadership. To become market share leader, these firms set prices as low as possible. For example: in Finland, there are some companies like lidl, jysk, who could set their price low to create more sales and profit. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 347-348)

Furthermore, marketing mix strategy is another crucial factor affecting pricing decision. Price is the only one of the marketing mix tools that a company uses to achieve its marketing objective. Price decision must be coordinated with product design, distribution and promotion decision. To form a constant and effective marketing program. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014,348)

More still, cost set the floor for the price that company can charge. The company wants to charge a price that both covers all its costs for producing, distributing and selling the product and delivers a fair rate of return for its effort and risks. A company cost may be a crucial element in its price strategy. Many companies such as southwest airlines, Wal-Mart, and union carbide work to become the low-cost producer in their industries. Companies with lower cost can set lower price that result in greater sales and profit. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014,350)

Similarly, there are some external factors which are affecting pricing decisions. Such as market and demand, competition, and other environmental elements. Cost set the lower limit of the price but market and demand set higher limit. Both consumer and industrial buyer balance the price of the product. Or service against the benefit of owning it. Thus, before setting prices, the marketer must understand the relation between price and demand of its product.

More still, competition is another factor affecting pricing decision. Cost and price and possible competitor reactions to the company own pricing moves. In addition, the company's pricing strategy may affect the nature of competition it faces. If any product follows a strategy of high price, high margin, it may attract the competition. While a low price low margin however, may stop competitors or drive them out of the market. Furthermore, economic condition, social concerns, government are the other factor affecting pricing decision. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014,352-357)

Education represents experience that cannot be evaluated before it has been experienced, and the results of attending some educational institution can be evident only after employment and starting professional carrier. Also, one should bear in mind that the price represents only one marketing mix components, through which user choice is influenced. Potential students, in addition to the tuition fee will also be interested in educational institution program, educational service quality location, way of communication and other characteristics. Many students, faculty students and their families are ready to pay a higher price to get quality education. When deciding an educational institution choice, location of an institution and its academic prestige can be crucial in making the decision, regardless of tuition fee price. Consideration and use of the price as a marketing instrument cannot be observed separately, rather only as a part of overall marketing strategy. (Gajic 2012, 33)

Before autumn 2017, Finland used to have free study policy but now onwards non-EU student must pay certain amount of money to have a study placement. SAMK has set its tuition fees and these amounts 7,000 euro per year which is 3,500 euro per academic semester. The tuition fee will be collected before the students enroll for the academic year. To attract new students, SAMK has started a strategy of providing good scholarship and grants. This scholarship and grants are for those who are obligatory to pay the tuition fees. (Website of the Satakunta University of Applied Sciences)

The criteria of receiving the scholarship is that the student must gain at least 55 ECTS for his/her degree per each academic year as present. The scholarship is available only for the optimum study time for the degree in question. If the student graduates during

the optimum study time. He/she will be paid a graduation grant. A bachelor degree student who applies for a scholarship and fills the criteria receives:

- A scholarship of 30% of the tuition fees for second academic year
- A scholarship of 50% of the tuition fee for a third academic year
- A scholarship of 70% of tuition fees for the rest of the optimum study time
- A graduation grant of 80% of tuition fees for graduation during the optimum study time. (Website of the Satakunta University of Applied Sciences)

### 5.2.3 Place

Place strategy is a fundamental role in a marketing mix of product and service. Place strategy outlines how and where a company will place its products and services is an attempt to gain market share and customer purchase. The component of 4ps is sometime referred to as the distribution strategy and many include stores both physical and online and any other means by which the company can reach its customer. For example, today banks offer a customer a very wide range of distribution channels, including visiting the bank branch using a network of ATMs, doing business by telephone and conducting banking transactions over the internet. (lovelock, chew & wirtz, 2012)

Deciding where to locate a service facility that will be visited by the customers involve very different considerations from decisions related to locating the backstage elements, where cost savings and access to labor are often key determinants. In the former case, question of customer convenience and preference come to the fore. Frequently purchased service that are not equally differentiated from competitors needed to be easily assessable to the customer homes or work places. (lovelock 2000, 344)

Although customer convenience is important, operational requirement set tight constraints for some services. Airports for example, are often inconveniently located to the traveler's home, office or destinations. Because of noise and environmental factor, finding suitable sites for construction of new airport or expansion of existing ones is a very difficult task. (Services marketing lovelock, 2000 345). More still, school and colleges are mostly located in very quiet and peaceful place rather than in the center

of the city. Because teaching and learning activities can't be done smoothly in noisy and crowded places.

Furthermore, the need for the economics of scale is another operational issue that may restrict choice of location. Major hospitals offer many different health care services even a medical school at a specific location, requiring a very large facility. Customers requiring complex, patient treatment must come to this service factory, rather than being treated at home. (Services marketing Lovelock, 2000, 345)

While concerning the delivery of educational services is how to make programs of higher education institutions more accessible and acceptable for students? When it comes to location of the institution, we should bear in mind multiple meanings of that term, first the location can refer to the place where the institution is. Then it can refer to the characteristics of the arena in which the institution is located. Location can also have a relative meaning which it can be viewed in relation to where current and future students and high school students live. Most educational institutions have already had their buildings in one or more places. Usually when an educational institution starts to think about improving efficiency of its work that is sought to be realized within the existing facilities. The institution in the first place, consider how to attract the users, to the existing building, while the idea of getting the clients more familiar with their offer is accepted slower. (Gajic 2012, 36)

SAMK Rauma campus is in Satamakatu 26, 26100 Rauma Finland. The campus building is in a very quiet and peaceful area. The area of campus is covered with beautiful and green Christmas trees and on the back side of campus building flows a very beautiful canal. The campus building is somehow far from city Centre but not that much far away. It is very near to the student apartment which makes student life easier. Students who travel every day from Turku, Pori and other cities nearby can easily get to the campus premises. Campus also has a very big parking space which is very beneficial for students who travel to school via own car.

### 5.2.4 Promotion

The basic promotional mix contains advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and public relation. The elements of promotional mix are not interchangeable, many more than ingredients in a recipe are interchangeable the task that calls for personal selling cannot be carried out by advertising nor can public relation task can be carried out by using sales promotion. Promotion is all about getting the message across to the customer in the most effective way and the receiver and the choice of method will depend on the message receiver and the desire defect. (Blythe2012, 195).

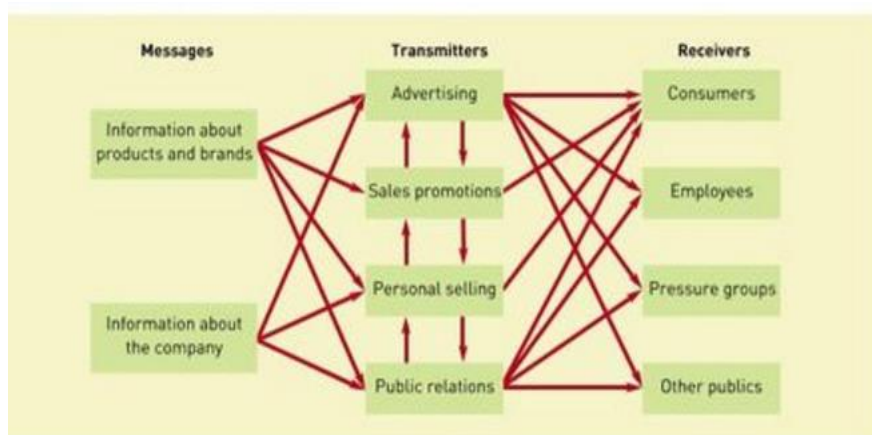


Figure. 3 The promotional mix (Blythe, 2012)

There are other promotional tools such as sponsorship, stage events, that do not fall under any of the categories of promotional mix. The definitions of the promotional mix and its example are elaborated below:

- **Advertising:** Advertising is the paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, and services by an identified sponsor. The example of promotional mix is print ads (newspaper and magazine) radio, television, billboard, direct mail, brochure and catalogs, signs, in store displays, posters, banner ads and emails.
- **Personal selling:** Personal selling is a process of helping and persuading one or more prospects to purchase a goods or service or to act on any idea using an oral presentation (person to person communication). The example of personal

selling are sales presentation, sales meetings, sales training and incentive programs for intermediary sales people, and tele marketing (either inbound or outbound).

- Sales promotion: Sales promotion are incentives designed to stimulate the purchase or sale of the product usually in the short term. The examples of sales promotions are coupons, sweepstakes, contests, product sample, rebates, tie-ins, self-liquidating premiums, trade shows, trade ins and exhibitions
- Public relation: public relation is a non-paid, non-personal stimulation of demand for a product, service or business unit by planting significant news about it or a favorable presentation of it in the media. The example of personal selling is: newspaper and imagines articles, TV and radio presentation, charitable contributions, speeches, issue advertising and seminars. (mullins, walker & boyd 2008, 332-333)

For the university to be successful it should find a way to promote its products and services. Higher education institution should effectively communicate with their products and public. It is not enough only to have good curricula and competitive prices, but the service user and all the interested proposition needs to be informed of the goals, activities offer to the institution and motivated to join and become users. That communication take place in several forms. Faculties, school and other educational institution are always sending out message to the public on their existence regardless of whether they formally have a communication program or not. Also, the institution must determine and get a comprehensive insight into information needs of internal environment. (Gajic 2012, 33)

Like any other business, promotion is very important for the higher educational as well. After the interview with Elina Valkama it was very clear that, to provide the detail information about the education which is offered, SAMK has done various adds such as advertisement and other necessary information on facebook, Instagram, YouTube ads, google ads, web2present webinar, study advisory, bachelor portal, Weibo (in china), VK.com (in Russia). Also, SAMK has done various press releases, events, student fairs, advertisement letters, and latest videos in YouTube. On the other hand, to attract the local Finnish students, on spring 2017 SAMK has done couple of ads in the local newspaper. Radio or Television ads were not undertaken this year.

Also, there was not any ads at radio, television or newspaper outside the Finland as well. When the government declared tuition fees for non-EU students, there has been made some changes in the promotion strategy.

As a result, although there wasn't any dramatic increment in the number of applicants compared to last year but it was not decreased as well. Degree program in International Business was the faculty which was offered by SAMK for many years now. But this year, SAMK started to offer four new bachelor's degree program and those programs also got honorable number of applicants. It means that, the strategy followed by SAMK for promotion is reaching to the students.

#### 5.2.5 Process

Service are process that are designed and managed to create the desired customer experience. Process described the step of how service operating system work and specify how they link together to create the experience desired by customer. In high contact service, customer is very much the part of the operation and the process become their experience. Badly designed process is likely to annoy customers because they often result in slow, frustrating and mediocre quality service delivery. Badly designed process also make difficult for frontline employees to do their jobs well, resulting in low productivity and the risk of service failure. (essential of service marketing 2012. 228)

Flowcharting is the technique for displaying the nature and sequence of the different step involve in delivering service to customers. It is an effortless way to understand the total customer service experience. By flowcharting the sequence of encounters that customer have with a service organization. We can gain valuable insights into the nature of an existing service. (Essential of service marketing 2012, 228)

The key tool that is used to document existing service process, redesign them, and even to design new service process is known as blueprinting. Blueprinting is a more complex form of flowcharting. A flow chart describes an existing process, often in a simple form to get a clearer picture of the steps a customer goes through receive and experience the service. In contrast, a blueprinting specifies in detail how a service process is



constructed, including what is visible to the customer and all that goes in the back office. (essential of service marketing 2012, 231)

Observing a service process, education falls into a category, which comprehends treatment of mental stimuli that refers to intangible actions oriented towards consequence of people. In this process, a student needs to be mentally present but can be located either at a very location where the service is created or at a distant location connected over telecommunication networks. Educational service is personal and characterized by intensive, intellectual, emotional or physical participation of the students in service process. Service are often realized in several steps which basically constitute the very service process. Production and consumption of educational service take place simultaneously and student participation in it is rather important. (Gajic 2012, 39)

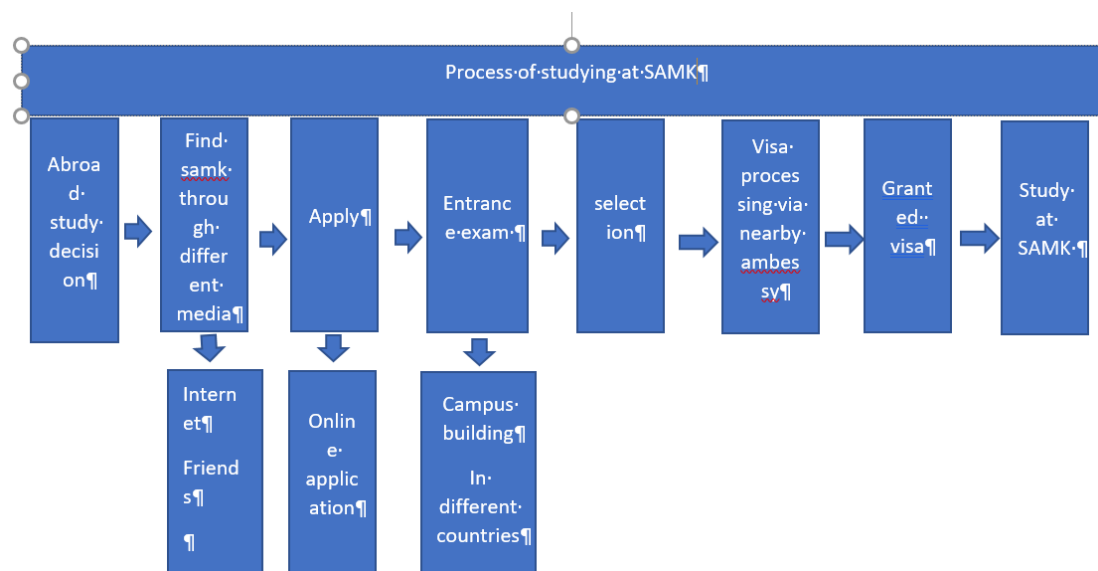


Figure 4. Admission process to study at SAMK until spring 2017

The admission process of international business at SAMK is very efficient. Before spring 2017, if the students who were interested to study abroad could find SAMK through various media such as internet, friends, study agent etc. then the student applied for their placement via SAMK official website. After couple of months of application SAMK organizes entrance exam at school as well as abroad. Student should reach to their convenient place and take exam. When the entrance result as well as

student past study history is evaluated, the right candidate receives the student placement. Students from outside the EU should apply for the resident permit and when the visa is granted, student will be flying to study at SAMK.

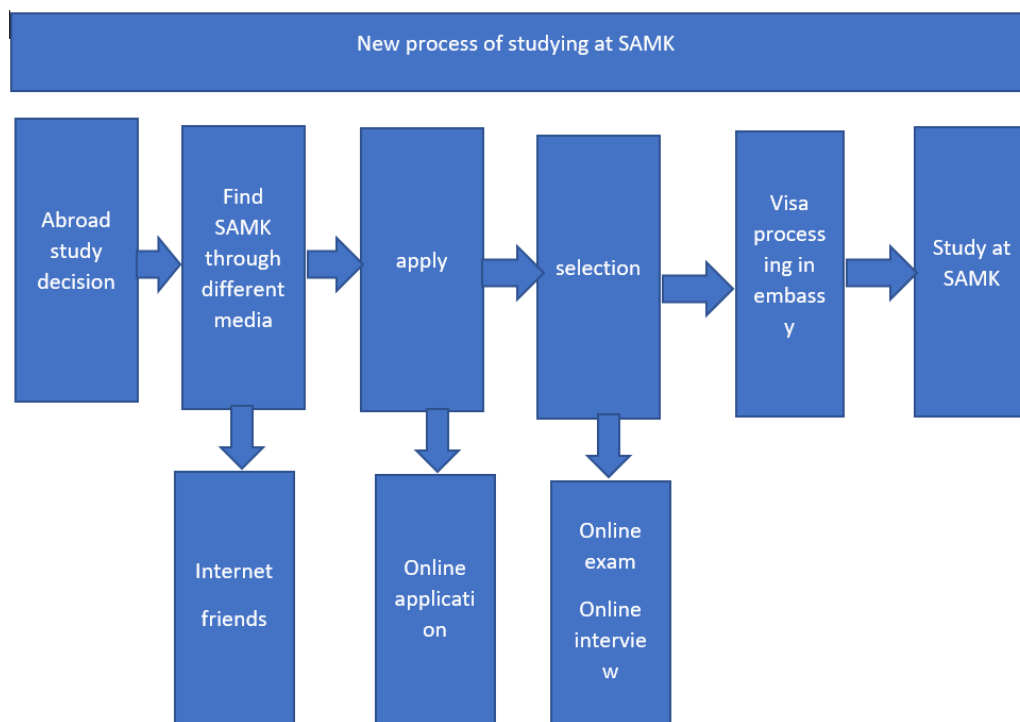


Figure 5. New admission process at SAMK

Previously, Finnips used to organize entrance exam abroad but now when SAMK drop out of Finnips and the admission process of SAMK was affected by that decision. When student applied for student placement, the written exam as well as interview will be held online. And the result will be evaluated based on online interview and written exam.

### 5.2.6 Physical element

Services are largely intangible when marketing. However, customer tend to rely on physical cues to help them evaluate the product before they buy it. Therefore, marketers develop physical elements to replace these physical clues in this service.

The physical service environment customer experience plays the key role in shaping the service experience and enhancing customer satisfaction especially so in high contact, people processing service. The good service environments that makes customer

feels comfortable and highly satisfied and live a long-lasting impression. In fact, organization from hospitals to hotels and from restaurants to the office of professional service firms has come to recognize that the service environment is a key component of their service marketing mix and overall value proposition. (service marketing, love-lock, wirtz. 2011 276)

Services are often intangible, and customer cannot assess their quality well. So, customers use the service environment as an important quality proxy, and firms take great pains to signal quality and portray the desire image. In retailing, the store environment effects how customer perceive the quality of its merchandise. However, if the physical environment is poorly designed then the service environment will drive the customer away. (service marketing, lovelock, wirtz. 2011 277)

Because the educational product is intangible the physical evidence plays a significant role as a proof of a product that is going to be delivered in the enrollment phase and as the proof of the knowledge acquired by the graduate as diploma. In the enrollment phase the buildings and facilities of the campus, the hardware and all the other tangible evidence reflects the quality of the service that is going to be delivered. All the physical evidence components contribute to the first impression. (Transylvania university 2011)

Physical environment can play a significant role in student's choice. It is one of the most major decision in life of young people and their families, that has caused modern educational institution to offer virtual tours, all with the purpose of providing future users with a closer insight in the environment, before making the decision which educational institution to enroll at. Internet technology allows the institution to make their service and environment more familiar to the users. Tangible image in the web creates expectations in users, posing standards of service delivery and it is very important for the service to meet those expectations. (Gajic 2012, 39)

Looking at Rauma campus from inside it is very big and comfortable. When we enter through main entrance, we can see big and luxurious sofas where student can sit with friends, talking, laughing and doing their own stuff. We can see green plants as well as trees inside the campus which makes the environment very pleasant. The lighting

inside the building is eye friendly and air condition is also nice. Inside campus, there are lots of things which student can do during their leisure time beside studying. The library facility inside building is commendable. We can find all books we need for our studies. In addition, the library has rooms for self-study where students can study by themselves. Normally, those spaces are used to study in groups. There are a lot of computers which students can use and all those computers relate to nice printer. All the student offices are located on the first floor which is very easy for students to find out. All the class rooms are in second and third floor of the building and all the class rooms are designed with advanced equipment and technology. Looking at the comfort of working students one room in third floor is designed in such a way that student can take rest as well as sleep during their spare time. Overall, the physical appearance of Rauma campus is nice and pleasant,

#### 5.2.7 People

One of the essential elements of marketing mix is people. This include everyone who is involved in the product directly or indirectly. Not these people get in touch with customers but all these people have their own role to play in the production, marketing, distribution and delivery of the product and service to the customers. Without people, all other element of marketing mix will not make a successful marketing mix formula. This aspect refers to those who are employed by the company to design develop and manufacture the product. People do marketing research to establish demand and determine customer needs, manage the supply chain to ensure timely delivery, provide support service and service touchpoints for customer interaction among others. (website of marketing mix.uk)

Behind most of today's successful service organization stands a firm commitment to effective management of human resource including recruitment, selection, training, motivation and retention of employees. Organization that display this commitment understand the economic payoff from investing to their people. These firms are also characterized by a distinctive culture of service leadership and role modeling by top management. It is probably harder for competitors to duplicate high performance human

assets. Compared to any other corporate resources. (service marketing, lovelock, wirtz. 2011 302)

People in educational institution are the key element in educational process are continued of curricular, extracurricular staff, students and other partners in the environment, doing business with the university. Curricular and extracurricular staff together participates in service delivery and influence perception of service users. Success of higher institution depends on quality and dedicated staff. With the purpose of creating the very same, it is necessary to provide motivational working conditions, academic freedom, adequate financial compensation. Successful academic system must offer to their teaching staff adequate working and compensation conditions, possibility of carrier building with appropriate guarantees for long term specialization and employment. Without these conditions an academic institution cannot be successful. (Gajic 2012, 36-37)

The success of SAMK lies behind its hard working and happy employees. All the staff and teachers of SAMK are very enthusiastic and open towards students, clients and colleagues. All the teacher and staffs are highly qualified in what they are doing and they know their job very well. Competent and thriving staff of SAMK assures quality, effectiveness, and development. The attitude of SAMK reflects that they built their future together and therefore it matters for them what they do and what they don't. The index value describing wellbeing at work is higher than in expert organizations in general. According to the writer's observation, the staff and teacher are very helpful and they are ready to help you in need. (Website of the Satakunta University of Applied Sciences)

### 5.3 Segmentation

Market segmentation is a process by which a market is divided into different subdivisions of customers with similar needs and wants which leads them to respond in an equivalent way to a product or service. (mullins 2007, 172). While marketing make up products, company should recognize the group of people who care about their product and target them. Similarly, if you are going open a restaurant somewhere in the city

first think which group of customers you are targeting. Will they be worker, students, families or youngsters? Then the restaurant come up with the plan to attract them.

Two comprehensive categories of variable are useful in describing the difference between segments. The first one is user characteristics and the second one is usage behavior. User characteristics are the one which may differ from one person to another reflecting demographic characteristics. such as, age income, education, geographic location, attitude, values, lifestyle etc. where, usage behavior relate to how product is purchased delivered and used. (lovelock 2000, 139)

As per Elina valkama, SAMK have chosen few segmentation areas where they will be concentrating their marketing action. As per now SAMK has chosen geographical factor where the marketing will mostly be focusing on.

#### 5.4 Target market

After evaluating the different segment of market, the firm should focus all their marketing strategy to that one segment which fit to the firm capabilities and goals. Target segment are often defined as a basis of several variables. For example, a restaurant in the city center might target potential customer who such user characteristics as office worker who earns good money, students who has limited budget, families out for shopping etc. (lovelock 2000, 139)

After evaluating and analyzing the target group the company can consider five pattern of target market selection. The first one is single segment concentration which means that company only concentrate on one segment such as, fait and Volkswagen concentrate on small car market. The second one is selective specialization where firm selects the number of segment which is objectively attractive and appropriate. The third one is product specialization where a firm makes a certain product or service that it sells to several different segments. The forth is market specialization where the firm concentrate on serving many needs of a customer group. And the last one is full market coverage where firm attempts to serve all customer group with all the product they

might need. Only few firms are available in the market which is following full market coverage strategy such as Microsoft, coca cola etc. (lovelock 2000, 139)

SAMK has concentrated on some target markets to attract new students. Spring of 2017, the target group of SAMK are Finland, Europe (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, The Netherlands Italy, France, Germany and Belgium), Russia, China.

## 6 SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL MEDIA MARKETING

### 6.1 Social media




		
Facebook 92%	Twitter 84%	LinkedIn 71%
Blogs 68%	Youtube 56%	Forums 24%
Foursquare 17%	MySpace 6%	Social BookMarking 26%

Figure 6. commonly used social media (saravanakumar & suganthalakshmi 2012, 4445).

Social media is being widely used by almost all and even the companies despite their size have started using social media to advertise and promote themselves. Big bands make use of the social media to convey their strong existence and friendly customer relationship. There are so many big brand which use social media for various purpose such as PepsiCo used social network to collect customer insight via its DEW promotions. Levi Strauss has used social media to offer location specific deals saravanakumar & suganthalakshmi 2012, 4445).

There are so many social media available and the pillars of social media marketing are described below.

- **Blogging:** A blog is a type of content management system that makes it easy for anyone to publish short article called posts. Blog software provides variety of social feature including comments, blog rolls, track backs, and subscription that makes it perfect for marketing purpose.
- **Micro blogging:** Twitter is the most popular micro blogging site, one drive by the most textual message or micro blogs. Twitter requires very little investment of time and can quickly prove worthwhile in increased buzz, sales and customer insights. Twitter also can be used to announce offers or events, promote recent blog posts or keep the reader in the know with link to important news and stories.
- **Facebook:** Facebook is one of the most used social media in the history. 92% of total population uses Facebook and it would be the natural fit for internet marketing. According to the wall street journal Facebook is working on system to allow targeted advertising to specific network of the people with similar interest. Social networking web Facebook is also working on new advertising system that would let marketer target user with ads based on the massive amount of information people reveal about on the site about themselves.
- **Media sharing sites:** Media sharing sites allow you to upload your photos, videos and audio to a website that can be accessed from anywhere in the world. The most popular media sharing sites are YouTube (videos), flickers and Instagram(pictures).
- **Social bookmarking and voting sites:** social book marking sites are a trendy way to store classify share and searched links through the practice of folksonomy (an internet based information retrieval methodology consisting of collaboratively generated, open ended labels that categorize content such as web page, online photograph and web links) technique on the internet.
- **Review sites:** A review site is a website on which review can be posted about people, business products or service. This type of sites is usually professionally designed sites and written to maximize conversation, and is used by e-commerce marketers. saravanakumar & suganthalakshmi 2012, 4446-4448).



If we talk about social media and marketing higher education, they share a huge relation with each other. It can be proved from the research and survey which was conducted in the past. In 2010-2011 university of Massachusetts Dartmouth center of marketing research survey for four years' colleges and universities found that all the institution surveyed used social media for recruiting new students, and almost all of them have a Facebook page. A separate study- the third annual survey of social media in advancement, conducted by CASE, MS toner, and sloverlinett strategies found that Facebook was not just the widely used social media application but the was the most successful media. Similarly, in 2011, survey conducted at Claremont graduate university found that Facebook, twitter and YouTube are the most widely used social media at community college. It is no surprising to see that those icons on any college and university homepage. These fields may also include other icon such as google+, flicker, along with a link to the institution directory of college department and program social media sites. (Wilson, C.D. 2013)

Social media are very common these days as a tool for teaching and learning. Faculties are experimenting with online teaching and learning. Online video sites such as YouTube are by far the most commonly used course level tool. (Wilson, C.D. 2013)

According to the communication and marketing specialist, SAMK has used quite big amount of marketing budget to the social media. these days it is seen more effective than the other traditional media. as per her, their target group is using social media very often so it is very easy to find them there and target the actions to the right people.

## 6.2 Digital media

The marketing of product or service using digital channels to reach its customer is known as digital marketing. Digital marketing extends beyond internet which means that these channels do not require the use of internet. It includes mobile phone (SMS, MMS), display advertising, search engine marketing etc. one example of successful digital media marketing was created by pizza hut which introduced a app for iPhone where customer can choose their own toppings for their pizza and among their thousands of chains, nearest location pizza hut will serve the customer. This app was very

popular which was downloaded by millions of iPhone user. (website of financial times 2017)

A digital marketing strategy is needed to provide coherent direction for an organizations online marketing activities so that they integrate with its other marketing activities and support its overall business objective. Digital marketing strategy is a channel marketing strategy which defines how a company should set channel specific objective and develop a different channel proposition and channel specific communications consistent with the characteristics of channel and end user requirement. ( Dave 2016, 178-179)

To succeed in future, organizations will need marketers, strategist and agencies with up to date knowledge of how to apply digital media in the marketing. The digital marketing strategy will help to make informed decisions about your rush into the digital marketing arena, and ensure that your efforts are focused on the elements of digital marketing that are most relevant to the business. (Ryan. 2016)

The digital strategy determines the strategic significance of a digital channels relative to other communication channels that are used to communicate directly with customer at different customer touch points. The focus of digital marketing strategy is decision about how to use the channels to support existing marketing strategy, how to exploit its strength and manage its weakness and to use it in conjunction with other channels. (Ryan. 2016)

As global and local online populations have spiraled upwards, so too have the levels the level of broadband penetration, which means that not only are there people online, but they are also more online often, for much longer periods of time and can do much more with that time. All of which means that market penetration of digital channel is growing rapidly. Similarly, digital channels also continue to broaden the scope available to marketers, so they add to the potential complexity of any digital marketing campaign. (Ryan. 2016)

While marketing higher education institution, digital media these plays a vital role as the youngsters these days are all depend upon mobilephone. Many higher organisation

still employ the old recruitment strategy, but as the enrollment declines, it is increasingly important to embrace technology. Traditional marketing methods such as mailing, phonecalls and old fashioned boots on the ground visits are no longer the best way to reach today's tech-savvy students, who find the information they need online. (Lonore-jenkins 2016, 87)

The first place student engage with the university is in its website. The navigation of an institution's website is crucial, yet many websites require numerous clicks to get information on financial aid or to apply to the school. The university has to make sure that the website is mobile friendly as the majority of students access the web on a mobile device. Meeting students on social media website platforms they are now is not what they are 10 years ago. It is also important to segment messages depending on the social media platform knowing when to use the text, photo or video content. As social media platforms and trends develop, universities must look for opportunities to stand out. For example several colleges recently harnessed the phenomenon of Pokemon Go to highlight their campus among the players. (Lonore-jenkins 2016, 87)

Adding digital components to the new student search campaign updates your communication for the 21st century. And ensures entire households are receiving your early brand messaging in digital form. Unlike traditional marketing strategies, digital marketing should be dynamic and evolve with the needs and demands of the market. Recruitment is highly competitive and to keep the competitive advantage you must communicate with students where they live and breathe online. By embracing these digital innovations, institutions can make more effective and efficient and rise above the competition. (Lonore-jenkins 2016, 87)

## 7 SURVEY ANALYSIS

This survey was sent to the students of IN14, IN15 and IN16 studying degree programs in International Business at Satakunta University of Applied Science. Among all, 47 students could respond and 44 students attempted all 10 questions. These many numbers of responses are adequate to make a comprehensive analysis.

## 7.1 Background

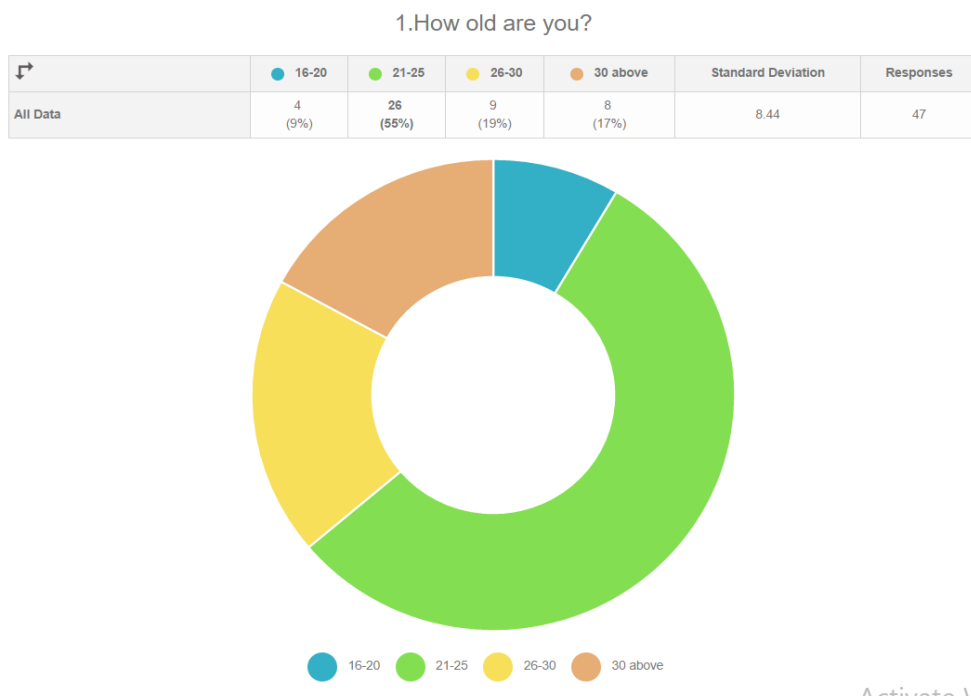


Figure 7. Age of the respondent

The main purpose of the survey is to find out the marketing strategy of Satakunta university of applied science. The first question of the survey was about the age of the respondent. From this question, we will be able to find out that which age group of students are studying in SAMK. This part of questionnaire will help to decide which age group case company can target with their promotional strategy. This survey questionnaire was responded by 47 students and among them 4% are the students of age group 16-20. Similarly, 55% are the students of age group 21-25. While, 8% of students were above 30.

## 1.Which country you belong?

	cameroon	India	pakistan	China	Korea	Vietnam	Russia	France	Sweden	Nepal	Kenya	Ghana	taly	other	Responses
All Data	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	16 (36%)	3 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	12 (27%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (16%)	44

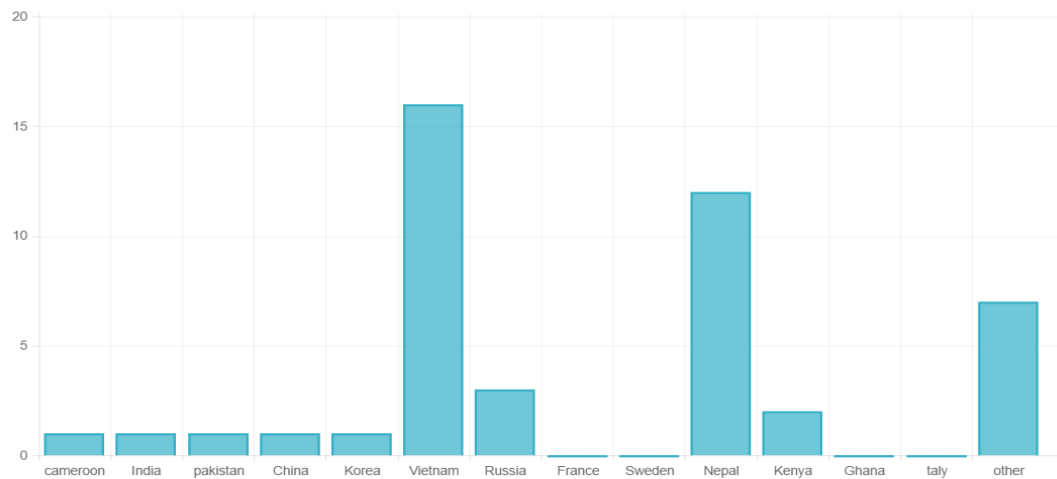


Figure 8. Nationality of students

This section of survey focuses on the nationality of the students studying International business. By the help of this question it will be easy for SAMK to focus on which country they should target to attract new applicant to the degree program offered by SAMK. This question was answered by 44 students out of 47. Currently, there are 36% of students from Vietnam studying International business which is the highest. While, 27% of students studying at SAMK are from Nepal. Similarly, 7% of students came to SAMK from Russia and 5% came from Kenya. Furthermore, 2% of students are from Cameroon, India, Pakistan, China, Korea, and respectively. Where 16% of the students were from other countries outside Finland.

## 3. What was your previous educational background?

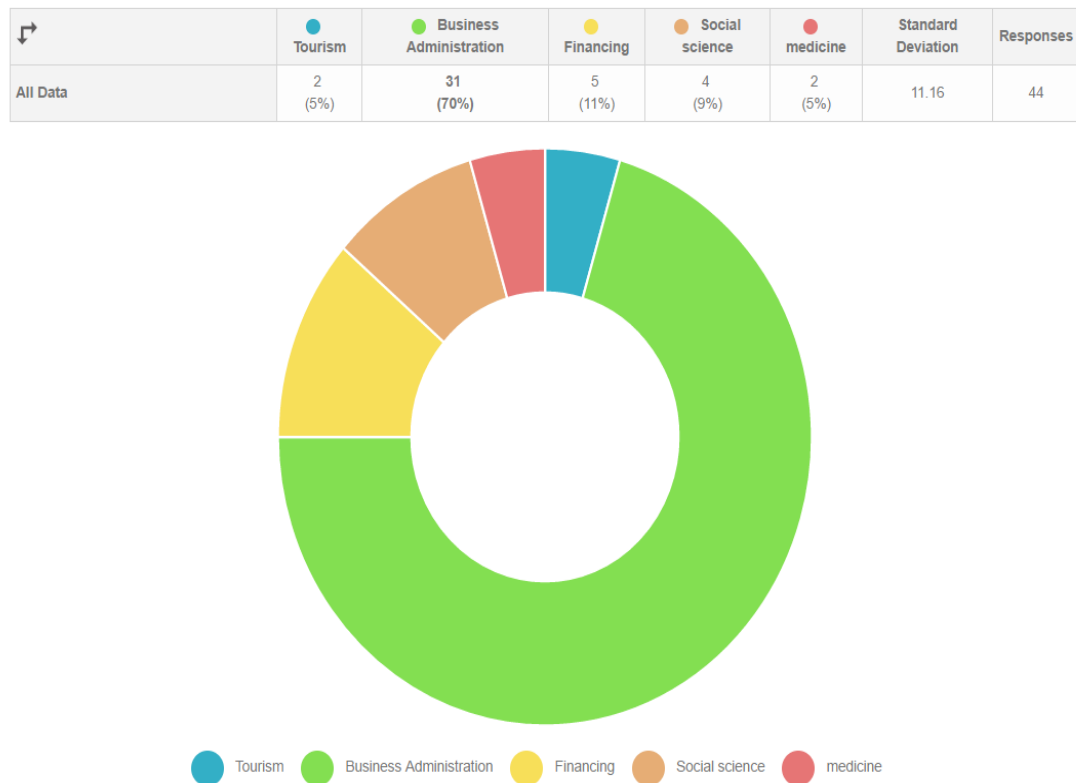


Figure 9. Educational background of student

This question of the survey focus on the educational background of student who are currently studying International Business at SAMK. This part of questionnaire covers the targeting part of marketing strategy When asked about the student students study background, 70% of students answered that they came from business and administration background. While, 11% of students came to study international Business with financing background and 9% of student came from social science. Similarly, 5% of student came to study international business with tourism background and 5% of student came with medicine background.

## 7.2 social media

### 4. Which social media you use is popular among all in your country?

	Facebook	Twitter	Whats app	Wechat	Instagram	Standard Deviation	Responses
All Data	41 (87%)	0 (0%)	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	15.83	47

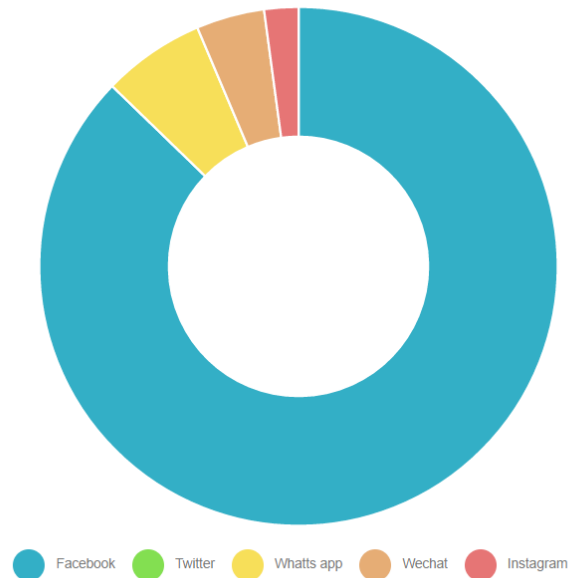


Figure 10. popular social media respondent use

This part of the survey covers the promotion element in marketing mix strategy. This question will help case company to find out the possible medium for promotion which is popular in students home country.

When asked to the respondent about the social media they use is popular in their country, 87% of student voted in favor of Facebook saying it is the most popular social media in their country. While, 6% of student responded WhatsApp as the most popular social media they use in their country. Similarly, 4% of students said that WeChat is popular in their country and only 2% of student said Instagram as their popular social media in their country. Unfortunately, microblogging site twitter is not so popular social media they use in their country.

### 7.3 Knowledge about case company

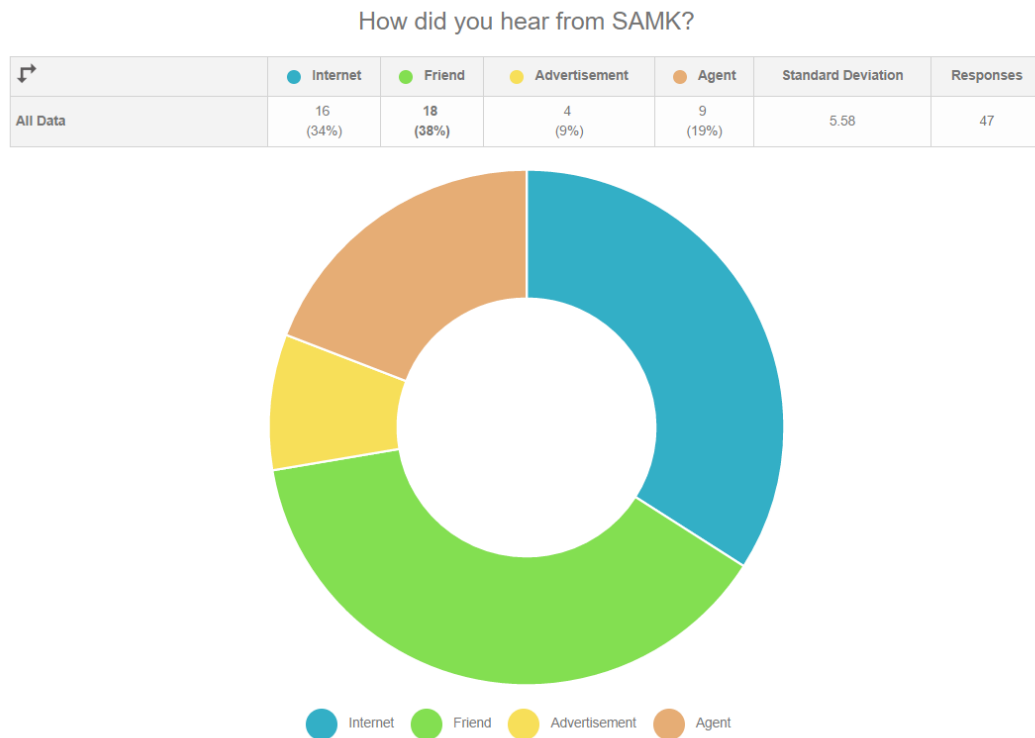


Figure 11. knowledge about case company

This section of the survey focuses on how student get the information about SAMK before applying into it. This question is the core of the thesis and this part of survey also covers the promotion element in marketing mix strategy. Through this question, we will be able to know that how students are getting information about SAMK. When asked to students how did they heard about SAMK, 38% of student responded that they heard about SAMK through their friends who studied in SAMK. While, 34% of students responded that they found out about SAMK through internet. Similarly, 19% of student heard about SAMK through study agent. Ultimately, only 9% of student get to know about SAMK through Advertising done by SAMK.



## 6. Was SAMK your first choice for your studies?

	Yes	No	Standard Deviation	Responses
All Data	18 (38%)	29 (62%)	5.5	47

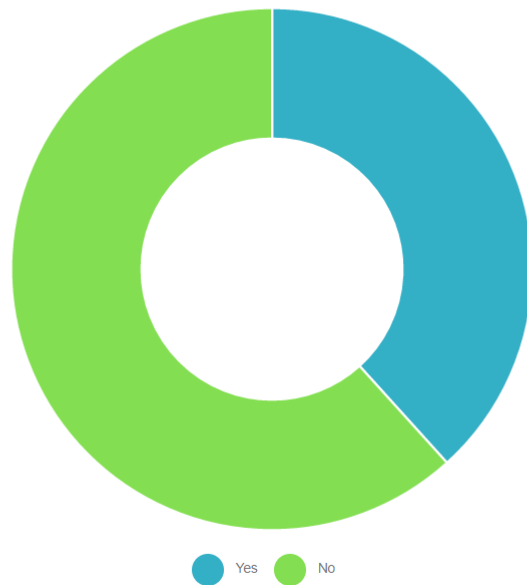


Figure 12. choice of university

This section of survey focus on whether SAMK was the first choice for student to study in Finland. When asked to the student of SAMK, if SAMK was their first choice, 62% of student responded that it was not their first choice for study. Where 38% of student responded that SAMK was their first choice for studying international in Finland.

Did you have enough information about the programme (International Business) you have applied to come to samk?

	Yes	NO	Standard Deviation	Responses
All Data	33 (72%)	13 (28%)	10	46

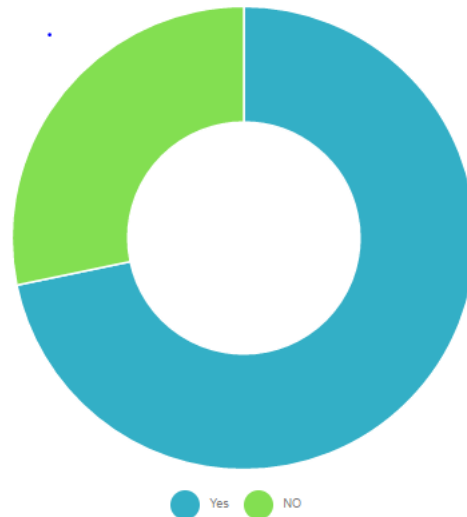


Figure 13. information about international business program

This section of survey will explain whether students who came to study international business have enough knowledge about the program they have enrolled for. When asked to the students whether they have enough information about degree program in international business, 72% of student responded that they had enough information and knowledge about the course. At the same time, 28% of students responded that they didn't had enough information about the program they had enrolled for.

## 7.4 Application medium

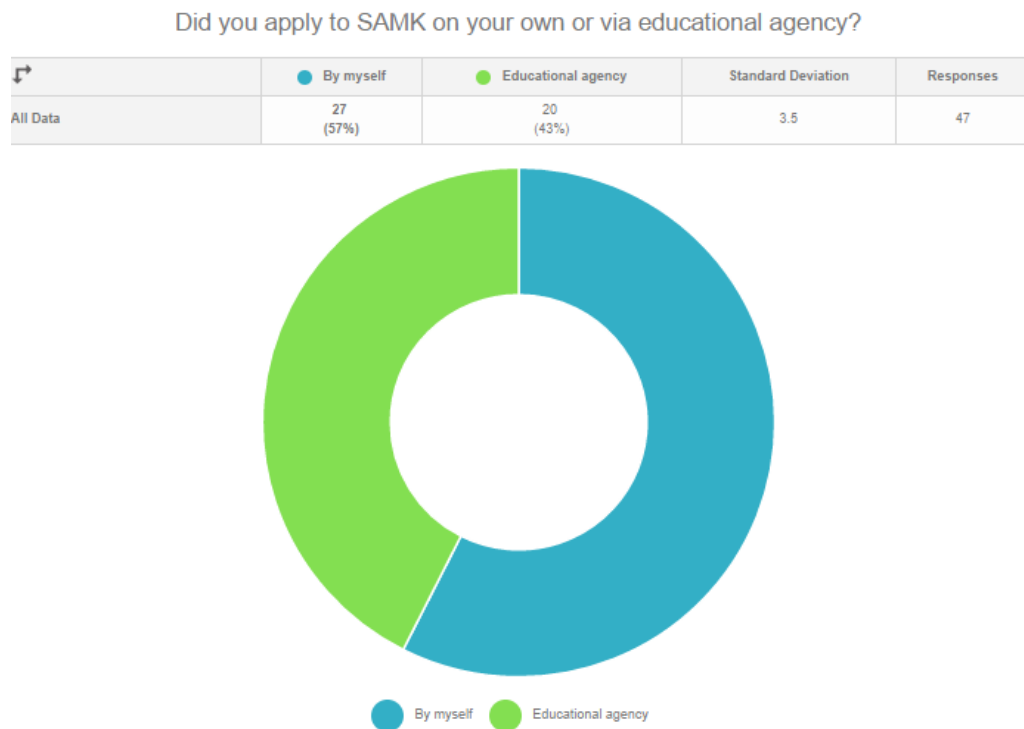


Figure 14. application medium

This section of survey covers the area how student apply for universities in Finland. When asked to the student about this 57% of student responded that they did their application on their own through internet. Furthermore, 43% of student replied that they applied to Finland through educational agency.

## 8. Is study agency being popular in your country?

	Yes	NO	Standard Deviation	Responses
All Data	35 (78%)	10 (22%)	12.5	45



Figure 15. Agency as medium

This section of survey explains if the educational agency is popular in student's country or not. When asked this question on the survey student, 78% of students responded that educational agency is popular in their country which is responsible for providing the information about the country and university they want to go and study. At the same time, 22% of students responded that educational agency is not popular in their country.

In most of the countries, the universities are considered as the good university as if it is recommended by the study agency. These study agencies are like a middle man in the business who act as a bridge between the universities situated in abroad and the students who are looking for the universities in their respective countries. These agencies will do the marketing and all the promotional activities for the universities in their respective country. Also, they will provide the guidance on how to do the paper work

and application to apply for the respective universities they recommended to the student.

## 7.5 Tuition fees

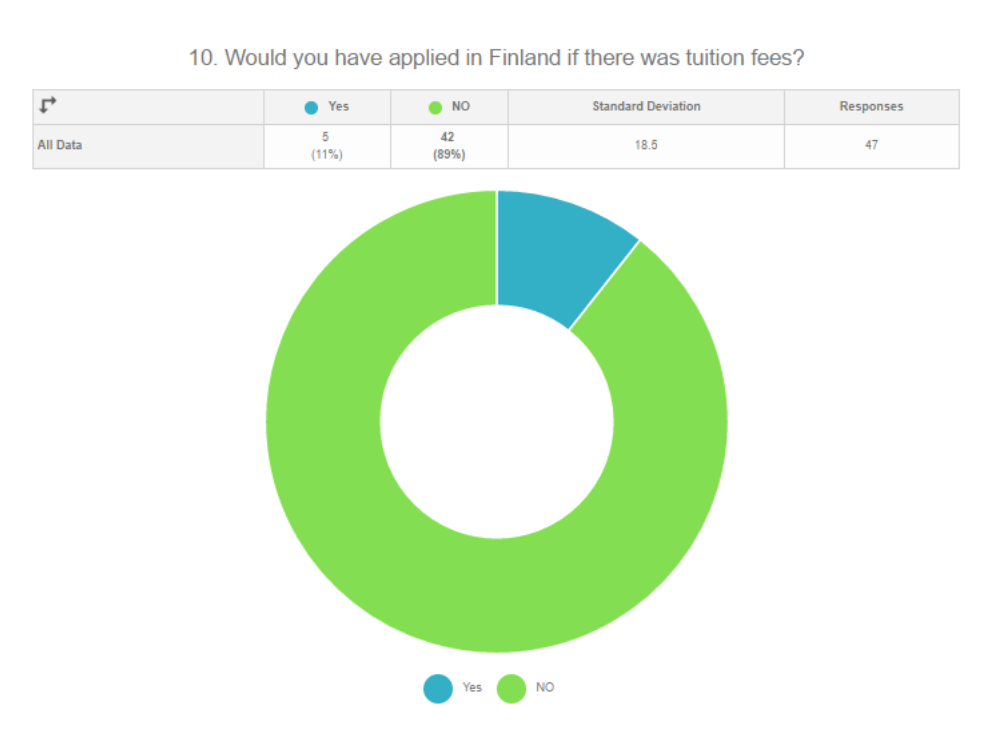


Figure 16. response on tuition fees

This part of questionnaire mainly focus the price element in marketing mix strategy. By the help of the answer of this question it will be very clear that how the pricing decision strategy affect the student's application for the degree program offered by case company.

This section is basically focuses on whether student would have applied, when there would have tuition fees in Finland while they were applying. When asked to the students about this question on survey, 89% of student responded that they would not applied if there were tuition fees for studying in Finland. Meanwhile, 11% of students responded that they would have applied to study in Finland even though there were tuition fees.

## 8 SWOT

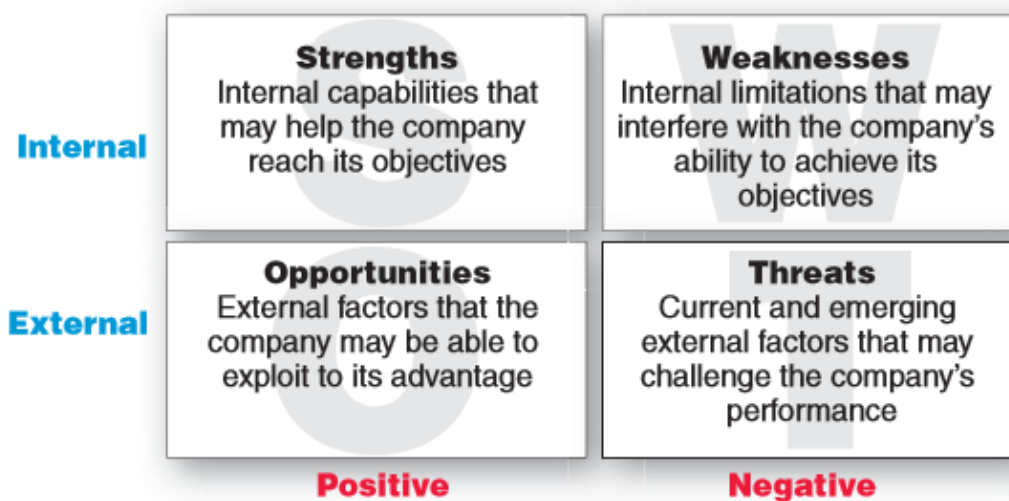


Figure 17. SWOT analysis (Kotler & Armstrong, 1991)

SWOT analysis is a technique designed specially to help identify suitable marketing strategy for the company to follow. A SWOT analysis encompasses both the internal and external environment of the firm. Internally, the framework addresses a firm's strength and weakness on key dimensions including financial performances and resources, human resource, production facilities, capacity, market share, customer perception of product quality, price and availability. While, the external environment includes information on market, economic condition, social trends, technology and government regulation.

The degree to which a firm receives the full benefits of a SWOT analysis will depend on the way the framework is used. If done correctly, SWOT analysis can be very strong catalyst for the planning process. If done incorrectly, it can be a great waste of time and other valuable resources. The SWOT analysis should be a powerful stimulus for communication outside normal channels. The outcome of a properly conducted SWOT analysis should be a mixture of information from many areas.

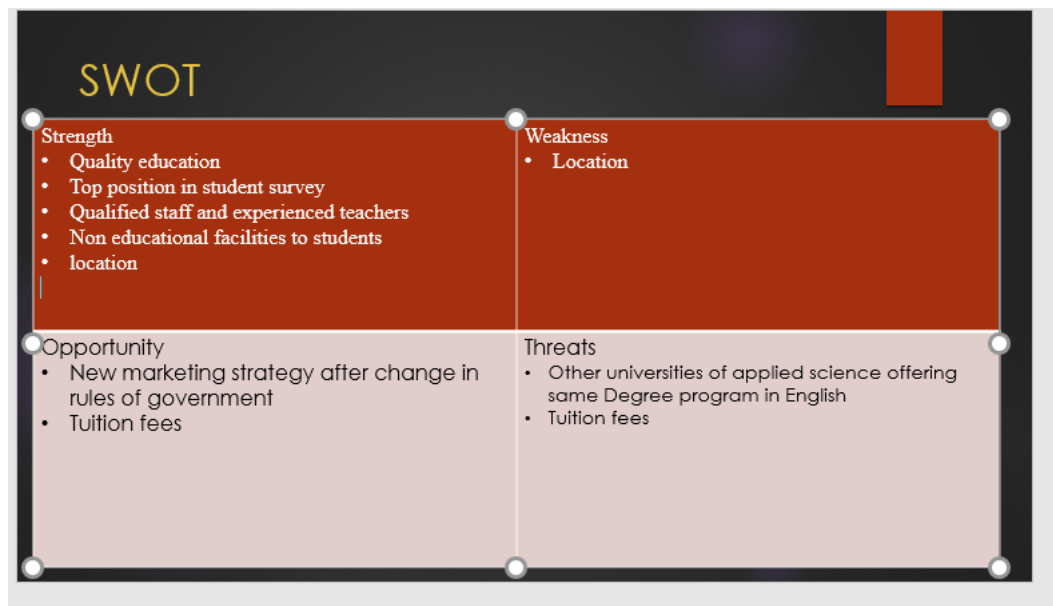


Figure 18. SWOT analysis of International Business at SAMK

After the interview with Elina Valkama (communication and marketing specialist) I could evaluate the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat of degree program in international business at SAMK.

Firstly, the quality education is the immense strength of SAMK. Every year SAMK receives several top positions in the national student survey that is done to the graduating students. Similarly, qualified staff and teachers are considered the integral part of SAMK and can be considered as the vital strength. Furthermore, SAMK provides various facilities to the students studying in SAMK such as library, sports, computer facility and many more which is very essential strength of SAMK. More still, location of SAMK is the biggest strength of SAMK. It is surrounded by natural beauty with very clean air and peaceful environment with a lot of free space.

Next in order, where location of SAMK of the strength it can be turned to weakness as well. Degree program in international business faculty of SAMK is situated in a very small town Rauma with a very limited facility. Though Rauma has a frequent bus connecting directly to capital city Helsinki and big cities like Turku, Pori and Tampere, there is no any train facility in Rauma neither airport. So, it can affect the student attraction towards Degree Program in International Business in Rauma. Additionally,

Rauma has limited number of shopping Centre which can also effect the student's attraction towards studying in Rauma.

To continue, SAMK has the very new and marketing strategy after the change in rules concerning education which supports the international activities as well as English degree program which is considered the opportunity of SAMK. Likewise, the government decision to charge tuition fees to non-EU students could be the huge opportunity. It will help SAMK to collect capital.

Further, it can be said that other universities of applied science who offers same degree programs in English and the same kind of facilities are considered threat to SAMK. Most of the universities of applied science with similar program are situated in city area with many facilities. Because of that it is very possible that SAMK might receive less applicant for the program offered to the students. Although, tuition fees are considered as strength for SAMK, it can also be treated as threat. From the survey held within the current students studying degree program in International Business at SAMK, 89% of student responded that they wouldn't have applied in SAMK if there was a tuition fees. So, tuition fee decision can minimize the new applicants for the program offered to the students.

## 9 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### 9.1 Conclusion

To the nutshell, the thesis was based on the knowledge of marketing strategy to set the understructure of empirical part. SWOT analysis was utilized to evaluate the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat of the case company. For the time being, 7ps of marketing helped to evaluate the case company's ownership, its direction, and companies marketing and promotion techniques and campaign. The knowledge of segmentation and targeting helped to get the better understanding of marketing strategy of case company.



The research and analysis of degree program in International Business at SAMK's marketing strategy in relation to the marketing in education was the core of the thesis. Research and study on company's marketing mix, research on marketing in education as well as research on importance of social media and digital media marketing created the complete picture of case company's marketing strategy decisions.

To answer the objective of the study, following actions were done. Case company's communication and marketing specialist was interviewed to get the information on the action which were taken to promote case company national and international platform. Literature and internet was used to get the theoretical knowledge required for the thesis. Survey was also used to understand the background of student, popular social media which is used in student's home country and to find out how student found out about SAMK.

The ending result of this thesis is to provide suggestion on marketing strategy which will help case company to attract new students to the program offered by SAMK. It is very important that the case company considers those suggestions to reach the goal, otherwise the company might fail in the market. Since the purpose of the thesis is to provide marketing strategy suggestions to the case company, not to plan. So, it is very important to say that these are not the actions the case company are going to follow, but suggestions of the ways to make the strong marketing strategy to attract new students in degree program in international business at SAMK.

## 9.2 Recommendation

According to the deep research and analysis, degree program in international business at Satakunta university of applied science is a very auspicious program offered to its students. After certain change in rule for education sector in Finland, it has been assumed that the rate of incoming students might decrease. Also, from the survey organized within international students, most students responded that they wouldn't have applied to study in Finland if there was tuition fee. In this scenario, it is very essential that SAMK has powerful strategy to stand out in front of competitors and attract new

students. Therefore, the author analyzed and came up with some major recommendations to support the case company's development with strong focus on education sector. These recommendations are the writer's reflection on the research which has been done and the objective evaluation from the interview and survey.

- Firstly, SAMK has been using various channels to reach to its target customers but still there are some more channels that SAMK can consider as their medium for promotion. Such as WeChat and WhatsApp very popular in Europe and Asia also, Twitter is popular mostly in India. With all other media of promotion if these media added together SAMK can be benefited from this.
- After analyzing the survey, it is very clear that only few student applied after watching advertisement. More student came after the recommendation of friend and agent. So, it is very important that SAMK includes their old students to promote the degree program in their respective countries as people listen to their views and experience they have gained so far.
- At the same time, in most of the country the education agent is very popular and so the survey showed. If SAMK contact some agent in Africa and Asia who takes responsibility to recommend SAMK's facility to students and they also do the advertising of university in the respective country. It would be very beneficial for SAMK. The culture in Asia mostly in Nepal is such that, if the agent recommends certain university to the student then the university is considered the best among all.
- From the interview, it was clear that SAMK is mostly focusing the students inside Europe and only two countries out of Europe which is Russia and china. It would be fruitful for SAMK it focusses on some other countries in Asia and African countries as well. Further, from the writer's observation students below 20 mostly transfer their school to the big city so that they can explore the city while students above 20 stayed in campus and graduated successfully while focusing on target group SAMK should focus on the age group of from 20 above.
- More still, from the survey results it was very clear that there are many students with the business background but still, there are some students who does not have any connection with business in their previous study background. In this

situation, it is very possible that those students might change the course and leave the university in middle. Lots of effort, time and capital will be wasted. So, to reduce this situation SAMK should focus on the student who has the business study background for the International Business program.

- Further, it has been noticed that SAMK has not used digital media as much as it should have. These days SMS are very easy to target the possible customers. Sending information about the school, its education system through SMS can help case company to attract more students to the program.

## 10FINAL WORDS

The idea of thesis come up when I got chance to participate in making a promotional YouTube video for degree program in International Business faculty to target the new international students. This topic is very suitable for me because it exactly matches my study background. Also, this topic will help me to apply all my experiences and knowledge from school and real life working experience.

When I started writing this thesis, there came so many ups and downs and I some time felt like I should give up writing this thesis. Some time it felt like I don't know what I am doing. Therefore, I would like to deeply thank my supervisor Marina Wikman and my opponent Ranu Karki who went together with me, become so patience in this long journey, helped me when I had difficulties, and provided me with the helpful advice and constructive comments. The enormous support from case company and my peer students who played vital role to assist me to complete my thesis.

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# APPENDIX 1

1 1.How old are you?

- 16-20                       21-25                       26-30  
 30 above

2\* 1.Which country you belong?

- |                                  |                                   |                                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kenya   | <input type="checkbox"/> Korea    | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweden   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italy   | <input type="checkbox"/> Russia   | <input type="checkbox"/> Nepal    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> India   | <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistan | <input type="checkbox"/> other    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnam | <input type="checkbox"/> France   | <input type="checkbox"/> Cameroon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> China   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ghana    |                                   |

3 3. What was your previous educational background?

4 4. Which social media you use is popular among all in your country?

- Facebook                       Twitter                       WhatsApp  
 Wechat                       Instagram

5 How did you hear from SAMK?

- Internet                       Friend                       Advertisement  
 Agent

6 6. Was SAMK your first choice for your studies?

- Yes                       No

7 Did you have enough information about the programme (International Business) you have applied to come to samk?

- Yes                       NO

8 Did you apply to SAMK on your own or via educational agency?

- By myself                       Educational agency

9 8. Is study agency being popular in your country?

- Yes                       NO

10 10. Would you have applied in Finland if there was tuition fees?

- Yes                       NO

Finish Survey

Interview questions

1. What are the promotional activities SAMK has been doing so far to attract new students?
  2. What are the medium you are using for promotion?
  3. Are you using local newspaper, television or radio to attract local students?
  4. Have you done any change in strategy after tuition fee decision?
  5. How is the result of promotion activities this year? Are there more students than last year or less? do you think the activities which we are doing are reaching out here where our students are?
  6. What are the strength and weakness of SAMK? What about opportunity and threats?
  7. Is location of SAMK in Rauma strength or weakness?
  8. What is the segmentation strategy so far? Is there any age group, country, gender you are mainly focusing?
  9. What is your target market? Is there any country you are focusing more on? Why?
  10. How much you use social media to promote SAMK? Is it more effective than the traditional way?
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