

**ŠIAULIAI UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY OF SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN SCIENCES AND ARTS**  
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**CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR: CHOOSING STUDIES  
ABROAD “CASE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS,  
WHO STUDY IN LITHUANIA”**

Master thesis

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Master thesis

Social sciences, Management (N 200)

**Supervisor:**

**Assoc. prof. dr. Milda DAMKUVIENĖ**

Hereby I declare that the present master thesis, which I submit for gaining master degree in Management is my own work and that if any text passages or diagrams from books, papers, the Web or other sources have been copied or in any other way used, all references – including those found in electronic media – have been acknowledged and fully cited.

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(Student signature)

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## SUMMARY

The main aim of this master thesis is to evaluate international student's decision-making process, when choosing higher education in Lithuania. This work consists of three chapters: the first chapter consists of theoretical background from the studies done in the field of consumer behaviour. It includes the concept of consumer behaviour, consumer behaviour theories, consumer decision making process, overview of consumer decision making models and international student's decision making process. The existing research was used to select the factors for the empirical study. Finally, the theoretical framework of international students decision making process which is developed according to the literature analysis is provided in this chapter.

The second chapter presents the research method. The structure of questionnaire, research sample and research organization are also presented in the second chapter. The third chapter presents the results of an empirical research done on the basis of the theoretical framework created in this work and their interpretations were given.

The data collection process was performed via survey using structured online questionnaire which maid according to Engel, Blackwell, Miniard consumer behaviour model. 680 of international students of Siauliai University (SU), Mykolas Romeris University (MRU) and Kaunas University of Technology (KTU), who are studying in the fall of 2016 were asked to participate in the research. The result of survey was analyzed with Microsoft Excel 2010 programme. This master thesis ends with the conclusions and recommendations for university administration and more effective marketing progamme targeted at international students. Overall, this study gives the good picture of main factors which influences international student's decision making with regards to choosing studies abroad.

The main findings of the research are: the most of international students emphasized the *expansion of friend's network, better employment opportunities* and *international network creation* as important motivation factors for choosing studies abroad. The *internet* and *university website* are the two most significant information sources for international students when they were making decision about country and university for their studies. *The safety of the country, the living cost of the country* and *possibility to travel to other countries* are the most important country selection factors for international students. The most of respondents emphasized the *right course/ program* and *tuition fee* as important university selection factors for international students when choosing studies abroad.

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## INTRODUCTION

Over the last 30 years, the internationalization of higher education (HE) has been a major growth industry worldwide (Bodycott, 2009). Higher education is facing continuous changes due to an increasing impact of globalization and the growth of student enrolments worldwide, particularly in the overseas and emerging markets. The so-called “massification” and the global knowledge economy are the two main drivers of the higher education transformation around the world, which are generating unprecedented changes in the field of higher education (Altbach, 2013). Education has become a key determinant of the growing importance of intellectual capital in today’s increasingly competitive global socio-economic landscape. There are several trends which have proven to be especially important in shaping international education and its exponential internationalization, such as: student mobility programmes, research collaboration and university rankings (Marginson, 2012).

Higher education institutions (HEI) have always been affected by international trends and operated within a broader international community of academic institutions, scholars, and research (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley, 2009). Internationalization caused a move from a simple student exchange to the sophisticated business of global recruitment and head hunting which we see today in battle for top talent (De Wit and Brandenburg, 2011). Higher education institutions are dealing with the significant importance of return on investment and the quality of services offered to their customers – both students and employers.

There are various reasons that influence the demand for international education. Traditionally, it has been driven by expectations to raise the graduate’s economic and social status, especially within the HE sector (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). Over the second half of the twentieth century, a lack of access to HE in many countries in Asia and Africa has been a key driver for international student flow (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). In addition, the historical or colonial links between host and home countries has also played a role in determining where students travel for study (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002).

By the 1990s, many HE institutes in host countries like Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and US have become more market focused by adopting professional marketing strategies to recruit international students (Mazzarol et al., 2003). Many universities have used marketing theories and concepts, which have been effective in the business world in HE to gain a larger share of the international market (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006). In many developed countries, the international trade in education services is a major source of income; it has become

a multi-billion dollar business (Cheung, Yuen, Yuen and Cheng, 2011). This highlights the attractiveness and importance of international students as a potential target group.

Arrival of students from non-EU countries is also considered to be one of the priority areas. EU aspires to position Europe globally as a provider of high quality education and to attract more international students to EU Member States. The European Commission has passed Council Directive (2004/114/EC) of 13 December 2004 on the Conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service (the Student Directive). The purpose of the directive is to facilitate and harmonize procedures for arrival and stay of non-EU students in EU Member States.

Lithuania also aspires to attract international students to study in Lithuania. The Government of the Republic of Lithuania has passed programs encouraging internationalization of higher education, which – among other goals – aim to encourage entry of aliens, including non-EU Member States students, to Lithuania for study purposes.

The study of consumer behaviour helps marketers to recognize and forecast the purchase behaviour of the consumers while they are purchasing a product. It is important for them to know consumers as individual or groups opt for, purchase, consumer or dispose products and services and how they share their experience to satisfy their wants or needs (Solomon, 2009). This helps marketers to investigate and understand the way in which consumers behave so that they can position their products to specific group of people or targeted individuals. It helps the marketer to take vital decisions with respect to designing of future marketing strategies and help him to find out what kind of promotional offers or marketing campaigns need to be undertaken. The importance of understanding consumer behaviour can most probably be summarized in a simple, yet powerful, statement by Assael (1995, p. 3) "Consumers determine the sales and profits of a firm by their purchasing decisions. As such, their motives and actions determine the economic viability of the firm". To be a successful seller of products and services, organisations need to understand consumer needs and behaviour and draft their marketing strategies to incorporate such behavioural needs of consumers.

The steps in consumer decision making process can be a guide for marketers to understand consumers communicate effectively to them. It is important for marketers to consider the factors that affect the buying behaviour of consumer before entering the market. Understanding factors helps marketers to market the product on right time to the right consumers. Moreover, the marketers should be ascertain the factors that influence and affects purchase decision of consumers (Solomon, 2009). If the marketers failed to understand the factors that



might influence consumers, they will fail to convince the consumer to purchase that product or will fail to meet the demands of consumers.

The **aim** of this master thesis's to evaluate international student's decision-making process, when choosing higher education in Lithuania. **Objectives** of this master thesis are:

- To explore the concept of consumer behavior in the framework of different consumer behavior theories.
- To identify the main elements of consumer decision making process according to different consumer decision making models.
- To ground the framework of international student's decision making process
- To evaluate international student's decision making process when choosing higher education in Lithuania.

This master thesis focuses on the following **research questions**:

- Why do students look for studies abroad? What is their strongest motive?
- What sources of information are most important for students, when deciding about study destination (country and university)?
- What are most important factors for student's country choice?
- What are the most important factors for student's university choice?

The research involved quantitative method to investigate international students as consumer behavior **who comes to Lithuania for higher studies. Quantitative research was made through survey using structured online questionnaire in English language which was made according to Engel, Blackwell, Miniard model.**

The data was collected by using online questionnaire for the international students of Siauliai University (SU), Mykolas Romeris University (MRU) and Kaunas University of Technology (KTU) who studying in the spring 2016. After their replay, the results were picked and analyzed. The survey instrument was constructed based on a careful review of the literature. Data has been analyzed with Microsoft Excel 2010.

This research contributes to the existing knowledge on international students' decision-making process. The main theoretical contribution of this research is the increased knowledge on the attributes that students use to evaluate higher education institutions in an international context. From a managerial perspective, this research offers important information of the international students' decision-making process that is crucial in creating an effective marketing plan.

# **1. THEORY OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR**

## **1.1. The Concept of Consumer Behaviour**

Bennett (1995) describes consumer behaviour as the actions and decision processes of people who purchase goods and services for personal consumption. Engel et al. (1990) consumer behaviour refers to “the mental and emotional processes and the observable behaviour of consumers during searching for, purchasing and post consumption of a product and services”.

The definition formed by Solomon et al. (2006, p. 6) “Consumer behaviour is the study of the process involved when individuals or group select, purchase, use or dispose of product, services, idea or experiences to satisfy needs and desires”. Similar definition of consumer behavior is offered by Schiffman et al. (2007) in which they describe it as behavior that consumers express when they select and purchase the products or services using their available resources in order to satisfy their needs and desires.

Walters (1974, p. 7) defines consumer behaviour as: "the process whereby individuals decide whether, what, when, where, how, and from whom to purchase goods and services". Mowen (1993, p. 6) provides a different definition by explaining consumer behaviour as: "the study of the buying units and the exchange processes involved in acquiring, consuming, and disposing of goods, services, experiences, and ideas". This definition focuses on buying units in an attempt to include not only the individual but also groups that purchase products or services.

Hoyer and Macinnis (2008, p. 3) have focused on the definition of consumer behaviour “as being the entirety of consumer’s decision with regard to acquisition, consumption and disposition of goods, services, activities, experiences, people and ideas by decision-making units”. Consumer buying behaviour is defined by Stallworth (2008) as a set of activities which involves the purchase and use of goods and services which resulted from the customer’s emotional and mental needs and behavioral responses.

According to William (1982) defined consumer behaviour thus all purchase release before, during and after the purchase itself as performance by buyer and consumers of products and services and those who influence the purchase. According to Loudon et al. (1993), consumer behaviour is the decision process and physical activity, which individuals engage in when evaluating, acquiring, using or disposing of goods and services.

The definitions provided above should provide sufficient clarity on the concept of consumer behaviour. There are some differences and similarities in each author. Bennett (1995),

Engel et al. (1990), Louden et al. (1993), and Mowen (1993) said that consumer behavior is the action and decision process, mental and emotional process, exchange processes and physical activity of people or individuals who purchase goods and services. Walters (1974) came and with consumer behavior as the process whereby individuals decide whether, what, when, where, how, and from whom to purchase goods and services. And Solomon et al (2006), Schiffman et al. (2007) and Stallworth (2008) defined the consumer behavior as the process satisfying needs, desires and wants of individuals or groups or organization who purchase goods and services. The main similarity is that each authors used almost same type of process and consumption patterns in each of their definition.

In above definitions of consumer behavior, the main phenomena, that they are touching is consumer's buying decision making process and consumption pattern. These are action and decision processes, emotional processes and mental processes, satisfy needs and wants, satisfy needs and desires, physical activities, mental needs and behavioral response of people or individual or groups or organization who purchase goods and services.

In this Master Thesis Bennett's (1995) definition and Solomon et al. (2006) definition are used. Bennett (1995) describes consumer behavior as the actions and decision processes of people who purchase goods and services for personal consumption. According to Solomon et al. (2006, p. 6) "Consumer behaviour is the study of the process involved when individuals or group select, purchase, use or dispose of product, services, idea or experiences to satisfy needs and desires". This Master Thesis is related to consumer behavior, "choosing studies abroad "case of international students, who study in Lithuania". So students have to be vigilant while choosing their studies abroad that whether their needs and desires could be satisfied. This thesis comprises the actions and decision process that the consumers (students) proceeds while choosing their product (studies abroad). These are included in that definitions and hence both these definition are very effective for my master thesis.

## **1.2. Consumer Behaviour Theories**

There are different approaches have been accepted in the study of decision making of consumers. In this study choose different five major emerging approaches in this study. (Foxall, 1990) he said that all of these five approaches posit alternate models of man, and emphasis the need to examine quite different variables. Each of these five approaches described below.

- Economic Man
- Psychodynamic
- Behaviourist
- Cognitive
- Humanistic

### **Economic Man**

An economic man, a term was first coined in the late 19th century (Persky, 1995) has developed to refer to a hypothetical individual who acts rationally and with complete knowledge, but entirely out of self-interest and the quest to maximize personal utility. An economic man is an imaginary figure who is able to satisfy economic models that push for consumer equilibrium. All of an economic man's choices are based on the fulfillment of his or her "utility function", meaning the ability to maximize any situation that involves choice (Persky, 1995).

Many economic models are hypothetical, and the assumptions on which they are built deviate from real-world conditions. Economic Man is the principal, symbolic of every individual in society, whose preferences satisfy the condition specified in the models. As consumers have few adequate information, motivation or time to make a perfect decision and are often reacted by less influences like social relationships and values (Simon, 1997). However, to behave rationally in the economic sense, as this approach says, a consumer must be aware of all the available consumption option, be capable of rating each alternatives correctly and also be particular to choose the optimum course of action (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2007).

### **Psychodynamic Approach**

According to Hoyer and Macinnis (2008) the underlying idea behind psychodynamic approach to consumer behaviour is that the human behaviour is motivated primarily by biological drivers, rather than environmental stimulus or individual cognition.

Psychodynamic approach is largely based on the work of Sigmund Freud and this approach considers behaviour to be the results of 'instinctive forces' or 'drivers' (Backhaus et al., 2007). And Freud identified, three fundamental facets of the psyche namely Id, Ego and Superego (Freud, 1923). Moreover, a range of additional drivers have been introduced by other theorists since then. The major assumption of the psychodynamic approach is that the behaviour is determined by biological drives, rather than individual cognition, or environmental stimuli.

## **Behaviourist Approach**

According to behaviourist approach to human behaviour is depended to external events, and importantly, a specific pattern of behaviour can be learned because of external factors (Wiedmann et al., 2007). Advocates of behaviourist approach refer to famous behavioural experiments involving dogs and the impact of external environment on their behaviour conducted by Pavlov (1849-1936) to justify the validity of the approach.

However, Schiffman et al. (2007), argue that while to behaviourist approach to human behaviour has adequate level of relevance to modern marketplace it is not able to explain the issues of consumer behaviour thoroughly on its own. Essentially behaviourism is a group of philosophies saying that behavior is explained by outer events and all things that an individual performs. Including all the action, feeling, emotions and thoughts can be characterized as behaviours.

There are a number of branches of research centers around the global that conform to the major tenets of behaviourism, but differ subtly in other ways or the other. Initially 'John Watson introduced 'Classical Behaviourism', needed entirely objective study of behaviour, without mental life or internal states being accepted. Watson viewed human thoughts as 'covert' speech (Sternberg, 1996), and strict monism was believed to (Foxall, 1990).

By 1930 and 1950 Skinner established 'Radical Behaviourism' that acknowledges the existence of feelings, states of mind and introspection, however still regards these factors as epiphenomenal (Skinner, 1938;Nye, 1979). The assumed role of internal processes continued to evolve in subsequent decades, leading to more cognitive approaches by a newly introduced branch of study 'Cognitive Behaviourism' claiming that intrapersonal cognitive events and processes are causative and the primary irreducible determinants of overt behaviour (Hillner, 1984).

Even though behavioural research still contributes to the understanding of human behaviour, it is now widely realised as only part of any possible full explanation (Stewart, 1994). Behaviourism does not appear adequately to account for the vast diversity of response created by a population exposed to similar, or even near identical one.

## **Cognitive Approach**

The cognitive approach to consumer behaviour perceives individuals as 'information processors' (Ribeaux and Poppleton, 1978) acknowledging the impact of environment and social experience in the processing of information. The development of cognitive psychology in general

is credited with the introduction of Stimulus-Organism-Response model by Hebb in 1950s (Figure 1.1) (Cziko, 2000) and the publication of the landmark text by Ulric Neisser in 1967 (Neisser, 1967).

According to Stimulus-Organism-Response model recommend a linear relationship between the impact of stimuli on inactive organism, and as a result of the impact the organism responses in a certain manner (Cziko, 2000). However, this model has been subjected to criticism, notably by Tyagi (2004) and Kahle et al. (2006), and the criticism relates to the idea that Stimulus-Organism-Response model does not take into account the past experiences of the organism.

Early Stimulus-Organism-Response models (as depicted in Fig.1) suggest a linear relationship between the three stages with environmental and social stimuli acting as external antecedents to the organism. This approach assumes that stimuli act upon an inactive and unprepared organism (Eysenck and Keane, 2000).



**Fig.1.** Stimulus-organism-response model of decision making

Source: (Cziko, 2000)

Most modern theorists now, however, acknowledge that information processing is conducted by an active organism whose past experience will influence not only the processing of such information but even what information is sought and received. Information processing will be both stimulus driven and concept driven (Moital, 2007); (Groome et al., 1999). This development has resulted in more recent depictions of consumer decision making being circular in fashion (Peter and Olson, 2008), or drawn through a Venn diagram (Jacoby, 2002).

Inspite of coming from a Radical Behavioural perspective, Foxall (1990) identifies four major strengths of cognitivism as a means of explaining consumer behaviour:

- Its closeness to the common-sense explanations of everyday discourse make it an intuitively attractive means of offering explanations of everyday behaviours such as purchasing and consuming;

- The ability of consumers to describe their experiences in terms of their attitudes, wants, needs and motives ensures that an explanation proceeds in the same terms as the description of what is explained;
- It brings a measure of unity and consensus to a still young field of inquiry;
- The extensive use made by other social science and humanity disciplines of cognitive explanation has assisted the conceptual development of this line of consumer research by making possible the borrowing of theoretical and methodological inputs.

Foxall (1990) comments that the cognitive approach “relies extensively upon the use of abstract and unobservable explanatory variables which seldom prove amenable to empirical investigation and evaluation”. The cognitive approach is more appropriate in the examination of ethical purchasing behavior. Firstly, the complexity of such actions cannot be accommodated through behavioural models and secondly, the benefits of ethical consumption are largely vicarious in nature, requiring extensive intrapersonal evaluation.

### **Humanistic Approach**

The cognitive models are often portrayed as offered the best usable explanation of consumer decision making. However, because of finding limitation of cognitive approach and humanistic approach in psychology developed in the 1960s and 70s to further understanding of specific aspects of behaviour. According to the humanistic thinkers, limiting ourselves to observable behavior and external stimuli alone is ignoring the thinking- feeling person, and that is dehumanizing. These new approaches can be described as humanistic as they seek to explore concepts introspective to the individual consumer rather than describe generic processes (Stewart, 1994).

Humanistic approach emphasizes the person, the psychodynamic stresses unconscious determinants, and the behaviourist focus upon external determinants and it is more optimistic than the other two in the sense that it believes in the person’s ability and will. Nataraajan and Bagozzi comment in 1999 ‘There is a pressing need in the field to balance the rational, cognitive side of marketing thought and practice with new ideas and research on the emotional facets of marketing behavior’ (Nataraajan and Bagozzi , 1999, p. 637) .

The main central themes of humanistic approach are, human beings are capable of shaping their own destiny, they can think and design their course of action and can follow it in the way they like, people can overcome or minimize the environmental and intrinsic influences

and “wholeness” or “completeness” of the personality is important rather than its separate, disintegrated, structural parts.

In above, as this discussion has shown, there are a number of different approaches used to modeling consumer decision making such as Economic Man, Psychodynamic, Behaviourist, Cognitive and Humanistic. The decision making models undertaken here highlights the complexity of consumer choices and identifies the key processes that lead to behaviour. A wide range of variables have been posited across the models, and each has evidence to justify its inclusion in attempts to explain behaviour. It is difficult for one model to claim to include all the considerations and factors that influence consumer choice.

### **1.3. Consumer Decision Making Process**

There are different types of consumer behavioural models that indicate steps of consumer decision making process. Consumer behavior model provide better insight to the marketers for taking important decision regarding various marketing mix elements. These models explain the human behaviour and the impact thereof on consumer behaviour in a precise approach. According to Runyon and Stewart (1987), consumer behavior models, in contrast to models of human behaviour, attempted to describe and systemise the entire purchasing process, thereby providing a guide for further study and research on the subject of consumer behaviour.

A consumer behavior model can be viewed as a testable "map of reality" and its utility lies in the extent to which successful predictions and description of behaviour, together with underlying influences, are made possible. According to Engel and Blackwell (1982), the purpose of a model, namely to guide researchers, cannot be overemphasised. A model provides the researcher with a range of appropriate variables, thereby preventing a problem often experienced, namely a narrow perspective when looking at problems.

Lilien and Kotler (1983) point out that comprehensive models of consumer behaviour pose both advantages and disadvantages. The advantage of these models is that they describe complex decision-making processes, while the disadvantage can be attributed to its estimation, measurement and policy analysis. The discussion below will focus on five consumer behaviour models, namely

- The Bettman information processing model
- The Nicosia model



- The Howard-Sheth model
- The Howard model
- The Engel, Blackwell, Miniard model

### 1.3.1. The Bettman Model

Bettman model is a structural concept of overall decision making process of individual consumer. J.R. Bettman presented the decision-making process as information processing, that follows the specified program consciously controlled by the consumer. According to Bettman purchase selection process does not progress in simple and sequential manner. The course of this process is controlled by the internal mechanisms. It is adjusted in such a way as to make the process of choosing went smoothly in accordance with the will and rational thinking of the consumer.

Lilien and Kotler (1983) add that the model provides an analytical 'framework for understanding consumer behaviour in an environment where choice is made by selecting between a set of alternatives. The model focuses on the information processing perspective by viewing the type of information used by consumers, how the information is evaluated and finally, how decisions are made. Lilien and Kotler (1983), they continue by describe that the model comprises two sub-models, namely the basic hierarchy and the intermediate or modulating processes.

The first component of the basic hierarchy is **motivation and goal hierarchy**, serving as mechanisms to control the movement from some critical state to a described goal or state with in an individual. Runyon and Stewart (1987) add that these components together with information acquisition are, at least in part, a function of prior experience and information obtained by the consumer. **Attention**, the second component, comprises voluntary attention (implying the consumer's allocation of the information-processing effort) and involuntary attention. The third component, **information acquisition and evaluation**, stipulates that attention is influenced by the goals pursued and therefore activates the search for information. The evaluation component of the model determines when sufficient information is obtained for the purpose of decision-making. The next component of the model, the **decision process**, is continuously active in the model by focusing on the comparison of possible alternatives. The final element of the basic hierarchy, namely **consumption and learning**, focuses on the purchase and consumption of the product and offer a new source of information to the consumer. The final stage in the basic hierarchy will, therefore, affect the structure of future choices (Lilien and Kotler, 1983).

The intermediate processes, also referred to as modulating processes, focus on mainly four elements, namely perceptual encoding, processing capacity, memory and external search and finally, scanner and interrupt mechanisms. The first component of the intermediate process, "**perceptual encoding**", comprises the interpretation process of an individual once being exposed to a stimulus. Bettman argues that this process is influenced by memory, implying the way things were, and by the stimulus itself, implying the way things are. The second component, the implications of **processing capacity** are that capacity has to be allocated to a decision task since the complete information-processing process is limited by capacity. Capacity is furthermore positively related to effort and motivation. Runyon and Stewart (1987) continue by pointing out a relation between processing capacity and education, intelligence and previous experience. According to the **memory and external** search components, information may be obtained, in a choice situation, through internal search of the memory and external search, where attention and perceptual decoding is focused on stimuli outside the consumer's memory. The final component, **scanner and interrupt mechanisms**, indicates that consumers are interruptible and not single-minded when pursuing a goal. The scanner monitors the environment in an effort to note conditions that may warrant changes in current actions or beliefs (Lilien and Kotler, 1983).

Considering the Bettman information processing model, Lilien and Kotler (1983) suggest that the model represents an attempt to develop a complete theory on the consumer choice process. Knowledge obtained from the model, beneficial for the development, presentation and timing of marketing communications, includes insight into the information consumer's desire, how information is obtained and the probable processing of such information.

Runyon and Stewart (1987) add to the above by stating that, while the schematic model suggests complex relationships involving interactions and feedback, these are not specified in the model and have not been empirically tested. And the model has proven useful to managers concerned with effective communication with consumers and also as a guide for further research on consumer information processing.

### **1.3.2. The Nicosia Model**

Francesco Nicosia was one of the first to develop consumer behavior model in the early 1960s and shift focus from the act of purchase itself to the more complex decision process that engage in about products and services. According to Runyon and Stewart (1987), the Nicosia model provides a sophisticated attempt to show the interrelationship between attributes of the

consumer, the consumer decision-making process, the marketing communication of an organisation and feedback of the response of the consumer to the organisation.

Schiffman and Kanuk (1987) provide a simplistic explanation of the model by stating that it is interactive in design, where the organisation attempts to influence consumers through marketing actions and the consumers in return influence the organisation through their purchase actions (or lack of action if products are not purchased).

Runyon and Stewart (1987) continue by stating that the model consists of four different fields or components, namely exposure of the organisation message, search and evaluation, purchase and feedback. The first field comprises two subfields. The first field represents the **output** of a commercial message from the organisation to the consumer in the form of advertising or other forms of promotion. The model explicitly assumes that the consumer has no previous knowledge or experience with the brand. The message form of the organization serves as **input** to sub field two, representing the consumer's unique psychological attributes. At this stage of the model, the consumer react to the message, providing input to the second field. Schiffman and Kanuk (1987) indicate that the output of field one is an attitude towards the product, as a result of interpretation of the organisation's message.

Runyon and Stewart (1987) continues by stating that if the reaction or attitude resulting from field one is favourable, the consumer will **search** for the product and **evaluate** it in terms of other alternatives. Schiffman and Kanuk (1987) add that the output of the second field is motivation to **purchase** the organisation's brand. The evaluation could, however, also lead to rejection of the brand although the model illustrates a positive response. The positive evaluation leads to purchase of the product, the third field of the model.

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (1987), the final field of the Nicosia model, field four, consists of two types of **feedback** from the purchase experience. The first type of feedback relates to the organisation where sales data will be obtained and the second to the consumer in the form of experience, leaving the consumer either **satisfied or dissatisfied**. The experience obtained by the consumer relating to the product will affect the predisposition and attitudes with regard to future messages from the organisation.

Engel et al. (1978) criticise the Nicosia model by claiming that the model never received the necessary elaboration and empirical support nor has it been revised to reflect changes. In conclusion to the Nicosia model, Runyon and Stewart (1987) express the opinion that despite the limitations of the model, it attempts to explicitly incorporate the marketing actions of the organisation within a model of consumer behaviour.

### 1.3.3. The Howard-Sheth Model

The Howard- Sheth Model represents a major revision of an earlier systematic effort to develop a comprehensive theory of buyer decision making. According to Foxall (1990), presents a sophisticated integration of the psychological and various social and marketing influences on consumer choice, into a coherent sequence of information processing.

Schiffman and Kanuk (1987) explain the Howard-Sheth model, that explicitly distinguishes between three different stages or levels of decision-making, also referred to as levels of learning. Namely: extensive, limited and routinised problem-solving.

The Howard- Sheth model consists of four major set of variables. These variables, according to Schiffman and Kanuk (1987), used as the basis for the discussion on the Howard-Sheth model unless otherwise stated, are inputs, perceptual and learning constructs, output and external variables.

**Input**, the first variable include three distinct type of information source (stimuli) present in the consumer's environment, namely significant stimuli, symbolic stimuli and social input. Significant stimuli represent the brand's physical attributes, the marketers provide the symbolic stimuli in the form of brand information and could be visual or verbal, and the third kind of information is furnished by consumer's social environment such as family, reference group, and social class. All these three of stimuli furnish information inputs to the potential consumer concerning the product category or the brand (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1987). Significant stimuli, according to Foxall (1990), include quality, price, service, distinctiveness and availability, while symbolic stimuli are portrayed by the mass media and sales people and influence the consumer indirectly.

The **perceptual and learning constructs** (second variable), forms the central element of the Howard-Sheth model. At this stage of the model, psychological variables are assumed to operate when the consumer is contemplating a decision. Although forming the so-called heart of the model, these constructs are treated as abstractions that are not defined operationally or directly measured. Some of these variables are perceptual in the nature and focus on how the consumer receives and processes information gained from input and other part of model. For example, if the consumer is not sure about information and its meaning received from the environment, stimulus ambiguity occurs, while distortion of information received by the consumer, to match established needs or experiences, results in perceptual bias (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1987).

**Learning constructs** (second component of second variable), includes the consumer's goals, preferences, criteria for evaluating alternatives, information regarding products in the evoked set and buying intentions. The proposed interaction between the perceptual and learning variables together with variables in other segments of the Howard-Sheth model ensures its distinct character (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1987). Runyon and Stewart (1987) provide additional information on the second variable, combining perceptual and learning constructs into a single term, called hypothetical constructs. These constructs are responsible for processing and interpreting input stimuli and are characterised by the fact that changes in them can only be inferred from output variables, since they are not observable.

The **outputs** (third variable in the model), it shows the possible response to stimuli by the consumer and includes five variables, namely attention, brand comprehension, attitude, intention and act of purchase (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1987).

The last variable (**external** variables), are not directly involved in the decision making process. The reason for mentioning this variable is that it should impact on the segmentation efforts of the marketer, since the consumer is influenced by external variables. External variables considered relevant in terms of impacting on consumer behaviour include time pressure, consumer personality traits, financial status and importance of the purchase (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1987).

According to Runyon and Stewart (1987), the value of the Howard-Sheth model, is that the model attempts to identify and organise major variables that may influence consumer behaviour. The model is also perceived to be dynamic in nature, since it reflects the complexity of consumer behaviour in an attempt to understand it. The consumer is portrayed to form generalisations as a guide to decision-making through an active information search from the environment by employing past experiences.

#### **1.3.4. The Howard Model**

The Howard model has been revised a number of times from the early 1970s to the current version published in 1994. It should be noted that the original model by Howard (1974 version), according to Engel et al. (1978), was based on revisions from the Howard-Sheth model. The model indicates the revisions that reflect insights gained from testing the Howard-Sheth model, as well as contributions of other authors who often approached consumer behaviour from different theoretical perspectives.

The Howard model 1989 and 1994 version (O'Shaughnessy, 1992 and Howard, 1994), it shows consumers to be in one of three different stages of decision-making, corresponding to the first three stages of the product life cycle. In the introduction stage the corresponding decision state is called extensive problem solving, followed by the growth stage, referred to as limited problem-solving, and finally at the maturity stage, the decision state is referred to as routine problem-solving.

The Howard model portrays the consumer decision process, comprising six interrelated concepts, namely Information (F), Brand recognition (B), Attitude (A), Confidence (C), Intention (I) and Purchase (P) (O'Shaughnessy, 1992 and Howard, 1994). For better clarity of Howard model, the six interrelated concepts briefly discussed below.

**Information (F)**, it refers to the precept that is caused by stimuli, for example advertisements, where the precept is what the consumer perceives when exposed to stimuli. The precept is measured by recall, implying that information comprises of all that is recalled by the stimulus. **Brand recognition (B)** involves categorisation, resulting in the consumer needing information on both the functioning of the product and the form. Brand recognition is viewed as being causally linked to both Attitude (A) and Confidence (C) (O'Shaughnessy, 1992 and Howard, 1994).

**Attitude (A)** towards a brand refers to the measure of the extent to which consumers expect the brand to meet certain expectations. The measure of attitude is argued to be multidimensional, where each benefit is measured in terms of its importance to the consumer and the multiplication of each weighting by the corresponding envisaged performance of the brand, resulting in the overall sum being the measure of attitude. Attitude is viewed as being causally linked to Intention (I). **Confidence (C)** refers to the degree of certainty experienced by consumers regarding the correctness of their judgements about a brand and its benefits. Confidence is suggested to be causally linked to Intention (I), especially when Attitude (A) is high (O'Shaughnessy, 1992 and Howard, 1994).

**Intention (I)** to purchase represents the mental stage reflecting the consumer's intention to purchase a specified quantity of a particular brand within a specified period. Intention (I) is viewed as a predictor of Purchase (P). **Purchase (P)**, the final interrelated concept of the Howard model, occurs once the consumer either has bought the brand or when the consumer has financially committed to purchasing the brand (O'Shaughnessy, 1992 and Howard, 1994).

Howard (1994) described, Price (Pr) and Availability (PL) directly influencing Intention (I), represent the regular price of the brand and the Place (PL) where the brand can be purchased.

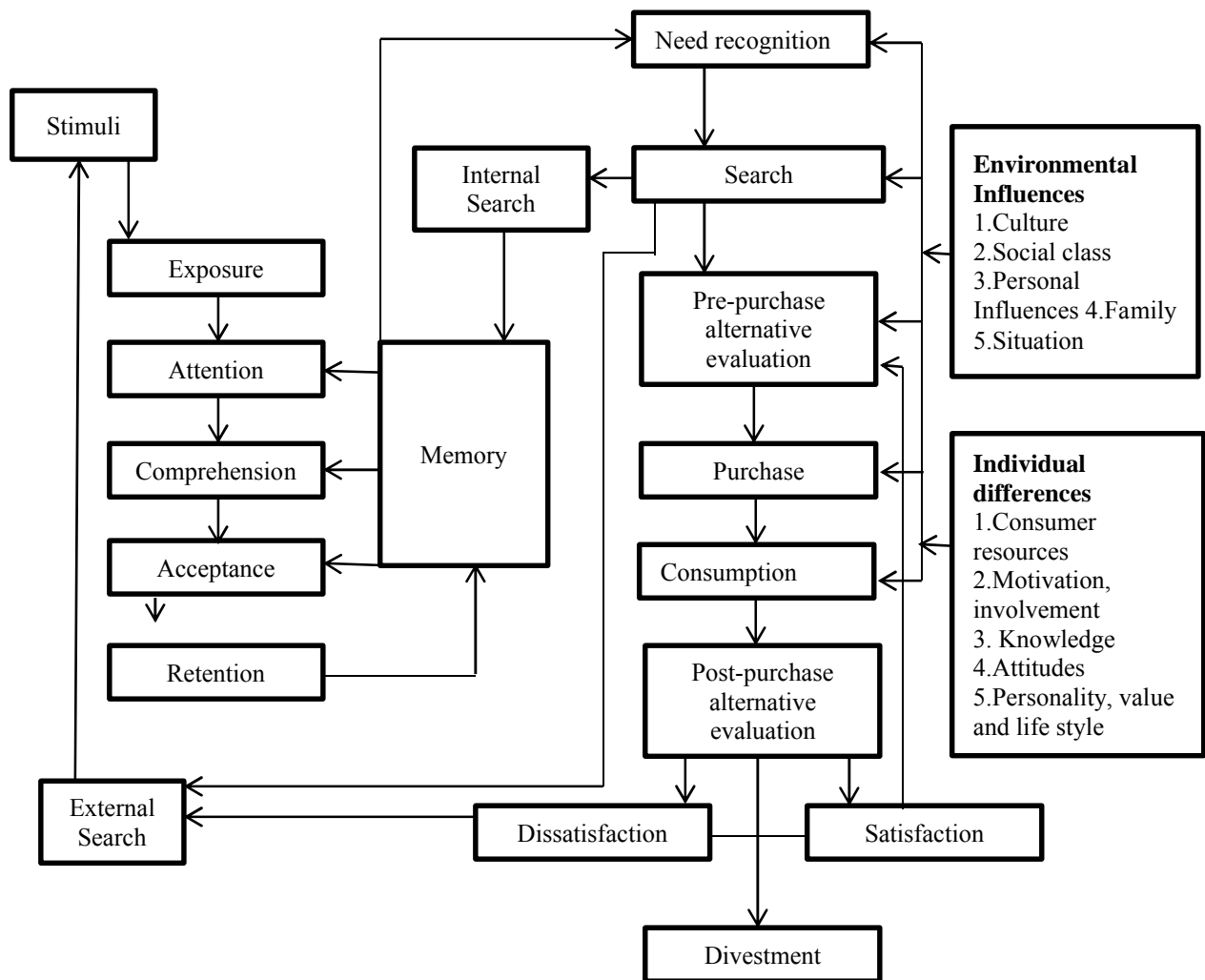
Although price and availability are considered important influencing factors of the purchase process, these variables change often and Information (F) can therefore bypass the thinking process by directly influencing Intention (I). Intention (I) is not only influenced by Price (Pr) and Place or availability (PL), but also by motives. Howard (1994) indicates that motives represent the motives operating in each specific situation.

### **1.3.5. The Engel, Blackwell, Miniard Model**

The Engel, Blackwell, Miniard Model (EBM model 1995 version), mainly focus on the variables influencing consumer decision-making and the way in which they interact. The complete EBM model is shown in Fig.2, where a solid arrow indicates a direct relationship and a broken arrow, an indirect or feedback relationship between variables. According to the EBM model, the model is made up of four sections as: decision process stage; information input; information processing; and variables influences the decision process.

The model focuses on the decision process stages: problem recognition, search, pre-purchase alternatives evaluation, purchase, consumption, post-purchase alternative evaluation, and divestment. The information processing section is made up of consumer's exposure, attention, comprehension, acceptance and retention of important information. All stages of the decision making process are also influenced by individual and environmental factors. The environmental factors include culture, social class, personal influence, family and situation. The individual factors include consumer resource, motivation, involvement, knowledge, attitude, personality, value and life style.

The seven steps (activities) involved in the decision process stage of Engel, Blackwell, Miniard Model are briefly explained below.



**Fig.2.**The Engel, Blackwell, Miniard model

Source: Engel et al. (1995)

### ***Need recognition***

The first stage of the decision-making process is that of need recognition, it explained as “result of an imbalance between actual and desired needs” (Lamb et al., 2011). Need recognition is a critical stage in consumer decision making process because without it, there is no deliberate search for information. The process of need recognition combines some highly relevant consumer behaviour concept such as information processing and the motivation process. First of all, consumers must become aware of the problem through information processing arising as a result of internal or external stimuli. This advantage will motivate consumer, they are aroused and activated to engage in some goal directed activity. This kind of action in response to recognizing needs and finding solutions to needs depends on the magnitude of the discrepancy between the



current state and the desired or ideal state and secondly, the importance of the needs for the concerned consumers (Engel et al., 1995).

### ***Information search***

The second stage of consumer decision making process relates to information search. Once a need is recognised by a perspective customer, he would seek for information about the available ways to satisfy the need. It is important to stress that “the extent to which the consumer needs to search for information depends on his current information levels and the perceived value of the additional information” (Pradhan, 2009).

Customers are greatly influenced by marketing strategies of retailers during this stage of the decision – making process as well. Namely, retailers communicate information about the brand through various communication channels that might include any combination of advertising, direct marketing, public relations and publicity, personal selling, events and experiences and sales promotion (Kotler and Keller, 2009).

### ***Alternative evaluation***

The alternative evaluation process of Engel, Blackwell, Miniard Model, the consumer will examine products in terms of their attributes as compared to personal standards and specifications, defined as evaluation criteria. The evaluation is simply based on how the product makes the consumer feel while consumer is using the product and services.

The evaluation criteria, expressed in the form of preferred attributes, present the desired outcomes from the purchase and consumption of products. Evaluation criteria, influenced by individual and environmental influences, can therefore be perceived as becoming a product-specific manifestation of the consumer's needs, values and lifestyle (Engel et al., 1995).

### ***Purchase***

Making the purchase corresponds to the fourth stage of customer decision making process. The purchase process occurs in either a retail-type environment or through in house shopping, and often requires the assistance of a highly skilled salesperson, although this does not necessarily imply that the decision and evaluation process is executed at the point of purchase (Engel et al., 1995).

Moreover, it has to be stated that “if the need isn’t great and the solutions the consumer finds aren’t desirable enough to motivate a purchase, the consumer may postpone the purchase until a satisfactory opportunity presents itself” (Lake, 2009).

### ***Consumption and post-consumption alternative evaluation***

The consumption of products has traditionally not been the concern of marketers, since the primary objective used to be to sell the product. This view has changed since marketers need to remain competitive by ensuring consumer satisfaction with the purchase and the consumption of products in an effort to retain consumers. Marketers can, therefore, learn a great deal from consumers by examining how products are consumed, noting preferences and suggestions on how to improve on products, and 'finally to probe into reasons why products are returned (Engel et al., 1995).

Dissatisfaction with the purchase and consumption of a product occurs when the consumer perceives the chosen alternative to be failing against the desired outcome. The consumer may also experience, doubt with the purchase even before consumption, simply because of the presence of alternatives that also cater for the desirable features. This phenomenon is known as post-decision regret and may inspire the consumer to engage in further information search. The importance of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the purchase and consumption of a product is illustrated in Figure.2, where satisfaction provides feedback to pre-purchase alternative evaluation, assisting the consumer with future alternative evaluation and choice, and dissatisfaction which leads to external search for information (Engel et al., 1995).

### ***Divestment***

The final stage of the decision process model is divestment, where the consumer faces the options of disposal, recycling or re-marketing (Engel et al., 1995).

## **1.4. Overview of Consumer Decision Making Models**

These are the different way of consumer decision making process depicted in every consumer behaviour model. But different authors talk about same steps such as **attention, motivation, attitude, intention, confidence, comprehension and purchase**. But they used in different terms in theirs consumer decision making models. The **attention**, Bettman information processing model, The Howard-Sheth model and The Engel, Blackwell, Miniard model talked about attention step, but The Bettman information processing model used attention as sub part of the basic hierarchy of information processing model, The Howard-Sheth model used attention as sub part of output step and The Engel, Blackwell, Miniard model used as tools of information processing. In the case of **motivation**, the Bettman information processing model used motivation as sub part of the basic hierarchy of information processing model, The Nicosia model

used motivation in Field 3 for gain information. The **attitude** step, The Nicosia model used attitude as input to the Second Field, The Howard-Sheth model used attitude as sub part of Learning constructs and output variables and The Howard model used attitude as interrelated concepts of consumer decision making.

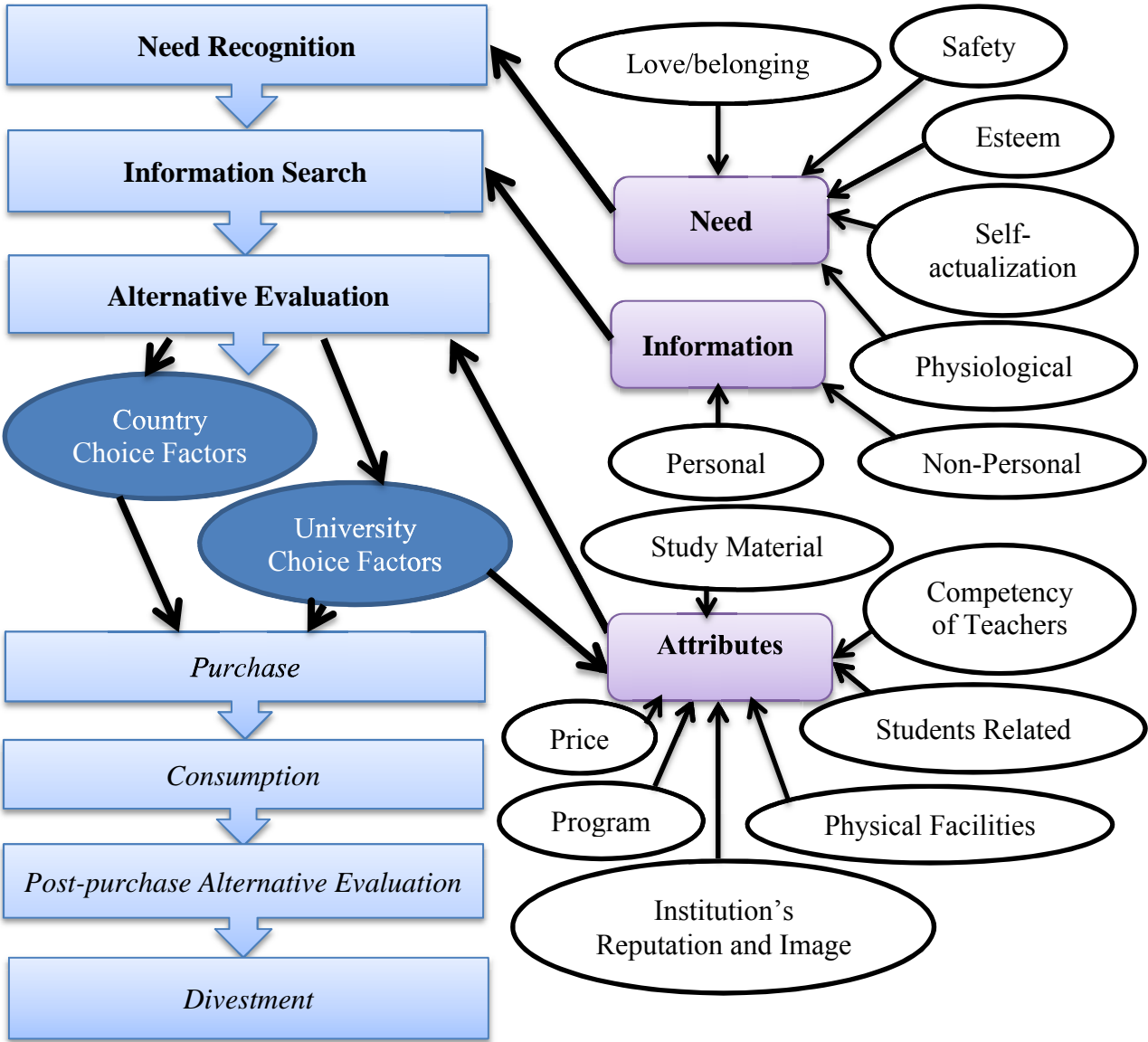
The **intention** step, The Howard-Sheth model used intention as sub part of Learning constructs and output variables and The Howard model used intention as interrelated concepts of consumer decision making. The **confidence** step, The Howard-Sheth model used confidence as sub part of Learning constructs and output variable and The Howard model used confidence as interrelated concepts of consumer decision making. The **comprehension** step, The Howard-Sheth model used comprehension as sub part of Learning constructs variable and The Engel, Blackwell, Miniard model used comprehension as tools of information processing. In the case of **purchase** step, The Nicosia model used purchase as the main Field (field-3) of his decision making process, The Howard-Sheth model used purchase as sub part of output variable of his decision making process, The Howard model used purchase as interrelated concepts of consumer decision making and The Engel, Blackwell, Miniard model used as main decision making step (step 5) of their consumer decision making process.

### **1.5. International Student's Decision Making Process**

**Introducing model:** In this Master Thesis, is used the Engel, Blackwell, Miniard Model on consumer behaviour, the Engel, Blackwell and Miniard model, focus on the variables influencing consumer decision-making and the way in which they interact. The model provided a comprehensive discussion on the possible influences on consumer behaviour, and more specifically the impact of influences on the different stages of the decision-making process. The model is made up of four sections as: decision process stage; information input; information processing; and variables influences the decision process. The model focuses on the decision process stages: problem recognition, search, pre-purchase alternatives evaluation, purchase, consumption, post-purchase alternative evaluation, and divestment. The model provided the latest thoughts on the subject of consumer behaviour.

The theoretical framework of this study, which is presented in fig.3, it includes the main process and concepts of this research as well as their relationships. The framework is based on the seven stages of decision-making process by Engel, Blackwell, Miniard (1995). The seven stages model describes the decision-making process in highly complex situations such as

selecting a higher education institution in an international context. The main focus of the research is especially on need recognition, information search and evaluation of alternatives of international students. These three steps of the decision-making process are in bold alphabets to highlight their central role in this research. The purchase decision is also linked to the evaluation stage through country choice factors and university choice factors. The other stages of the decision-making model are not under special interest and are thus written with italicized letters.



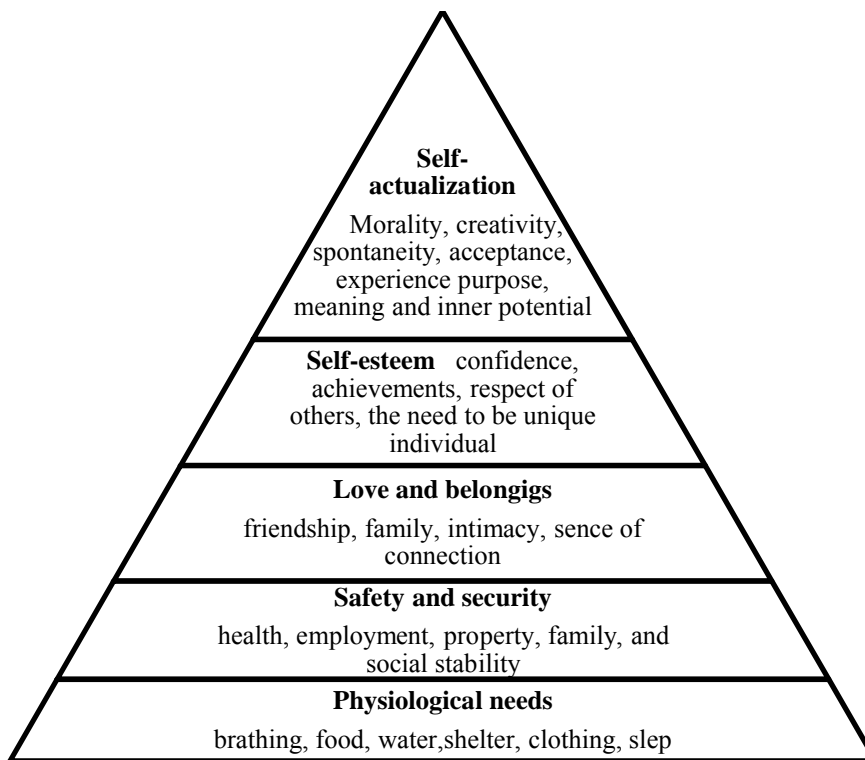
**Fig.3.** Theoretical framework

Need recognition, information search and evaluation of alternatives play a key role in the international student's decision-making process and as mentioned before this is the main focus of the research. The main needs, information and attributes are also presented in the theoretical framework as they are the center of the need recognition, information search and evaluation of alternatives stage. The needs are classified into five groups, the information are classified into two groups and attributes are classified into seven groups of factors that influence the purchase intention of international students as can be seen from the framework. The needs groups are physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem and self-actualization. The information groups are personal and non-personal. The attributes groups are physical facilities, program, price, study material, competency of teachers, students and institution's reputation and image. The chosen needs, information and attributes are discussed in further detail in this chapter of this research.

### **Need recognition**

In this stage, Maslow's hierarchy of needs is used. Maslow (1943) stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs. When one need is fulfilled a person seeks to fulfill the next one, and so on. Maslow's well-known hierarchy of needs, although not classified as a model of human behaviour, provides valued input to the theory of consumer behaviour, since it provides theory on the motivation of human beings based on a hierarchy of human needs. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (1997), Maslow's theory postulates five basic levels of human needs, ranging from lower level (biogenic) needs to more important, higher-level (psychogenic) needs. Consumers, therefore, seek to first satisfy lower-level needs before attending to higher-level needs.

The hierarchy of needs theory proposed by Maslow comprises five distinct levels (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997 and Belch and belch, 2001), namely physiological needs, safety and security needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. The fig.4 provides a graphical view of the different level of needs, clearly indicating the hierarchy from lower to higher level needs.



**Fig.4.** Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Source: Maslow (1943)

Each level, as portrayed in Figure.4, will be briefly discussed to differentiate between the levels.

**Physiological needs.** These include the most basic needs that are vital to survival, such as the need for water, air, food, and sleep. Maslow (1943, 1954) believed that these needs are the most basic and instinctive needs in the hierarchy because all needs become secondary until these physiological needs are met. Most of these lower level needs are probably fairly apparent. We need food and water to survive. We also need to breath and maintain a stable body temperature. In addition to eating, drinking, and having adequate shelter and clothing, Maslow also suggested that sexual reproduction was a basic physiological need.

**Security needs.** These include the needs for safety and security. Security needs are important for survival, but they are not as demanding as the physiological needs. Examples of security needs include a desire for steady employment, health care, safe neighborhoods, and shelter from the environment (Maslow, 1943, 1954).

The needs become a bit more complex at this point in the hierarchy. Now that the more basic survival needs have been fulfilled, people begin to feel that they need more control and

order to their lives. A safe place to live, financial security, physical safety, and staying healthy are all concerns that might come into play at this stage.

**Social needs (love and belonging).** These include needs for friendship, love, and affection, belonging and acceptance (Churchill and Peter, 1998). Maslow (1943, 1954) described these needs as less basic than physiological and security needs. Relationships such as friendships, romantic attachments, and families help fulfill this need for companionship and acceptance, as does involvement in social, community, or religious groups.

**Esteem needs.** After the first three needs have been satisfied, esteem needs becomes increasingly important. These include the need for things that reflect on self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others (Maslow, 1943, 1954). At this point, it become increasingly important to gain the respect and appreciation of others. People have a need to accomplish things and then have their efforts recognized. People often engage in activities such as going to school, playing a sport, enjoying a hobby, or participating in professional activities in order to fulfill this need.

**Self-actualizing.** This is the highest level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Self-actualizing people are self-aware, concerned with personal growth, less concerned with the opinions of others, and interested fulfilling their potential. Maslow (1943, 1954) stated that human motivation is based on people seeking fulfillment and change through personal growth. Self-actualized people are those who were fulfilled and doing all they were capable of.

The growth of self-actualization (Maslow, 1962) refers to the need for personal growth and discovery that is present throughout a person's life. As each person is unique the motivation for self-actualization leads people in different directions (Kenrick et al., 2010). For some people self-actualization can be achieved through creating works of art or literature, for others through sport, in the classroom, or within a corporate setting.

Maslow (1962) believed self-actualization could be measured through the concept of peak experiences. This occurs when a person experiences the world totally for what it is, and there are feelings of euphoria, joy and wonder. It is important to note that self-actualization is a continual process of becoming rather than a perfect state one reaches of a 'happy ever after' (Hoffman, 1988).

Exploring cultural heritage, experience of living abroad, willingness to travel, better academic offerings, professional career boost, these motivations and 'pull' factors are outlined in the key finding of research done by Macready and Tucker (2011). The research presents the findings of the annual Open Door data of IIE on US study abroad. These factors used as self-

actualization needs in this research. Cubillo et al. (2006) examined factors that have influence when selecting a study destination abroad. These are live in a different culture, make international contacts, improve language skills. These factors also used as self-actualization needs in this research.

### **Information search**

The second stage of consumer decision making process relates to information search. Once a need is recognised by a perspective customer, he would seek for information about the available ways to satisfy the need. In this research Information search in international students' decision-making process comprise of two information search sources: personal and non-personal.

#### **Personal**

Influences and recommendations from family members, relatives, friends and professors also play an important role in a student's decision-making process for HE (Chen and Zimitat, 2006; Maringe and Carter, 2007). Bonnema and Van der Waldt (2008) examined the impact of stakeholders on students' decision when selecting a university in South Africa. Authors identified three categories: media sources, direct sources (provided by universities), social sources (e.g. friends, teachers, parents, fellow students). Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) suggested that personal recommendations or word-of-mouth referrals of former alumni are main influences. Even though the final decision to study abroad is mainly decided by students themselves, their family members, relatives and friends influence them significantly by providing information and suggestions (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). Pimpa (2003) indicated that the influence of family on the Thai students differed depending on the level of education they planned to study. While the majority of the research investigated family influence from the two categories of 'recommendation' and 'financial support'.

#### **Non-personal**

Non-personal information search classified by three: internet, print and consultancy companies.

**Internet.** In today's society, the Internet is an important instrument for communication following globalisation and technology advancement (Chirkova, 2011). When communication occurs across the Internet, cultural aspects have to be taken into account. The reason is the Internet offers alternative communication channels, besides traditional communication channels (Kim, Holdsworth, Li and Fam, 2009). Further, the Internet allows marketers to customize information that targets different cultures, including both verbal and nonverbal content (Usunier and Lee, 2009). Website and email correspondence provides institutes opportunities to market



themselves (Gomes and Murphy, 2003) and communicate with prospective students worldwide without meeting in person. On the other hand, prospective students use the same technologies in their decision making process (Gomes and Murphy, 2003).

The Internet provides a place for users to engage in different types of interactions (Crystal, 2001). In synchronous communication, interaction occurs in real-time between senders and receivers. For example, in synchronous communication like Skype and Yahoo Messenger, users are 'online' at the same time to exchange information using chat, call or video. As in asynchronous communication, there is a time-delay (postponed time) between information exchanges of senders and receivers where simultaneous interaction is not required. One example is an online forum, where users can post ideas and information on the 'board' which will be stored and allow users to follow the sharing and exchanging of ideas later (Crystal, 2001).

**Print.** Ivy claims that in education the 7Ps are slightly different from other services marketing. Prospectus also one of the p of 7ps. Prospectuses, brochures and other informational material are unique to educational institutions and are important since university education is a high involvement sector. Students need to be fully informed on details before they decide where to study (Ivy, 2008). Print media also are used to recruit students to abroad (Kim, Holdsworth, Li and Fam, 2009).

**Consult.** In every country, consultancy companies are very popular now-a-days. Consultancy companies will provide all information about country and university for students who looking for higher education abroad. Word-of-mouth and public relations which are used to recruit students (Kim, Holdsworth, Li and Fam, 2009).

### **Alternative evaluation**

The alternative evaluation process, the consumer will examine products in terms of their attributes as compared to personal standards and specifications, defined as evaluation criteria. The evaluation is simply based on how the product makes the consumer feel while consumer is using the product and services.

### **Case of country:**

Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) identified six factors influencing the selection of a host country: knowledge and awareness of the host country, personal recommendations, cost issues, environment, geographic proximity and social links. Maringe (2006) highlights costs that include living expenses and availability of part time job for prospective students. Working part time is one of the ways for them to make their HE abroad possible (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002).

According to Cubillo et al. (2006), a country, a city or an institution's image influences international students' decision. There are several aspects that relate to living in the study destination and city such as safety, cultural activities, international experience, university environment, facilities, quality of life, visa application and immigration prospects (Bodycott, 2009; Chung et al., 2009). Student satisfaction (Price et al., 2003) is highlighted as an important factor affecting their decision to choose a study destination and a specific institute.

#### **Case of university:**

Evaluation attributes of in international students' decision-making process comprise of seven factors: physical facilities, program, price, study material, competency of teachers, students and institution's reputation and image.

**Program and study material.** Universally, availability of a desired course is the most important for students when selecting a university (Price et al., 2003). Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) present that international students are influenced students' qualifications being recognised when choosing an institute. Banwet and Datta (2003) believed that satisfied customers are loyal, and that satisfied students were likely to attend another lecture delivered by the same lecturer or opt for another module or course taught by her/him. In their survey of 168 students who attended four lectures delivered by the same lecturer, covering perceived service quality, importance and post-visit intentions, they found that students placed more importance on the outcome of the lecture (knowledge and skills gained, availability of class notes and reading material, coverage and depth of the lecture and teacher's feedback on assessed work) than any other dimension.

**Price.** Price is always an important consideration but not the only one, since it is associated with financial aid options as well as employability rates and salary levels upon graduation. Students are willing to get to a more expensive program as these two factors increase (Ivy, 2008). The costs of going to university are the most influential when selecting between several universities that offer a similar course (Price et al., 2003).

**Institution's reputation and image.** Universities are often assessed for their qualities in different areas by rankings and other evaluation bodies, such as accreditation or validation. All these develop a reputation that can be used for promotion (Ivy, 2008). Price et al. (2003) found that, when choosing a university, two out of six most important factors were the academic ones: study program and university's teaching reputation.

**Physical facilities.** The outcome of service delivery is a tangible product, and a "bundle" of goods and services as the product offering (Sasser et al., 1978). The service-product bundle refers to the inseparable offering of many goods and services including what Liverpool John

Moore's University has to offer its students. This bundle consists of three elements: the physical or facilitating goods, the sensual service provided – the explicit service and the psychological service – the implicit service. The physical facility which university has offer such as the lecture theatres and tutorial rooms and their level of furnishing, decoration, lighting and layout as well as ancillary services such as catering and recreational amenities.

Price et al. (2003) recently reported on the impact of facilities on undergraduate student choice of university. They surveyed a number of universities over two years in order to determine students' reasons for selecting a particular university. The average results for the two years were fairly similar – the top eight reasons being; it had the right course, availability of computers, quality of library facilities, good teaching reputation, availability of “quiet” areas, availability of areas for self-study, quality of public transport in the town/city and a friendly attitude towards students. The location of the campus, the facilities offered, quality of accommodation, academic infrastructure, these are all premium to the program itself and add to the student decision (Ivy, 2008). Besides, Bodycott (2009) indicates that students consider facilities and accommodation as well as scholarships availability during their decision-making process.

**Competency of teachers.** The outcome of service delivery is a tangible product, and a “bundle” of goods and services as the product offering (Sasser et al., 1978). The service-product bundle refers to the inseparable offering of many goods and services including what Liverpool John Moore's University has to offer its students. This bundle consists of three elements: the physical or facilitating goods, the explicit service and the implicit service. The explicit service includes the knowledge levels of staff, staff teaching ability, the consistency of teaching quality irrespective of personnel, ease of making appointments with staff, the level of difficulty of the subject content and the workload. The implicit service includes the treatment of students by staff, including friendliness and approachability, concern shown if the student has a problem, respect for feelings and opinions, availability of staff, capability and competence of staff. It also includes the ability of the university's environment to make the student feel comfortable, the sense of competence, confidence and professionalism conveyed by the ambience in lectures and tutorials, feeling that the student's best interest is being served and a feeling that rewards are consistent with the effort put into course works/examinations (Sasser et al., 1978).

The research of Hill et al. (2003) who utilised focus groups to determine what quality education meant to students. The most important theme was the quality of the lecturer including classroom delivery, feedback to students during the session and on assignments, and the relationship with students in the classroom.

**Students.** Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) present that international students are more influenced by the following factors when choosing an institute: its links or alliances with other institutions familiar to the students, alumni base, and the number of students enrolled at the institution and students' qualifications being recognised. Maringe and Carter (2007) highlight that international recognition of UK HE is a factor that influences international students' choices to study in UK.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There are two helpful research methodologies: quantitative and qualitative. Bryman and Bell (2003) point out that the connection between theory and research, epistemological consideration and ontological consideration, quantitative and qualitative research can be considered as two distinctive cluster of research strategy.

Verschuren and Doorewaard (2005) stated that there are three key decisions to make when conducting research: using a quantitative or qualitative approach, do a broad or in-depth research and use an empirical or non-empirical setting. In this research used quantitative method to investigate international students as consumer behavior who coming to Lithuania for higher studies.

The **aim** of the research is to evaluate international student's decision-making process, when choosing higher education in Lithuania. The **research questions** of the research are:

- Why do students look for studies abroad? What is their strongest motive?
- What sources of information are most important for students, when deciding about study destination (country and university)?
- What are most important factors for student's country choice?
- What are the most important factors for student's university choice?

### 2.1. Research Method

Quantitative research method was chosen for the study as it better serves the purpose of this research than qualitative method would have. According to Alkula et al. (1994) quantitative methods are appropriate for examining a phenomenon's structure that refers to the factors that it consists of and the dependencies among these factors. This research is focused on the international students' decision-making process and quantitative methods provide the best tools for examining these issues. Quantitative research was through web base-survey using structured online questionnaire in English language which maid according to Engel, Blackwell, Miniard consumer behaviour model.

## 2.2. The Structure of Questionnaire

This research is focused on the international students' decision-making process when choosing higher education in Lithuania. This survey based on Engel, Blackwell, Miniard consumer behaviour model. The survey instrument was constructed based on a critical review of the literature. In table 1 shows the detailed information about research instruments.

**Table 1**

### The Structure of Questionnaire

<b>Main Factors Influencing “case of <u>International Students</u>”</b>	<b><u>Questions</u></b>
<b>Need recognition</b>	
<b>Physiological Needs</b>	
Food, Shelter (Maslow, 1943-1954).	1.Studies abroad will allow me to have better feeding 2.I will get better living condition in my life
<b>Safety Needs</b>	
Security, Employment (Maslow, 1943-1954).	3.Studies abroad will provide me more security in labor market 4.Studies abroad will provide me better employment opportunities
<b>Love/belonging Needs</b>	
Friendship, Family (Maslow, 1943-1954).	5.Studies abroad will allow me to have stronger family stability in my future 6.It will expand my friends network 7.It will give possibility of international family building in my future
<b>Esteem Needs</b>	
Self-esteem, Confidence, Achievement, Respect of others (Maslow, 1943-1954).	8.It will build my self esteem 9.It will help me to be secure in myself and my abilities 10.It will help to gain me highest career achievements 11.Studies abroad will help me to get more respect from friends and colleagues
<b>Self-actualization Needs</b>	
Exploring cultural (Macready and Tucker, 2011), Make international contacts (Bourke, 2000), (Cubillo et al., 2006)	12.It will help me explore cultural heritage of other countries 13.It will give possibility of international network creation
<b>Information search</b>	
<b>Personal</b>	
Family, Relatives, Friends, Professors (Chen and Zimitat, 2006), (Maringe and Carter, 2007), Word-of-mouth referrals of former alumni (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002), Direct source(provided by universities) (Bonnema and Van der Waldt, 2008)	1.Opinion of my family members / relatives 2.Friends's opinion 3.University/school teacher's opinion 4.Word of mouth referrals of former alumni 5. Direct meeting with representative of universities
<b>Non-Personal</b>	
<b>Internet:</b> Internet (Kim, Holdsworth, Li and Fam, 2009), University Website, University Email (Gomes and Murphy, 2003)	6.Information found on internet. 7.Information from home University received by email. 8.University website
<b>Print:</b> Print Media (Kim, Holdsworth, Li and Fam, 2009),	9.Information in newspapers, Magazines. 10.University prospectus, Brochures.

University Prospectus, Brochures of University (Ivy, 2008)	
<b>Consult:</b> Public Relation (Kim, Holdsworth, Li and Fam, 2009).	11. Information from consultancy company.
<b>Alternative Evaluation</b>	
<b>Case of Country</b>	
Knowledge and awareness of the host country, Cost issues, Environment, Social links (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002).	1. My knowledge and awareness of the host country 2. Living cost in the country 3. Climate conditions 4. Availability of social network in the country
Safety, Cultural activities, International experience, Facilities, Visa application and Immigration prospects (Bodycott, 2009), (Chen, 2007)	5. Safety 6. Country traditions and cultural activities 7. Possibility to travel to other countries 8. Travelling infrastructure 9. Visa application and Immigration procedure
<b>Case of University</b>	
<b>Program</b>	
The right course/ program (Price et al., 2003), Students' qualifications being recognized (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002), Knowledge and skills gained (Banwet and Datta, 2003).	1. The right course/program 2. Students' qualifications being recognized world wide 3. Knowledge and skills gained
<b>Price</b>	
Effective Cost (Ivy, 2008)	4. Tuition fee
<b>Institution Reputation and Image</b>	
University Ranking, Accreditation or validation of University (Ivy, 2008), Good teaching reputation (Price et al., 2003)	5. University ranking 6. University reputation 7. Accreditation or validation of university
<b>Physical Facilities</b>	
Quality of library facilities, Availability of computers, Availability of quiet area, Availability of area for self-study, Quality of public transportation in the city (Price et al., 2003), Quality of accommodation (Ivy, 2008), Catering and recreational Amenities (Sasser et al., 1978).	8. Quality of library facilities 9. Availability of computers in university 10. Availability of "quiet" areas for self-study 11. Quality of public transport in the town/city 12. Quality of accommodation 13. Catering and recreational Amenities
<b>Competency Of Teachers</b>	
Staff teaching ability, Ease of making appointments with staff, Capability and competence of staff, Treatment of students by staff, Including friendliness and approachability, Concern shown if the student has a problem, Respect for feelings and opinions (Sasser et al., 1978), Feedback to students during the session and on assignments (Hill et al., 2003).	14. Teacher's teaching Methodology 15. Teacher's consultation Availability 16. Competency of teachers 17. Treatment of students by teachers 18. Friendliness and approachability of teachers 19. Concern shown if the student has a problem 20. Respect for feelings and opinions 21. Feedback procedures during the session and on assignments,
<b>Study Material</b>	
Availability of class notes and reading material (Banwet and Datta, 2003).	22. Availability of class notes and reading material
<b>Students</b>	
Alumni base, The number of students enrolled at the institution Student's night life, Strong and active student community, Students after-class events and activities (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002).	23. Big alumni base 24. The big number of students enrolled at the institution 25. Strong and active student community 26. Students after-class events and activities 27. Student's night life

### **2.3. Research Sample**

The link for the survey was sent to 680 international students of Siauliai University (SU), Mykolas Romeris University (MRU) and Kaunas University of Technology (KTU) via e-mail and Facebook. The questionnaire was available for 20 days during April 2016 and altogether 103 responses from international students were received, resulting in a response rate of 15.15 per cent. Only the international students of Siauliai University (SU), Mykolas Romeris University (MRU) and Kaunas University of Technology (KTU), who are studying in the fall of 2016 were asked to participate in the research. There are some students, they had began their studies only two months before the survey was conducted and their memory was fresh on the reasons that affected their decision-making process. The survey that was used to collect the data for this research is presented in appendix 1.

### **2.4. Research Organization**

Gathering information is very significant in the context of broad research area, Yin (1994) has recognized five popular ways of collecting and analyzing empirical data in business research. It includes experiments, survey, and analysis of archival information, histories and case studies. The research used survey as the main method strategy to research. The survey was conducted in a web-based manner as it was the fastest and most accurate way to reach the target students. A link to the survey was sent for all of the target recipients via e-mail and Facebook and the students were given two weeks to answer the questionnaire. After the first week, the recipients who had not submitted their answers were sent a reminder.

In this empirical research, there are two different types of questions used: multiple choice questions and multiple choice grid questions. Multiple choice questions are used when gathering information about the respondents' background. Multiple choice grid is used when gathering information about the factors that influence respondent's decision making process.

The survey consists of two sections; the respondent's background information and information about the factors that influence respondent's decision making process. In the first section of the survey the students were asked questions related to their personal information. The background section included questions on gender, age, university, level of study and type of study. The second section of the survey is the most important one as it examines the different stages of decision making process of students such as need recognition, information search and



alternative evaluation. The aim of this research is to better understand the international students' decision-making process through examining the different stages of decision making process and therefore the second section of the survey is the most relevant one for this study.

Student's motivation is measured by using a 5-point Likert-type response scale, anchored 5- strongly agree and 1- strongly disagree. Student's information source is measured by using a 5-point Likert-type response scale, anchored 5 is extremely important and 1 is not important, with additional option not applicable. Country choice factors and university choice factors are analyzed by using a 5-point Likert-type response scale, where 5 is extremely important and 1 is not important.

**Methods of data analysis:** The collected data was analyzed with Microsoft Excel 2010 programme. Descriptive statistics was used to achieve the stated aim and objective.

### 3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 3.1. Respondents' Background Information

The following chapter presents the findings of the empirical research. The results of the survey are discussed and analyzed by first focusing on the respondents' background information and then moving on to the decision making process that is in the center of this research.

680 international students who started their studies at Siauliai University (SU), Mykolas Romeris University (MRU) and Kaunas University of Technology (KTU) in the spring 2016 were invited to participate in this research. The students were sent a link to a web-based questionnaire that was available 20 days during the April 2016. **Regarding characteristics of the respondents down below in the table 2 the description of respondents is presented.** 103 responses from international students were received, resulting in a response rate of 15.15 per cent, 40.8% (42) of the respondents were female and 59.2% (61) male. 24.3% of the respondents were aged 17-20, 58.3% were aged 21-24, 15.5% were aged 25-28, 1.9% were aged 29-32 and finally, 0% were aged over 32.

**Table 2**

**Demographic characteristics of respondents**

Characteristics	Category	Number of Replies	Percentage
Gender	Male	61	59.2%
	Female	42	40.8%
Age	17-20	25	24.3%
	21-24	60	58.3%
	25-28	16	15.5%
	29-32	2	1.9%
	Over 32	0	0%
University	Siauliai University (SU),	37	35.9%
	Mykolas Romeris University (MRU)	30	29.1%
	Kaunas University of Technology (KTU)	33	32%
	Other	3	2.9%
Level of study	Bachelor	62	60.2%
	Master	41	39.8%
Type of study	Whole programme	51	49.5%
	Short term programme (Erasmus, or other short term exchange programme)	52	50.5%

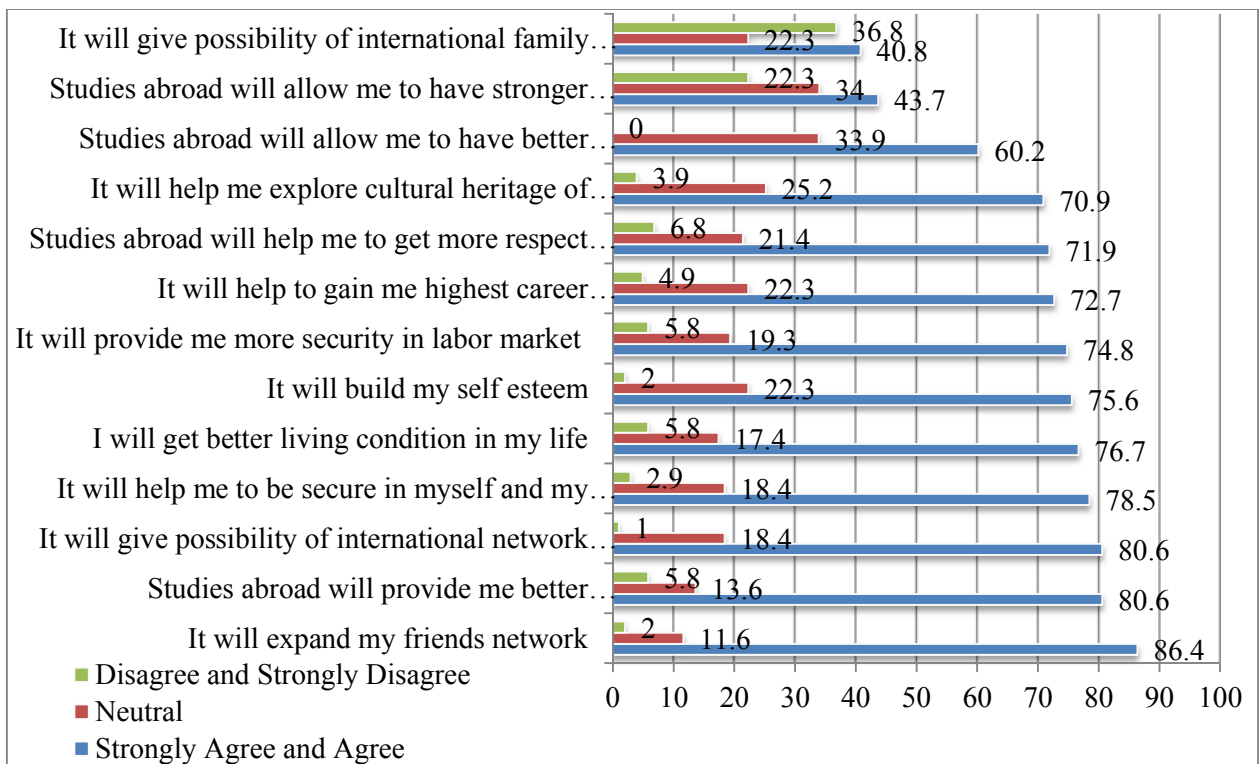
The respondents represented 3 different universities as can be seen table 2. 35.9% of the respondents were from Siauliai University, 29.1% of the respondents were from Mykolas Romeris University, 32% were from Kaunas University of Technology and 2.9% from other institutions.

The biggest part of respondents was in bachelor degree studies (60.2%) and 39.8% of respondents were master degree students. 49.5% of respondents were whole programme students, and 50.5% were short term programme students.

### **3.2. Analysis of Strongest Motivations of International Students When Choosing Studies Abroad**

In this section, first the strongest motivations of the international students are discussed in detail. Second important sources of information and finally evaluation of country and university selection factors in the student's decision making is analyzed in depth. Student's motivation, country choice factors and university choice factors are analyzed by using a 5-point Likert-type response (from strongly agree to strongly disagree in other questions from extremely important to not important). When estimating importance of information sources in student's decision making process a 5-point Likert-type response scale with additional option "not applicable" is used.

Figure 5 shows the strongest motivations of international students in choosing studies abroad. Provided motivational factors were rated from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Based on the data, 86.4% of respondents *strongly agree* and *agree* that *expansion of friends network* is the most important motivation factor which influenced international students' decision to study abroad. 80.6% of respondents emphasized the *better employment opportunities* and *international network creation* as important motivation factor. *Being secure in my-self and my abilities* (78.5%) and *having better living conditions* (76.7%) are also among strongest motivations of international students. The *international family building in future* (40.8%) and *stronger family stability in future* (43.75%) do not play major role in student's motivation for studying abroad.



**Fig.5.** Motivations of international student’s for studying abroad

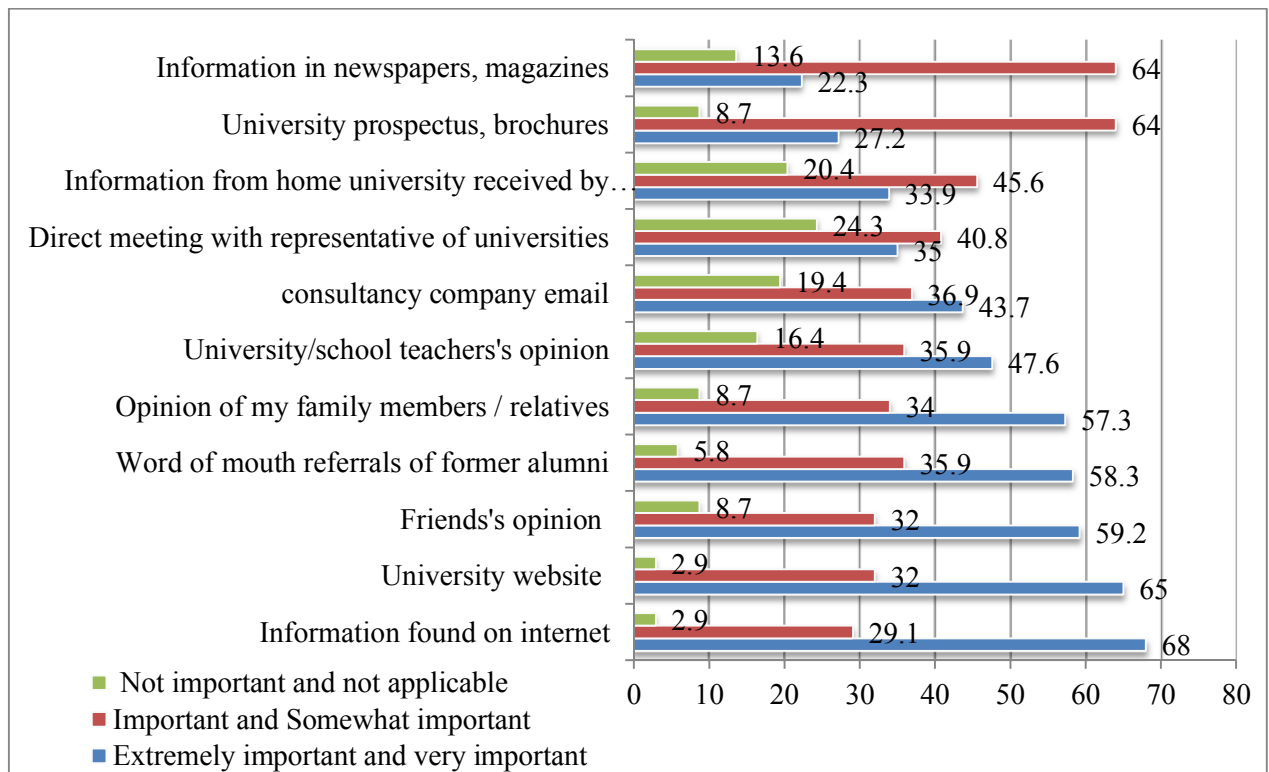
The 13 motivation factors were classified into five categories and percentages of respondents of each motivation factors were calculated. The empirical research showed that the *expansion of friend’s network* is one of the most important motivation factors which influenced international students’ decision to study in Lithuania. *Better employment opportunities* and *international network creation* are also important motivation factors for international students. Beside these three factors, respondents also stated *being secure in my-self and my abilities* and *better living conditions* are also important motivation factors which influenced international student’s decision to study Lithuania.

### **3.3. Analysis the Importance of Information Sources for International Students, When Deciding About Study Destination (Country and University)**

The below figure.6 shows the importance of different sources of information for international students, when deciding about destination such as country and university. Most of the respondents found the *internet information sources* (non-personal information sources) to be important for gaining insight about the destination such as country and university. *Internet* (68%) and *university website* (65%) were two most significant information sources for

international students when they were making decision about country and university for their studies.

Respondents also stated *friend's opinion* (59.2%), *referrals of former alumni* (58.3%) and *opinion of family members* (57.3%) ( personal information sources) were also important when making decision about the country and university. The information in newspapers, magazines (22.3%) and university prospectus, brochures (27.2%) do not play major role for international students.

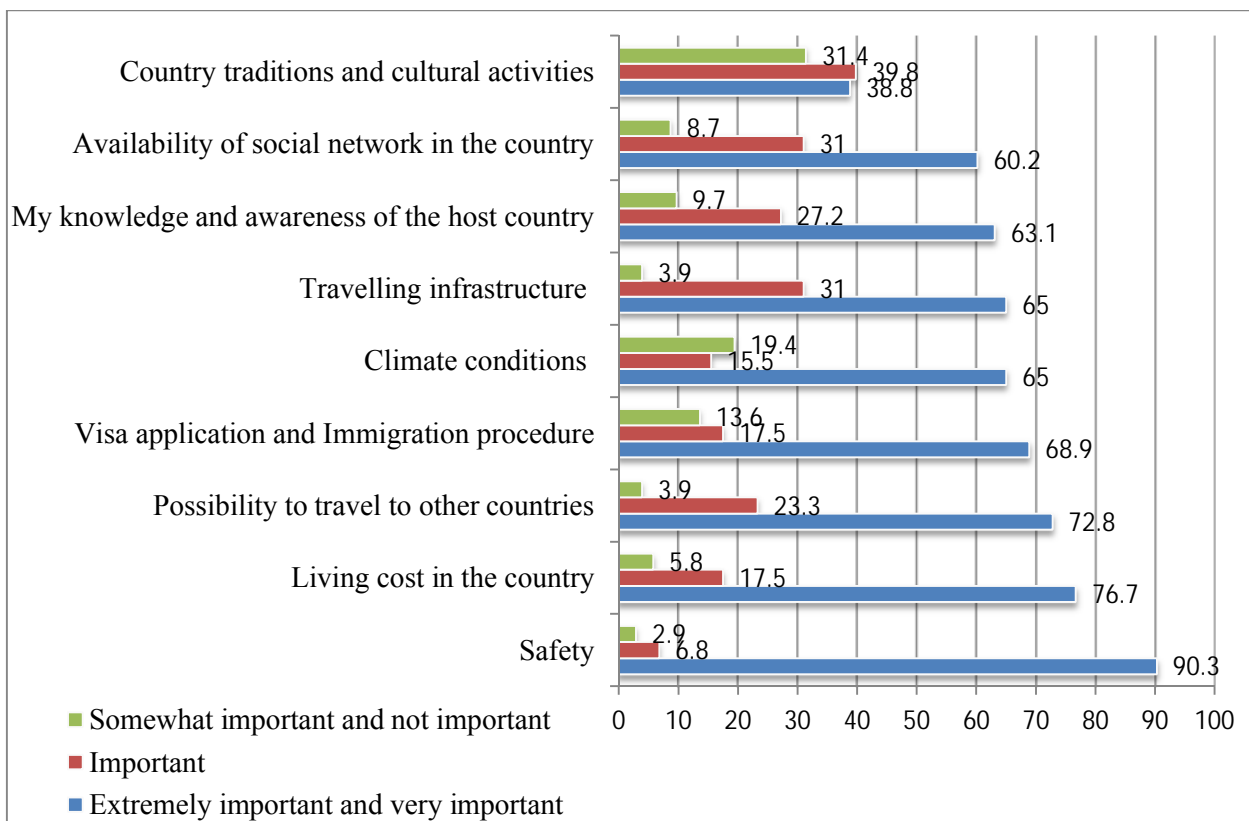


**Fig.6.**The importance of information sources for international students when choosing country and university for their studies abroad

11 important source of information were chosen for the survey and classified into two categories. The *internet information sources* (*internet* and *university website*) (non-personal information sources) was the most important information source for international students when they were making decision about country and university for their studies. *Personal information sources* (*friend's opinion*, *referrals of former alumni* and *opinion of family members*) also play an important role when making decision about the country and university.

### 3.4. Analysis of the Factors Influencing Country Selection

Figure 7 shows the main factors influencing country selection of the international students in choosing studies abroad. 90.3% of respondents *strongly agree* and *agree* that the *safety of the country* is the most important country selection factor which influenced international students' decision to study in Lithuania. Respondents also evaluated the *living cost of the country* (76.7%), *possibility to travel to other countries* (72.8%) and *visa application and immigration procedure* (68.9%) as important country selection factors. *Climate condition* and *travelling infrastructure*



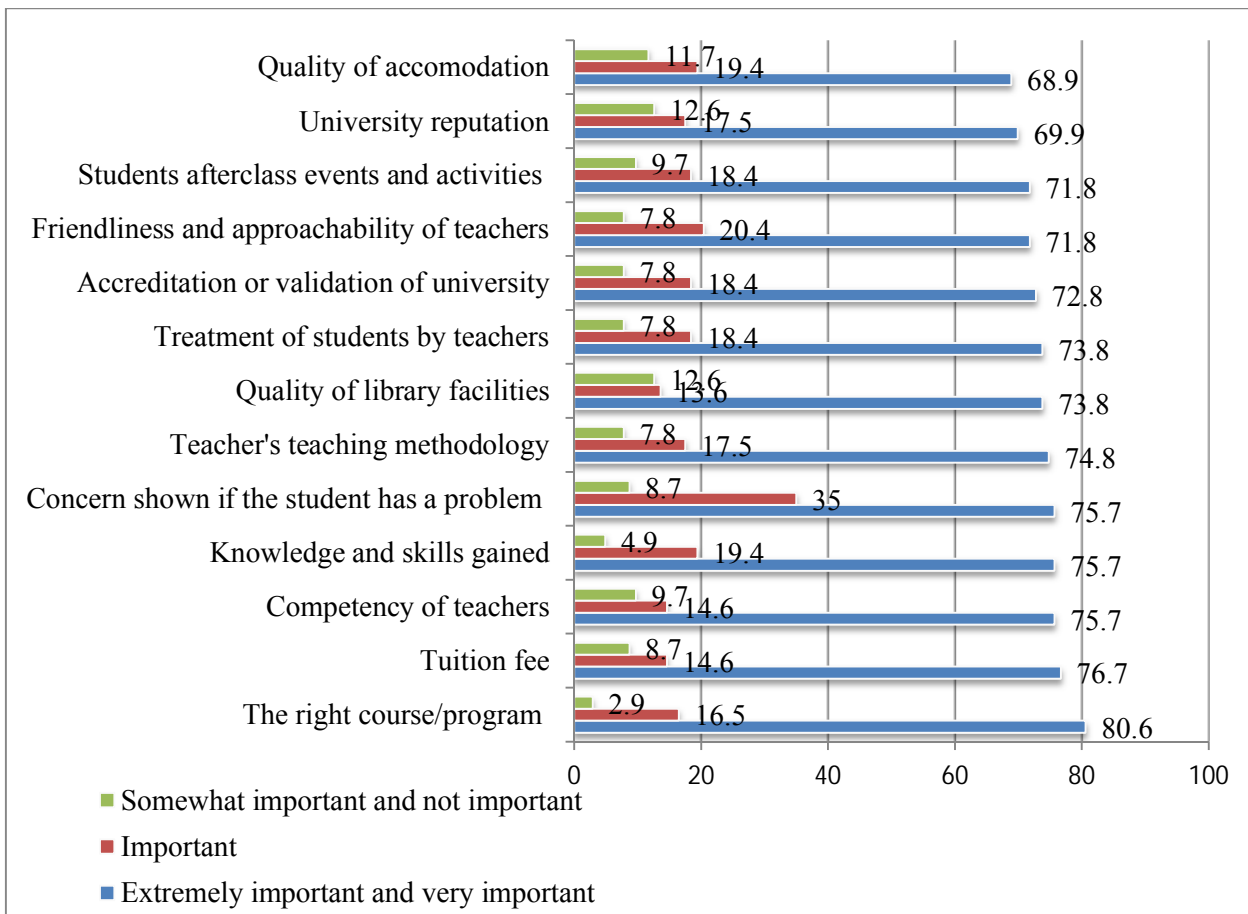
**Fig.7.** Factors influencing country selection

(65%) are also important factors when choosing studies abroad. *Country tradition and cultural activities* (38.8%) do not play major role in international student's country selection.

9 important international student's country selection factors were chosen for the survey and percentages of respondents of each country selection factors were calculated. *Safety of the country* is one of the main reasons for international students when choosing study destination (Lithuania). Students also evaluated *the living cost of the country*, *possibility to travel to other countries* and *visa application and immigration procedure* as important country selection factors.

### 3.5. Analysis of the Factors Influencing University Selection

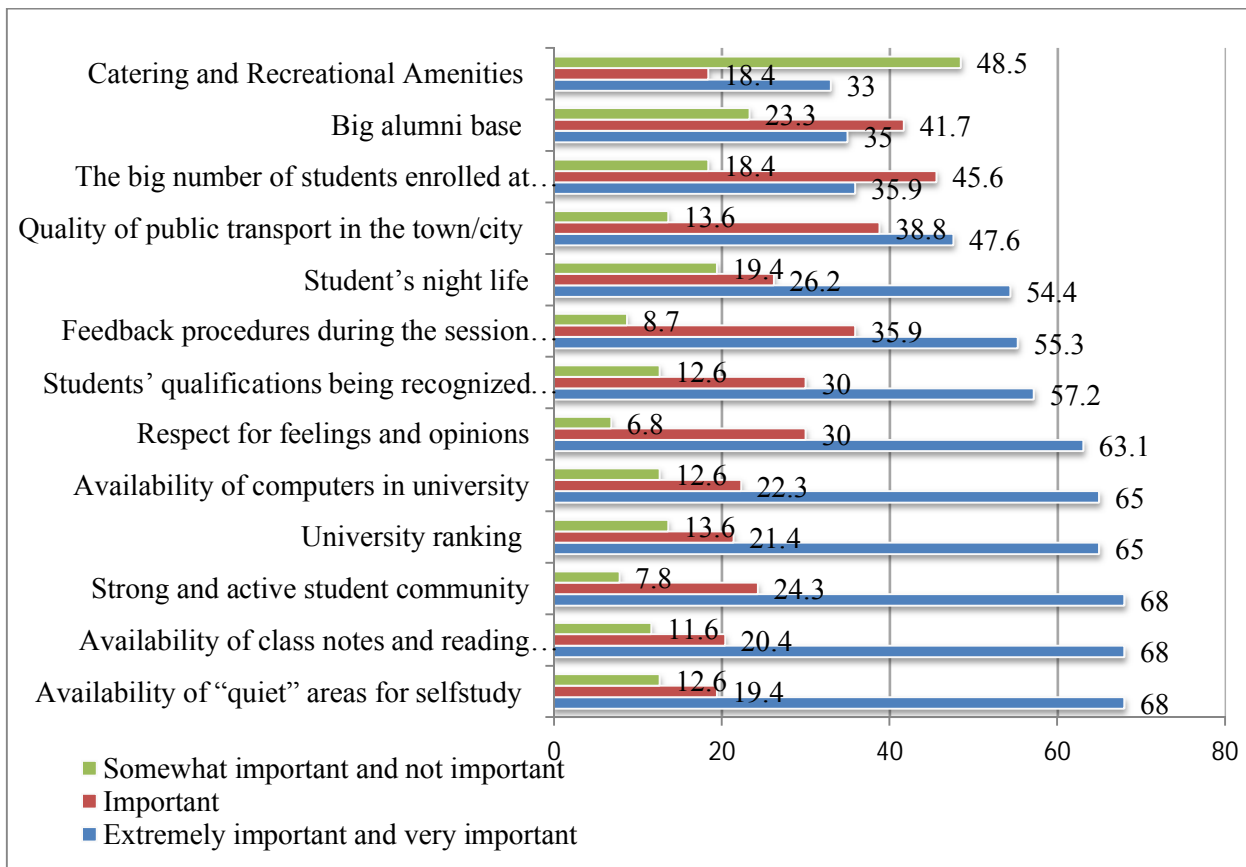
Figure 8 and 9 shows the factors influencing university selection of the international students in choosing studies abroad. Students were firstly asked to rate specific factors according to importance within their decision-making process. This factors analyzed by using 5-point Likert scale (1–not important; 5–extremely important). The factors were divided into two parts according to the response of respondents. Figure 8 presents the first part and Figure 9 the second part of the obtained results.



**Fig.8.** Factors influencing university selection, part 1

Most of the respondents *extremely important* and *very important* that *the right course/program* (80.6%) and *tuition fee* (76.7%) are the most important university selection factor which influenced international students' decision to study in Lithuania. 75.7% of respondents emphasized the *competency of teachers*, *knowledge and skill gained* and *concern shown if the student has a problem* as important university selection factors. The *teachers*

*teaching methodology* (74.8%), *quality of library facilities* and *treatment of students by teachers* (73.8%) are also important university selection factors when choosing studies abroad. The *catering and recreational amenities*, *big alumni base* and *the big number of students enrolled at the institution* (fig.9) do not play major role in international student’s university selection.



**Fig.9.** Factors influencing university selection, part 2

27 important university selection factors were chosen for the survey and classified into seven categories (table1). The study has shown that the *right course/ program* and *tuition fee* are one of the key factors which influenced international students’ decision to study in Lithuania. Beside these two factors, international students *evaluated the competency of teachers, knowledge and skills gained* and *concern shown if the student has a problem* as important university selection factors. And the *teachers teaching methodology, quality of library facilities* and *treatment of students by teachers* are also important university selection factors for international students when choosing studies abroad



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The literature overview of this research has shown that consumer behaviour and consumer decision-making processes are some of the most studied topics by researchers and marketers today. The overviewed authors agree that consumer behaviour is influenced by different groups of factors which cannot be controlled; however, they should be identified and taken into account when marketing strategies are being designed. And also the decision-making process is very complex and it represents one of the main issues in studying consumer behaviour. Thus, with the changing trends and increasing importance of international students as a source of revenue, the number of studies with the mentioned focus is growing.

1. Consumer behavior is defined as the actions and decision processes of people who purchase goods and services for personal consumption and “Consumer behaviour is the study of the process involved when individuals or group select, purchase, use or dispose of product, services, idea or experiences to satisfy needs and desires” ( Bennett, 1995; Solomon et al., 2006, p. 6)

2. The research focused on five consumer behaviour models that indicate steps of consumer decision making process, namely, Bettman information processing model, Nicosia model, Howard-Sheth model, Howard model and Engel, Blackwell, Miniard model. These different models talk about same steps such as attention, motivation, attitude, intention, confidence, comprehension and purchase.

3. The international student’s decision-making model is based on the seven stages of decision-making process by Engel, Blackwell, Miniard. The main focus of the research is especially on need recognition, information search and evaluation of alternatives of international students. The needs/ motivations are classified into five groups (physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem and self-actualization), the information is classified into two groups (personal and non-personal) and attributes are classified into seven groups (physical facilities, program, price, study material, competency of teachers, students and institution’s reputation and image) that influence the purchase intention of international students.

4. Research findings show that need recognition, information search and evaluation of alternatives played a key role in the international student’s decision-making process when choosing higher education in Lithuania. The empirical research showed that the *expansion of friend’s network* is one of the most important motivation factors which influenced international students’ decision to study in Lithuania. *Better employment opportunities* and *international*

*network creation* are also important motivation factors for international students. Beside these three factors, respondents also stated *being secure in my-self* and *my abilities* and *better living conditions* are also important motivation factors which influenced international student's decision to study Lithuania.

5. The *internet information sources* (non-personal information sources) was the most important information source for international students when they were making decision about country and university for their studies. *Personal information sources* (*friend's opinion, referrals of former alumni* and *opinion of family members*) also play an important role when making decision about the country and university.

6. *Safety of the country* is one of the main reasons for international students when choosing study destination (Lithuania). Students also evaluated *the living cost of the country, possibility to travel to other countries* and *visa application and immigration procedure* as important country selection factors.

7. The study has shown that the *right course/ program* and *tuition fee* are one of the key factors which influenced international students' decision to study in Lithuania. Beside these two factors, international students *evaluated the competency of teachers, knowledge and skills gained* and *concern shown if the student has a problem* as important university selection factors.

## **Recommendations**

- Most of the international students have gained information about study destination through the internet and university website. Therefore, the institutions should invest on creating an easier IT platform (website) that would provide clear, easily found information.
- The university website information sources should be more widespread and more effectively developed for easily finding university program through keywords and gaining information about study destination.
- The representatives of university should invest into participation at study fairs abroad, because the personal contact was found to be important.
- Referrals of formal alumni and friends opinions (personal information source) are important information sources for international students. Therefore, for making these sources to be more useful, the institutions should provide academic support to the students who are presently studying and to those who will be coming newly to the institution. The institution should also provide appropriate measures if student has a problem.
- The right Courses/program is one of the most important factors of international student decision-making process for attending a particular institution. The institution should keep its focus on offering interesting courses with a good content (syllabus). And maximum try to offer more interesting courses at the institutions than the courses offered at the home institutions of the students.

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## APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE

### Consumer Behavior: Choosing Studies Abroad “Case of International Students, Who Study in Lithuania”

Dear International Student

I am a master student of Siauliai University. Regarding my final thesis completion, I investigate the consumer behaviour who come to Lithuania as an International student for higher studies. As an international student in Lithuania, you are invited to participate in this study. Each respondent requires five to ten minutes to answer the questionnaire. There is no right or wrong answer as it entirely depends on your individual situation.

Any information provided is confidential and will be used only for academic purpose. This study provides many benefits to all parties, particularly to researchers in understanding the factors that contribute to the consumer behaviour who come to Lithuania as an International student for higher studies. Moreover, universities and institutions are also benefitted from this research in making investment to provide best service for their customers (students) through detailed understanding of their behaviour.

The questionnaire will be available for submission when you check all items/questions. So please read all the questions and mark your answers.

Thank you for your cooperation

Nihal Kothodiyil  
Student of Siauliai University

\* Required

1. Gender \*

Mark only one oval.

- Male  
 Female

2. Age \*

Mark only one oval.

- 17-20  
 21-24  
 25-28  
 29-32  
 Over 32

3. Which university are you studying at? \*

Mark only one oval.

- Siauliai University (SU)
- Mykolas Romeris University (MRU)
- Kaunas University of Technology (KTU)
- Other

4. At which level are you studying? \*

Mark only one oval.

- Bachelor
- Master

5. Type of your studies: \*

Mark only one oval.

- Whole programme
- Short-term programme ( Erasmus, or other short-term exchange programme)

6. Why did you look for studies abroad? What was your STRONGEST MOTIVATION? \*

My strongest motivation to study abroad was related with:

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Studies abroad will allow me to have better feeding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will get better living condition in my life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Studies abroad will provide me more security in labor market	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Studies abroad will provide me better employment opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Studies abroad will allow me to have stronger family stability in my future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It will expand my friends network	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It will give possibility of international family building in my future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It will build my self esteem	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It will help me to be secure in myself and my abilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It will help to gain me highest career achievements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Studies abroad will help me to get more respect from friends and colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It will help me explore cultural heritage of other countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It will give possibility of international network creation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. What source of INFORMATION was MOST IMPORTANT for you, when deciding about study destination (country and university)? \*

Mark only one oval per row.

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Not Applicable
Opinion of my family members / relatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friends's opinion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
University/school teachers's opinion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information found on internet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information in newspapers, magazines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Word of mouth referrals of former alumni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information from home University received by e-mail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information from consultancy company	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
University website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
University prospectus, brochures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Direct meeting with representative of universities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. What was the most important factor for your COUNTRY CHOICE? \*

Mark only one oval per row.

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
My knowledge and awareness of the host country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Living cost in the country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Climate conditions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Country traditions and cultural activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of social network in the country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Possibility to travel to other countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Travelling infrastructure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visa application and Immigration procedure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. What was the most important factor for your UNIVERSITY CHOICE? \*

Mark only one oval per row.

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
The right course/program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tuition fee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
University ranking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
University reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accreditation or validation of university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The big number of students enrolled at the institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students' qualifications being recognized world wide	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Big alumni base	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Competency of teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of accommodation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of library facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of public transport in the town/city	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of computers in university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of "quiet" areas for selfstudy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of class notes and reading material	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Catering and Recreational Amenities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teacher's teaching methodology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teacher's consultation availability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feedback procedures during the session and on assignments,	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowledge and skills gained	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Treatment of students by teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friendliness and approachability of teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Concern shown if the student has a problem	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Respect for feelings and opinions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Strong and active student community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students afterclass events and activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student's night life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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