Henric Bernunger
Gabriella Mattsson

Why Swedes study abroad

A study of what motivates Swedish students at Karlstad University to study abroad

Degree Project of 15 credit points
Business administration

Date/Term: Spring 2008
Supervisor: Bo Rundh
Abstract

The number of students at Karlstad University, who have studied abroad, has increased for many years. The university is working towards a vision of becoming more internationally recognized among universities in Sweden and abroad. They are therefore working intensively with what the university calls the internationalization process, which is to be carried out between 2006 and 2010. This process will help them to increase the quality of education and make the students more competitive on the national and international markets. This can be done for example by offering more courses in foreign languages, introducing an international credit system and exchange programs.

The purpose of our thesis is to investigate what motivates the Swedish students at Karlstad University to study abroad. We conducted a research concerning the students at Karlstad University who studied abroad during 2007 and 2008. These students have studied in many different countries ranging from Asia to America.

We have chosen to focus on the following questions to find out why students study abroad and what the university can do to influence more students to study abroad:

- What motivates Swedish students at Karlstad University to study abroad?
- Which factors might or might not have influenced the students when they chose where to study?
- What is Karlstad University doing to influence the students, and what can they do to persuade more students to study in a foreign country?

In order to reach answers for our questions we have conducted a questionnaire and sent these to those students who were abroad in 2007 and 2008. We sent our questionnaires by E-mail and regular mail to a total of 195 students. We also interviewed the international student guidance counselor at Karlstad University in order to find out what the university is doing to motivate students to study abroad.

We have studied different theories in relation to consumer behavior and the consumer buying process. With this theory and the responses we got from the students we found out what the major factors were that motivated students to study abroad and what the university can do to influence more students to study in a foreign country.

From our findings, some major factors that influenced students to study abroad were, personal development, improve language skills and to obtain international character in their studies. In order to motivate more students to study abroad we found that it was important with communication between students who have been abroad and those who have not yet been abroad. Students who have studied in a foreign country also thought that Karlstad University must become more skilful and competent regarding the process of applying to study abroad.
Zusammenfassung

Der Sinn unseren Aufsatz ist zu untersuchen, was den schwedischen Studenten bei Karlstad Universität motiviert im Ausland zu studieren. Deshalb haben wir unter den Studenten die im Jahr 2007 und 2008 im Ausland studiert haben, eine Untersuchung gemacht. Um herauszufinden was es ist die die Studenten motiviert im Ausland zu studieren, und was die Universität machen kann um mehr Studenten im Ausland zu schicken, haben wir entschieden, folgenden Fragen zu beantworten:

- Was motiviert den schwedischen Studenten bei Karlstad Universität im Ausland zu studieren?
- Welche Faktoren haben Einfluss auf den Studenten, als sie sich entschieden haben wo zu studieren?
- Was macht Karlstad Universität um die Studenten zu beeinflussen, und was können Sie machen um mehr Studenten zu überzeugen in einem fremden Land zu studieren?

Um Antworten auf unsere Fragen zu bekommen, haben wir eine Fragebogen geschrieben. Diese Fragebogen haben wir per E-Mail und Brief an 195 Studenten geschickt. Wir haben weiterhin die international guidance counselor bei Karlstad Universität befragt, um herauszufinden was gemacht wird um Studenten zu motivieren im Ausland zu studieren.

Wir haben verschiedene Theorien in Bezug zu consumer behavior und die consumer buying process studiert. Mit diesem Theorien und die Antworten die wir bekommen haben, haben wir zusammengestellt, welche Faktoren die Studenten motivieren und was die Universität machen kann um mehr Studenten zu beeinflussen im Ausland zu studieren.

Von unserem Ergebnis haben wir herausgefunden dass die wesentlichen Faktoren im Ausland zu studieren waren; Personale Entwicklung, Sprache verbessern, und einen internationalen Charakter in ihre Ausbildung zu bekommen. Um mehr Studenten zu motivieren im Ausland zu studieren, haben wir entdeckt dass die Kommunikation zwischen Studenten die schon im Ausland studiert haben und die die es noch nicht gemacht haben zu schaffen, sehr wichtig ist. Darüberhinaus ist es für die Universität zwingend noch geschickter und kompetenter mit dem Prozess zu werden, wann die Studenten das erste Interesse zeigen und sich endgültig bewerben.
Acknowledgments

We would like to take this opportunity to send our sincerest thanks to Ann-Britt Höglund at Karlstad University who helped us with contacting the students and the administration regarding our questionnaire.

Further we would like to thank our supervisor Bo Rundh, who inspired us to be motivated and committed to our work.

This degree project would not have been possible without Karlstad University, which gave us the economic fundings to carry out our distribution of the questionnaires.

We would also like to thank all the students at Karlstad University studying abroad that kindly and quickly answered our questionnaire and made it possible for us to conduct our research.

Without their generosity and help this work would never have been completed.

Henric Bernunger and Gabriella Mattsson

Karlstad, May 2008
# Table of contents

Abstract........................................................................................................................................................................ii

Zusammenfassung............................................................................................................................................................iii

Acknowledgments ............................................................................................................................................................iv

1. Introduction..................................................................................................................................................................1
    1.1. BACKGROUND ..................................................................................................................................................1
    1.2. PROBLEM DISCUSSION .................................................................................................................................1
    1.3. PURPOSE ..........................................................................................................................................................2
    1.4. PROBLEM DEFINITION ..................................................................................................................................2
    1.5. DELIMITATIONS ...............................................................................................................................................2

2. Method .....................................................................................................................................................................3
    2.1. QUANTITATIVE APPROACH ..........................................................................................................................4
    2.2. QUALITATIVE APPROACH .............................................................................................................................4
    2.3. POPULATION ...................................................................................................................................................5
    2.4. SAMPLE ..........................................................................................................................................................5
    2.5. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY ..........................................................................................................................5
    2.6. NON-RESPONSE .............................................................................................................................................6
        2.6.1. Internal non-response ..........................................................................................................................7
        2.6.2. External non-response ..........................................................................................................................7
    2.7. DESIGNING THE QUESTIONNAIRE ..................................................................................................................8
    2.8. FORMULATING THE QUESTIONS ...................................................................................................................8
    2.9. PROCEDURE ....................................................................................................................................................9
        2.9.1. Designing our questionnaire ................................................................................................................9
        2.9.2. Formulating our questions ..................................................................................................................10
        2.9.3. Outcome ................................................................................................................................................11
    2.10. SOURCE CRITICISM ......................................................................................................................................12

3. Theoretical framework..............................................................................................................................................13
    3.1. THE BUYING PROCESS ...................................................................................................................................13
        3.1.1. Influencers................................................................................................................................................15
    3.2. INTRODUCING THE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR ...............................................................................................15
    3.3. CONSUMPTION ...............................................................................................................................................16
    3.4. THE MOTIVATION PROCESS ..........................................................................................................................16
    3.5. CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT ...........................................................................................................................17
    3.6. PUSH VS. PULL FACTORS ..............................................................................................................................18
        3.6.1. Push factors ..........................................................................................................................................18
        3.6.2. Pull factors ............................................................................................................................................18

4. Empirical data...............................................................................................................................................................20
    4.1. BACKGROUND VARIABLES ..........................................................................................................................21
    4.2. HOW IMPORTANT WERE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS WHEN YOU DECIDED TO STUDY ABROAD? ....22
    4.3. HOW DO YOU VALUE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS WHEN CHOOSING COUNTRY? ............................23
    4.4. HOW DID YOU VALUE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS WHEN YOU CHOSE UNIVERSITY? ....................24
    4.5. WHEN ORGANIZING YOUR ABROAD STUDIES, HOW SATISFIED WERE YOU WITH THE FOLLOWING STALLMENTS?.................................................................25
    4.6. ON A SCALE FROM 1-5 (1 BEING THE HIGHEST AND 5 BEING THE LOWEST) HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU CONSIDER FOLLOWING STATEMENTS WHEN THE UNIVERSITY MARKET THEIR ABROAD PROGRAMS? ......FEL!
        BOKMÅRK ÄR INTE DEFINERAT.
    4.7. OWN COMMENTS TO WHAT THE UNIVERSITY CAN DO TO INFLUENCE MORE STUDENTS TO STUDY
        ABROAD............................................................................................................................................................26
    4.8. WOULD YOU RECOMMEND OTHER STUDENTS TO STUDY ABROAD? ..................................................................27
5. Analysis .......................................................................................................................................................... 28
  5.1 WHAT MOTIVATES SWEDISH STUDENTS AT KARLSTAD UNIVERSITY TO STUDY ABROAD? ............... 28
  5.2. WHICH FACTORS MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT HAVE INFLUENCED THE STUDENTS WHEN THEY CHOSE WHERE TO STUDY? .................................................................................................................. 30
  5.3. WHAT IS KARLSTAD UNIVERSITY DOING TO INFLUENCE THE STUDENTS, AND WHAT CAN THEY DO TO PERSUADE MORE STUDENTS TO STUDY IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY? .................................................. 31

6. Conclusions .................................................................................................................................................. 34
  6.1. RECOMMENDATIONS .................................................................................................................................. 35

7. Future research ............................................................................................................................................ 36

8. References .................................................................................................................................................. 37

Contents over figures and tables

Figure 1 The buying process .......................................................................................................................... 13

Table 1 Number of answers .......................................................................................................................... 6
Table 2 Background variables of our respondents ....................................................................................... 21
Table 3 Motivations for studying abroad ...................................................................................................... 22
Table 4 Evaluation of factors when choosing country .................................................................................. 23
Table 5 Evaluating of factors when choosing university ............................................................................. 24
Table 6 Evaluation of satisfaction ................................................................................................................. 25
Table 7 Evaluation of marketing the study abroad programs ........................................................................ 26
Chapter one

1. Introduction

In chapter one, we present the background of the problem and the problem discussion. These two combined, will lead the reader to the problem definition and the purpose of the thesis, we will also look at the limitations that we have made.

1.1. Background

Karlstad University is working towards its vision of becoming more internationally recognized among universities in Sweden and abroad. This internationalization of education and research is a priority for the university. They are working intensively with what they call the internationalization process, which will be carried out between 2006 and 2010. The aim of this process is to increase the quality of the education and make students more competitive on the national and international markets. They will achieve this by offering more courses in foreign languages, introducing an international credit system (ECTS) and exchange programs (Karlstad University, 2008).

The University has become Sweden’s first ECTS-accredited university. This gives them a clear quality recognition, which they are searching for, which will make it easier for students when studying abroad. It is important for Karlstad University to motivate Swedish students to study abroad for a semester and also to attract foreign students to study at Karlstad University.
1.2. Problem discussion
A part of Karlstad University’s internationalization process is to increase the number of students who chose to take part in international studies. According to SCB (www.scb.se) and Högskoleverket (www.hsv.se) the number of students studying abroad has for the last few years decreased, but at Karlstad University the trend is different. Here the amount of students studying abroad has increased the last years (Karlstad University 2003; 2005).

The reason for this can be both personal needs and influences from the university. There are many different factors that have different levels of importance for individuals. Finding the common denominators will be essential for the university and it might help the university to figure out what they can and should focus on when they market the possibility to study abroad.

1.3. Purpose
The intention of our thesis is to investigate what motivates Swedish students at Karlstad University to study abroad and what the university can do to influence more students to go abroad.

1.4. Problem definition
We intend to answer the following questions:

- What motivates Swedish students at Karlstad University to study abroad?
- Which factors might or might not have influenced the students when they chose where to study?
- What is Karlstad University doing to influence the students, and what can they do to persuade more students to study in a foreign country?

1.5. Delimitations
We decided to limit our research to students who were studying abroad during 2007 and 2008, while we found it to be very difficult to conduct research on all students who have been abroad. For us it would be difficult to find the current address to them and they might not remember in detail how the process was carried out, and Karlstad University might have changed the procedure. We have also decided to exclude those students that choose not to take part of international studies. This because of that they would be more difficult to get in touch with, compared to our target group. We also found it to be more interesting to study those who did study abroad, because they can give an insight of what can be improved at the university, since they have gone through the process of applying to international studies.
Chapter two

2. Method

In this chapter we will discuss how we carried out the research, what we have to consider concerning sample group, reliability and construction of the questionnaire. With the help of theories about methods it made it easier for us to decide which the best way of performing the research was. We will at the end of this chapter analyze the method and look at how it was carried out.

Before we could begin our research we had to start with answering the question: What is the population of interest? This is the first stage in making the sample decision (Czaja & Blair, 2005). Since we specify an objective in our research, we define a population. A population is a certain amount of elements, whose quality and attitudes we want to explore. The explored elements must be related to a certain time period and place or equivalent (Dahmström, 2005). In our case the examined elements are the Swedish students at Karlstads University who study abroad.

There are three overall questions that must be answered when planning this kind of research (Ibid).

- Who will be examined?
- What will be examined?
- How will the research be carried out?

We began with determining who we want to research, the Swedish students at Karlstad University. The next step is to find out what we want to examine. We decided to find out what motivates the students to study abroad. The problem that we encountered in planning our research was, to find out what the best method was to carry out this experiment. Since we wanted to contact those who have been and will be abroad during 2007 and 2008, we wanted to find a method where it was easy to establish contact between us and them.
There are a number of different procedures that can be used to carry out surveys; these are through interviews, questionnaires or observations. Interviews involve one or more individuals who ask a person or group questions. These can be carried out in person or by telephone and can take from only a few minutes to do up to one hour, or sometimes even more. A questionnaire is a written inquiry which is sent out to many individuals. Answers are given on forms connected to the questionnaire. Observations are done when something is explained which is happening at a certain moment, assuming that the researcher can be present and register what is happening (Kylén, 2004).

Since we want to research a large population the best method for us is to conduct a questionnaire, by using regular mail and email. We will now look into some of the advantages and disadvantages with regular mail and e-mail questionnaires.

**Mail and email questionnaire**

*Advantages*
- Cheap (in comparison to face to face interviews)
- The possibility to send to many people
- Many sorts of questions can be asked
- Can be answered when the recipient has time
- No influence from the interviewer

*Disadvantages*
- Risk for a large non response
- An extended research can not be done
- Takes a long time
- If there are questions about the questionnaire, there is no one to be asked
- You don’t know who actually answers the questions

(Dahmström 2005, p.80)

**2.1. Quantitative approach**

We are researching the Swedish students’ attitudes towards the opportunity to study abroad; we want to find out what motivates the students and how common the factor is among the students. Since we want to explore as many students as possible and find the common denominator among the students we will distribute questionnaires to them. A positive aspect with this method is that we are able to generalize the results to not only fit those who are researched, but also those who we have not studied. We can further see the different variations and what the common variables between our respondents are (Jacobsen, 2002). The most convenient method to carry out our research was to get in contact with the students through questionnaires. It was important for us to get information directly from the source and not through other channels; this is called primary sources which can be carried out in a combination of different methods (Ibid).
2.2. Qualitative approach
A qualitative approach is when the data consists of words, text and symbols that describes or represents people, actions and happenings in a social reality (Christensen et al., 2001). To be able to answer the question: “what is Karlstad University doing to influence the students and what can they do to persuade more students to study in a foreign country?” we conducted a qualitative interview with the person in charge of international programs, at Karlstad University.

2.3. Population
A population consists of everyone who can leave information about a certain subject. A whole population will only be relevant if it is small enough in relation to the resources that you have to your disposal (Kylén, 2004). In our case the population consists of all students who have studied abroad, and since we do not have enough resources it would be quite difficult for us to get in contact with all these people. Therefore we decided to concentrate our research on those who recently studied abroad and those who will study abroad this year.

2.4. Sample
After that we had decided our population group we narrowed it down to a sample group. Sampling is the selection of elements, following prescribed rules, from a defined population. These elements are usually the subjects of the study (Czaja & Blair, 2005).

The students who fit our sampling group were those who studied abroad during 2007 or during 2008. Since most of the students are most likely in Sweden now, we decided that the best way to contact them was through regular mail. Those who are abroad during spring 2008, the same time as we are conducting our research, we found to be difficult to contact via mail because we do not have their addresses. Therefore the most convenient method is to contact them via e-mail.

2.5. Validity and reliability
Validity and reliability state the quality of the data. The validity value is the usefulness and relevance of the collected information. Reliability stands for the trustfulness, stability and homogeneity of the data. For the validity of the data we ask ourselves following questions; have we obtained the right information needed to fulfill the purpose of our investigation? Is there data missing that could make the results more useful? Have we collected data that does not concern our objective? (Kylén, 2004)

The structure of the methods we use can have an impact on the outcome of the validity and reliability. These methods can be either informal or structured. Methods that are formal and structured tend to lower the measuring instruments validity. In this case it might be difficult to obtain “real” answers, if the questionnaire has limited answers. At
the same time, a more structured method can increase the possibility that we receive a higher reliability (Ibid).

As the explanation of validity and reliability says, we need to be able to rely on the data’s that we are receiving. We need to trust that the data’s gives us the right information and if missing data would give us another answer, we will therefore take a look at what the non-response is and what it can tell us.

2.6. Non-response

It is important to take the non-response into consideration when conducting a quantitative research. The fact that you do not know if those who have chosen not to take part of the research deviates from those who do answer. This means that those who do answer are not representative for the whole sample that you are researching and if the number of non-responses is big it can affect the outcome of the research. It is therefore important that you analyze why there is a non-response and if there are any differences between those who did not answer and those who did answer. How big the amount of non-response will be, depends on how involved the respondent is in the research. If the study concerns the respondent it is more likely that he/she will answer and return the questionnaire (Christiansen et al, 2001).

In the box below we have counted our total number of respondents in the sample and also the number of answers that we received. We will have a look at what the different types of non-responses are and look into reasons as why the respondents did or did not answer.

| Total number in the sample: | 163 letters |
| Total | 195 |
| Non-response: | |
| Number of wrong addresses | 5 |
| Number of non-responses | 110 |
| Total | 115 |
| Amount of answers: | 80 (195-115) |
| Answer frequency: | (Number of answers/total sample) 80 / 195 = 41,03% |

Table 1 Number of answers (Christensen et al, p.111)

When talking about non-responses, you will have to distinguish them from each other, as there are two different types. We will here have a look at the two types; internal and external non-response (Andersson, 1994).
2.6.1. Internal non-response

The first type, the so-called internal non-response, is where the person in the survey sample chooses not to answer a specific question. Why this occurs can be because of that it is a delicate question regarding criminality or sexual habits etc. (Dahmström, 2005). But since we do not have any delicate questions we think that the internal non-response will be small or non-existence. We also think that the internal non-responses will be low, due to the fact that the students who are being questioned were recently abroad and their experiences are quite new. Therefore we do not think that the individual asked person will think that he/she is not representative for answering the questionnaire or that it does not concern him/her (Ibid).

2.6.2. External non-response

The second type is called external non-response and this is when a person in the sample simply cannot or does not want to respond to the questionnaire. We think that the largest non-responses will be in this group. Due to that the survey might not reach the asked person, because of that the addresses that we have are wrong or outdated or perhaps that the asked person is out of town (Ibid).

There are negative aspects regarding non-responses. One is that the results of a non-response can affect the outcome of the research. The risk is that those who did not answer differ from those who did answer and thus, affecting the results (Andersson, 1994).

There are ways in which you can control how much the non-responses will affect the outcome of the research. You will first have to try to explain why you do not think that the non-responses will affect the outcome. Another way of controlling it is that you will have to send out reminders to the respondents, remembering them that they have to answer the questionnaire (Dahmström, 2005).

There are numerous of ways to increase the number of responses. Prior to sending out the questionnaires there are steps to decrease the number of non-responses.

Preliminary questionnaire
The first action that you have to think about to minimize the number of non-responses is to let a small test group fill out the questionnaire, so that there are no question marks and to minimize the likelihood of misunderstandings (Ibid).

Introduction letter
The second vital part of the questionnaire to increase the number of responses is the introduction letter. The purpose of the letter is to let the asked person know that he/she is important for the research and also to give a positive attitude towards questionnaires in general but specifically to the current questionnaire. We explained what the results will be used for and where the asked persons can find the results. That it was voluntarily to participate and that the individual answers will be held anonymously (Jacobsen, 2002). We also included contact information, if there would occur any concerns or questions (Dahmström, 2005).
The design of the questionnaire

It is important to keep the questionnaire short and with relevant questions. The more complex the questionnaire is, the greater the likelihood is that there will be a bigger number of non-responses.

After sending out the questionnaire you still have the opportunity to affect the respondents to fill out the questionnaire (Ibid).

Reminders

Usually three weeks after sending out the questionnaire it is time to remind those who still have not replied on the survey. It has proven to be quite efficient to send out reminders, the number of responses increases by 3-10 % per each remind letter. Since we have limited amount of time to conduct our masters’ thesis we have not sent out any reminders to our respondents by mail. It is also very expensive to send out reminders, while we needed to have enclosed self-addressed envelopes again. (Ibid). To our respondents on email we did however send out reminders, while this was not associated with extra costs. The number of responses by email increased from 50% to 77%.

Rewards

Another way of affecting the respondents to fill out the questionnaire is to offer them a reward, if they fill out the questionnaire. Lottery tickets are very often used as a reward for answering a survey, we decided not to use a reward system to increase the number of responses (Jacobsen, 2002), also because of the fact that it is associated with extra costs.

2.7. Designing the questionnaire

A rule in constructing a survey is to keep it as short and concise as possible (Ibid); to make sure that the respondents are willing to spend the time required to complete the questionnaire (Czaja & Blair, 2005).

When designing a questionnaire, there are two different types of questions that can be asked, those are: open-ended questions and closed-ended questions. In open-ended questions, the respondents answer in their own words, while closed-ended questions provide a list of responses from which the respondent can choose from (Ibid).

You also have to consider two important factors, when you design a questionnaire. One is the amount of money needed and the second is the time you need to conduct the survey. According to Kylén (2004) respondents should not have too many days to answer and return a survey, ten days is usually enough.

2.8. Formulating the questions

According to Dahmström (2005) and Jacobsen (2002), questions should be formulated in a neutral and non leading way, but when a research is done concerning attitudes and statements there should be a valuation in the question. When conducting a survey based
on attitudes and opinions, you often use different alternatives that are to be ranked, for example from “very good” to “very bad”. In these types of questions it is essential to include an option with “do not know” or “neutral” as an answer, in case the respondent does not have an opinion (Dahmström, 2005). There are two ways of asking attitude and opinion questions. The first way is to ask the respondent to take a stand on a number of statements where he or she agrees or disagrees with the statements to a certain degree. The other way is to ask questions where the respondents give a yes or no answer (Trost, 2007).

**Mean**

When you are using this type of scale you can not be certain of how big the step is between the different alternatives. The perception of the scale might vary from respondent to respondent and the risk is that you can not compare them to each other, and the comparability fails (Christensen et al, 2001). If you are using an ordinal scale you can use the frequency or percentage to measure customers’ attitudes towards a service. To get a more true bearing you often use the average measurement: mean. You receive this number by adding the values and then divide them by the amount of numbers of respondents. The mean value in the following example is: 20, 24, 29 = 73 / 3 = 24,3.

**Standard deviation**

The standard deviation is also commonly used when you are using an ordinal scale. The standard deviation is calculated by a relatively complicated formula. The standard deviation is used to see how large the affect of low and high numbers have on the mean value (Ibid). A definition of standard deviation simplifies:

“… the standard deviation shows how much the observations on average differ from the mean value”

(Dahmström 2005, p. 51).

The greater the standard deviation is, the greater is the affect on the mean value (Christensen et al, 2001). If there are a large number of data’s close to the mean value, the standard deviation is small. If it is the opposite, many data’s far from the mean, the standard deviation is large, the standard deviation is zero when all data values are the same (Dahmström, 2005).

### 2.9. Procedure

As we can see in the previous parts of the chapter, there are many things to consider as you conduct a questionnaire. We will in this section of the chapter simplify and explain how we designed and formulated our questionnaire, we will also clarify the outcome of the research.

#### 2.9.1. Designing our questionnaire

Before we could carry out our research we first needed to specify our goals of the survey (Czaja & Blair, 2005). Our goal in our research was to study a specific topic and a group of people regarding their attitudes and behavior concerning studying abroad. Our questionnaire was mostly made up by closed-ended questions, but we offered the
possibility for the respondents to give their own comments concerning the topic. We let a small group of students fill out the questionnaire, in order to find out if there were any misunderstandings or problems with the questions.

From the beginning we considered to send our questionnaires by e-mail to the target group, but our first thought concerning e-mail was that the questionnaire might get lost in the inbox or end up in the spam box. People might not even open the mail or they forget about it. To prevent this from happening we decided to send our questionnaires, to those who had studied abroad during 2007, by regular mail, while we thought it to be more professional and serious. But in order to reach those who were studying abroad during the spring of 2008, same time as we are conducting our research, we had to contact them via e-mail since we did not have their addresses. We received the addresses from the international student guidance counselor.

Since we conducted two types of methods to send out the questionnaires, the cost and the time needed to receive and return the responses were different. Sending the questionnaires by e-mail involved no costs and the time needed to answer and return was less than with regular mail questionnaires. Sending the questionnaires by regular mail costs money and the whole process of sending and receiving takes time. There is also the possibility that people might not respond, it can therefore be helpful to send a reminder to these people and hope that they will answer the questionnaire. This is simple when using the Internet and e-mail, but sending a reminder by mail cost more money and time.

Conducting this kind of survey, it is important to make the respondent’s task as easy as possible (Ibid). As we mentioned above the questionnaire should not be too long, the respondent might get bored. There shall not be any use of insulting or offending words in the questionnaire. The questions must be simple and clearly stated, using a correct and simple language (Ibid). They must know what we want to investigate, if the questions are too complex they might not understand.

2.9.2. Formulating our questions

When we planned our questions that we wanted to ask our sample group we carried out research of other studies. As mentioned in Czaja and Blair (2005), borrowing questions from other research studies is encouraging when putting together a questionnaire. This helped us since it gave us ideas about what some of the motivation factors might be why students study abroad. We were inspired to ask certain questions to try and find out if the same factors can be applied to the students at Karlstad University as to other students who study abroad.

Our questionnaire was mainly made up by closed-ended questions, where the first part of the survey consisted of seven basic background questions, where the respondent generally belonged to one of the alternatives. There were exceptions where some of the respondents chose more than one alternative. One of the reasons for this was that the person might have been abroad more than once.
The second part of the questionnaire was made up by a question and a certain amount of statements where the respondents had to rank their own opinion concerning the statement. A problem with ranked alternatives is that people might not want to rank many alternatives, or they choose to rank one but choose not to rank the rest (Dahmström, 2005). Another alternative is that the respondent gives the same rank on many alternatives and leaves some unanswered (Ibid). We used a scale of five possibilities, two positive, two negative and one neutral.

At the end of the questionnaire we gave the respondents the possibility to comment on own ideas and surprisingly many people gave us feedback and ideas what can be done at the university (see attachment). These statements that the respondents made were very important for us, since these answers could help us answer the questions we asked ourselves.

Since the chosen sample group that we wanted to research, recently were abroad or are going abroad, we believed that the respondents would be interested to participate, since it is a topic that they can relate to.

2.9.3. Outcome

Our rate of answered questionnaires that we received was only 35%, (if we include emails it was 41%). According to Christensen et al (2001) there are studies that have been done where the answer frequency has been around 50% including one or two reminders. Considering our situation, that we did not have time and the financial aid to send out reminders, we will have to assume that our 41% are enough to conduct our research. Even though the answer frequency, 41,03%, was not as high as we had hoped for, we assume that the represented results are reasonable. The problem with having a large number of non-responses is that you do not know what, those who did not respond would have answered; if they would differ from those who did answer or not. In our case we saw that most of the students have answered the questionnaire in similar ways and we therefore made the conclusion that those who did not answer would have answered the questionnaire in similar ways. According to Dahmström (2005) this is a classical attempt to try to and explain why the non-responses will not affect the analysis of the findings, but she also states that you have to be cautious concerning this method. There are examples where the distributions for the research variables are different, in the answer- and non-response-group even though there are similarities in the background variables. In other words, even though all the respondents have the same background variables there is still the possibility that the outcome will be affected. Even though she warns us, we still have to suppose that the non-responses would not affect our research. As we can see in table 2, we had five wrong addresses, but we think that there might be more. There might be students that have stated one address but lives on another and they might not have changed their address yet, according to Dahmström (2005) this can be a contributing factor to that there is a high level of external non-responses.

The number of internal non-responses, where specific questions are not answered, was bigger than we expected it to be. We think that this mainly depends on the fact that the
asked person did not see the question or decided not to answer it. We do not know why, maybe they had no notion about the question or they overlooked the question.

2.10. Source criticism

When using secondary information it is important to be critical concerning the choice of sources. Where does the information come from, who wrote it, and in what context was it written? One must find out if the sources are trustworthy. When there are many different data used and used against each other, the data can back up the result. But it can also be used to put different data against other data (Jacobsen, 2002).

In our research we have used both primary and secondary sources. Our primary sources are made up by students who have or will study abroad and the responsible person for international studies at Karlstad University. Since the people who we have conducted our research on, are involved in the issue that we are researching, we believe that the information that we have received is correct and trustworthy. Concerning our questions, we have tried to make them as simple and easy to understand as possible so there would not be any misunderstandings.

We find that the information that we received in books and articles to be reliable and we trust the authors since they will most likely posses a lot of knowledge about the topics they have done research about. Concerning the information from the Internet, one should be a bit critical about the trustworthiness. Today everyone can publish something on the Internet, and it is not always correct or reliable. The information and articles that we have received from the Internet, we believe is reliable since it comes from trustworthy sources such as Karlstad University and search engines such as Emerald.
Chapter three

3. Theoretical framework

In this chapter we will look at the theories that can help us to analyze why consumers do as they do. We will also explain what drives the consumer to buy the products or services they buy and what the reasons can be for motivating a consumer to purchase them. The theories explained in this chapter will be the basis for the analysis in later chapters.

3.1. The buying process

There are different steps that an individual will go through before he or she will purchase the preferred product or service. In this case the service that the students are consuming is education. In the figure below we can see the different stages that are involved when decisions are made.

![Diagram of the buying process](image)

Figure 1, The buying process (Palmer 2005, p. 110)
The process of buying a service is caused from an underlying need among customers. This desire motivates the customer to search for solutions to restore a sense of physiological and psychological balance which was missing. This stage in the process is known as the need recognition (Palmer, 2005). An important theory to look at when studying the buying process is “Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs”. Here we can study the different levels societies will climb when fulfilling their needs. Everyone has different needs that they want to carry out; (in our case it is the need that motivate Swedish students at Karlstads University to study abroad). There are many factors that can have an impact on individuals, why they have needs for certain services and products.

Once we have the need that motivates us to look for a solution, we enter the next stage which is called information search, where we collect information regarding the services that can support our wishes. These needs can originate from the provider or from other sources. There are many different sources where the consumer can find information about the required service. These sources can derive from the service provider through marketing or from personal experiences and encounters with others (Palmer, 2005).

The greater the risk is for purchasing the wrong a product or service, the longer the process is for searching after information. In this case, the service obtained is education abroad which can be perceived as a service with a greater risk compared to other everyday services. To study abroad takes a lot of preparation and gathering of information. The risk level can differ from individuals; some might be better prepared than others for various reasons (Ibid).

When the buyer has collected the information needed for the purchase, he or she will move to the next stage in the buying process, evaluation. In this phase the consumer will compare different services that are competing on the market. The buyer will reduce the alternatives and possibilities based on different factors that make some alternatives more interesting than others when making a decision (Ibid).

The next phase in the process is the decision. When individuals make decisions they are often influenced by other people. We will after the post purchase evaluation mention some key players that have influence on an individual in the process of making a decision (Ibid).

The last stage of the buying process that the consumer goes through is the post purchase evaluation, which deals with the consumers’ satisfaction and dissatisfaction. It is determined by the overall feelings or attitude about a service after it has been purchased (Solomon, 1996).

“Consumers are engaged in a constant process of evaluating the things they buy as these products are integrated into their daily consumption activities” (Solomon, 1996).

When customers look for products and services they look for the quality and value they get from what they buy. It is important for companies and organizations to maintain a competitive advantage since there is an increase in foreign competitors on the market.
There are different ways how consumers determine quality of products and services. Common ways are through brand names, price and advertisement. Consumers’ attitudes towards products and services derive from previous experiences. They expect a service to fulfill their needs and expectations, and when they do, customers might not think much about it, but if a service does not fulfill the needs and expectations, it will lead to a negative outcome (Palmer, 2005).

3.1.1. Influencers
The decision maker will most likely refer to and be influenced by other people or groups when making choices. These people and groups are known as influencers. These influencers can both be primary, such as friends and family, or secondary sources such as distant persons where there is no communication or relation to the customer. An example of a primary influence, which has a huge impact on the decision maker, is word-of-mouth, where information is passed on verbally such as recommendations; a typical secondary source with a vast influence on a person is advertisement in a newspaper (Palmer, 2005).

Another role that can be identified and influence the decision maker in the process is known as the gatekeepers. A gatekeeper is an individual who most likely have a direct contact with the person who will use the service, for example a family member or a friend. They have an influence in the choice through choosing a selection of offers to be considered. In our case it can be someone who collects information about certain universities and shares this with the person who in the end will decide (Ibid).

The final and most significant role in the process of deciding is the decision maker. This is the person who makes the actual decision to purchase the product or service. In some consumer services it might be difficult to see who actually makes the decision, but in our case it is quite clear to identify the decision maker since it is only one person consuming the service (Ibid).

3.2. Introducing the consumer behavior
For many years companies have been performing marketing and consumer researches but not been listening to these researches, when they have been producing their products. To become successful, companies have to listen to the consumers and designing their organization to serve the consumers. There are three main reasons for companies to listen to their consumers. First, focusing on the consumers to produce value added products will increase the companies’ revenue. Secondly, when listening to the consumers the quality in the consumer and marketing research will increase. Earlier, companies listened to the consumers the marketing research had no effect, while they did not conduct researches over time and thus did not know who the actual customer was. The last main reason for listening to the company’s consumers is the increased use of Internet as a marketing tool. To be able to be sending the “right” information about products and offers, the companies need to know what the consumer wants and needs (Peter & Olson, 2008).
The consumer behavior concept is very dynamic, it includes many different elements. Who the consumer is, can vary from a small child to an adult, from wanting to buy kitchen utensils or a company deciding on investing in a new security system. All these different types of consumers will be influenced by their environment, it can be everything from comments from others, how the product is marketed, how it is packaged etc. It is therefore important for companies to continuously perform researches on consumer behavior, to be able to know what the consumers want and need (Ibid).

Peter and Olson (2008) define the concept as following:

“Consumer behavior involves the thoughts and feelings people experience and the actions they perform in consumption processes.”

(Peter & Olson 2008, p. 5)

Nowadays the marketers see the consumer behavior as an ongoing process and not just something that happens at the moment. An important part of the consumer behavior, which also is an essential part of marketing, is the point of exchange, where two or more organizations or people gives money and receives products and services (Solomon, 1996).

In our paper we will also focus the actual consumption process in the consumer behavior concept. But in order to be able to move on to the next part it is important that we first have a look at what consumption actually is, because the Swedish students at Karlstad University are consumers of the service of studying abroad.

### 3.3. Consumption

Consumption consists of two different parts, the consumption of nondurable products and the durable products. The differences in the behaviors when purchasing nondurable products, such as a burger and fries, and when purchasing durable products such as an automobile are noticeable. When buying durable products you often also have to buy supplementary products, such as gas, insurance etc (Ibid).

To know how the university can motivate more students to buy the service of studying abroad we need to understand why consumers are motivated.

### 3.4. The motivation process

“To understand motivation is to understand why consumers do what they do”

(Solomon, 1996 p.125)

Motivation refers to the process that cause people to do as they do. It occurs when a need is aroused that the consumer wishes to satisfy. A state of tension exists once the need has been activated and it causes the consumer to wanting to reduce the tension. The need may be utilitarian (i.e. a desire for wanting to achieve some functional or practical benefit) or it may be a hedonic need (i.e. a need for experiences that involves emotional responses or fantasies). The desired end state is the customers’ goal. The gap between
the consumers’ present state and the ideal state that they may have causes a tension. The degree, or drive, of this tension determines how fast the consumer wishes to satisfy and reduce the tension (Solomon, 1996). The drive can be hunger, thirst, pain or it can be emotionally such as the desire for self esteem (Arnould et al, 2004). The goal and drive combined, creates a want, which is affected by both cultural and personal experiences of how the need can be satisfied. When the consumer has reached its goal, by consumption, the tension is released and the motivation for the need is for the time being, receded (Solomon, 1996).

“The degree to which a person is willing to expend energy to reach one goal as opposed to another reflects his or her underlying motivation to attain that goal” (Solomon, 1996 p.127).

This leads us to the next part of the chapter, involvement.

3.5. Consumer involvement

Every consumer is motivated to different extents regarding different goals. A definition of the concept involvement: “the level of perceived personal importance and or interest evoked by a stimulus (or stimuli) within a specific situation” (Solomon, 1996 p.146). It is the aspects of the person, the product and the situation combined that determines how well the consumer is motivated or involved in the process of finding information about the product/service. If the information is seen as not being relevant to satisfying a need, the consumer may not bother to pay attention to it. Depending on how involved the consumer is in the product or service he or she will spend different amounts of time on searching for the right information (Solomon, 1996).

According to Solomon (1996 p. 147) “Involvement can be viewed as the motivation to process information” the consumer will be motivated to pay attention to the information about a product or service when there is a gap between the consumers needs, goals and product knowledge. As the consumer receives relevant knowledge about the product/service a motivational state is created that drives the behavior (i.e. buying the product/service), this is called felt involvement. As the felt involvement for the product/service increases the consumer is more eager to aim his/hers attention towards the information that is surrounding the object, for example advertisement (Solomon, 1996). How much information the consumer will pay attention to depends on the level of involvement. When the consumer is highly involved he or she will place a greater effort of finding information sources and be active in the search process. The highest level of involvement is enduring involvement, it refers to the importance of a product or service to the consumers self concept (Arnould et al, 2004). An enduring involvement is something that is continuous and more permanent and it is an ongoing interest in the product/service category (Assael, 1994) while the consumers emotions is a result of using the product/service.

The higher the risk is of making the wrong decision and buying the wrong product/service the higher will the involvement be (Solomon, 1996).
3.6. Push vs. Pull factors

According to Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) there are different factors that can explain the students’ choice of where to study and why they choose to study abroad. These factors are called push- and pull- factors that influence students. Push factors operate in the home country and they are affecting a student’s decision to take on international studies. Pull factors are reasons that exists in the host country that makes that country more attractive than others to international students.

3.6.1. Push factors

There are many factors that may influence students to desire an international education. It could be the lack of access to higher education in the own home country. Other factors that are influencing students when choosing to take on international studies can be the commonality of language, the geographic proximity of the home and host country. Also the perception of the quality in the education system in home country has an impact when choosing to study abroad (Ibid).

According to Davey (2005) who performed a research about “Chinese students motivations for studying abroad”, there are several advantages of studying abroad, such as personal development, cultural awareness, career possibilities and the opportunity to become a global citizen. In his research he found that there were a number of factors that influenced the students to decide on studying abroad. The most common reason that he found was that international studies would give the student an internationally recognized and respected qualification. The ability to improve the English language and communication skills, personal development, and broader perspective of oneself were also factors that influenced the students. Other students were influenced of the ability to be challenged by the different academic and social systems in other countries; they also found it to be a good way of forming new friendships and build professional contacts (Ibid).

The students are going through three different stages in their decision making process, where the first stage is deciding on whether to study internationally or locally. This decision can be influenced by the earlier mentioned push factors within the home country. When the decision has been made to study abroad the second stage is reached, deciding on in what country to study. Here there are different pull factors that are influencers, making one host country more attractive than the others. The third stage is choosing at what institution to study. Also here there are pull factors that are influencing, such as market profile and the course range offered etc (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

3.6.2. Pull factors

There are six factors that have been found to affect students when choosing in what host country to study (Mazzarol et al, 1997 referred in Mazzarol, 2002). The first was the general knowledge and awareness of the host country. This knowledge is affected by the availability of information of the possible host country and how easy it is for the students to find information. The reputation of the quality of the host country that is recognized in
the students’ home country is also a part of this factor. The second factor is personal recommendations of the country, which the consumer receives from parents, relatives, friends or other gatekeepers (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

The third factor is related to cost issues, which includes fee costs, living expenses, travel costs and social costs (crime, safety etc). Presence of other students from the same home country (social costs) and the ability for part time work (financial costs) are also part of the factor for influencing students when deciding on which country to study in. A forth factor that affects the students is the environment which relates to the study climate, physical climate and lifestyle. The fifth factor is geographic proximity, which relates to the distance between the students home country and host country in which he or she wants to study in. The sixth and final factor is social links. This factor includes if the student has any family, relatives or friends that are living or have lived in the country or has previous experiences from the country, i.e. previous studies in the country (Ibid).

It is important to look at these six factors when trying to understand why students decide to study abroad and how they decide on in what country to study.
Chapter four

4. Empirical data

In the following chapter we will present the empirical data’s that were collected from the researched students. The data’s are divided by each question, as in the questionnaire and questions concerning the same areas are intertwined into one.

To start out we were a bit surprised about the total number of respondents. We reckoned that there would have been a quite high total of respondents, but the amount of surveys returned was quite low. We quickly realized that the best way to carry out our research was to send our questionnaires by e-mail instead of regular mail. We got some letters sent back to us because the address was wrong or the people did not live there anymore. Another reason for why the answer frequency for our mailed questionnaires was so low could be that some of the addresses might be their parent’s addresses so the students would not receive the survey in time if they had to forward their mail. As our study evolved we determined a number of variables why we did not receive as many responses as we had hoped for, and what we could have done to increase the number of participants.

As we mentioned, we used two methods to send our questionnaire, either by regular mail or e-mail. When we compare the two types, we could see that the answer frequency was very diverse. We received 77% of those sent to students by e-mail, and only 35% of those sent by regular mail. It is important to mention that we sent a reminder to those students who did not answer our e-mail survey, and we received more responses when we did this. For various reasons we could not do this by regular mail, mainly because of time and costs. We received almost 50% of all the e-mail surveys the first time, and after our reminder we obtained another 27% e-mail questionnaires. If we had done this for the other sample of students we might have obtained a higher amount of respondents.

Half of those who answered our survey even wrote some own comments about what the university could do to motivate more students to study abroad. The respondents own comments provide us with a primary insight of what they think can be done, which helped us come up with ideas what the university could do in the future.
4.1. Background variables

Our questionnaire was distributed to 195 students during the spring of 2008 and we got 80 answered questionnaires back. The questionnaire included background variables such as gender, age, demographical and educational questions. We will start the analysis with looking into the background variables of the students. We do this so that there will not be any repetitions in later parts of the thesis.

The following table represents the background questions for the students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Study abroad semester</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>54 (67.5%)</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>3 (3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26 (32.5%)</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>9 (11.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td></td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>42 (52.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under 20</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>23 (28.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-23</td>
<td>43 (53.8%)</td>
<td>9-</td>
<td>3 (3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-26</td>
<td>31 (38.8%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-29</td>
<td>5 (6.3%)</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>11 (13.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-</td>
<td>1 (1.3%)</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>30 (37.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Field of study</td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Region of studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and economics</td>
<td>33 (41.3%)</td>
<td>North America</td>
<td>27 (33.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care &amp; social work</td>
<td>5 (6.3%)</td>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>7 (8.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology &amp; engineering</td>
<td>8 (10.0%)</td>
<td>South America</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>2 (2.5%)</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4 (5.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Decision of abroad studies</td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Students status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before applying to KAU</td>
<td>25 (31.3%)</td>
<td>Erasmus</td>
<td>25 (31.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During studies at KAU</td>
<td>52 (65.0%)</td>
<td>ISEP</td>
<td>13 (16.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3 (3.8%)</td>
<td>Free mover</td>
<td>2 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>28 (35.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2, Background variables of the respondents.

In table 2 we can see that there were 54 out of 80, females who answered the questionnaire and only 26 males. The consequence of the fact that there were more females in the research might reflect the rest of the answers in the questionnaire.

The most represented age for the students who studied abroad in 2007 and 2008 was between 21 and 23 years. The fact that there were no students that were younger than 20 years of age depends on, that the students who wants to study abroad must have studied at least two semesters at Karlstad University before applying for international studies. We also asked the students in what fields they were studying; most of them, 33 of the respondents were studying business and economics. We also asked the students about when they decided to study abroad and it was 52 who said that they made the decision
while studying at Karlstad University. The three students who crossed the box “Other”, are students who’s semester abroad was included in the program that they were studying. To be able to figure out when the students were applying for international studies, we asked them which semester they were studying abroad. 42 out of the 80 students answered that they were abroad during the fifth or sixth semester.

As we can see in table 2 Europe was the most popular destination with 30 out of the 80 students, deciding to study their semester abroad there. North America is not far behind where 27 out of the 80 students studied. Four students studied in another region than those we accounted for, they all specified Africa as their region for studies. 28 out of the 80 students were studying in another program than those we accounted for. The most common, was a bilateral agreement, studying at the Washington Semester Program or that they were writing their thesis abroad. 25 of the students were ERASMUS students and this agrees with the fact that the most of the students were studying in Europe.

4.2. How important were the following statements when you decided to study abroad?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Either or</th>
<th>Quite unimportant</th>
<th>Very unimportant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve language skills</td>
<td>37 (46.3%)</td>
<td>23 (28.7%)</td>
<td>8 (10.0%)</td>
<td>9 (11.3%)</td>
<td>2 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture experience</td>
<td>28 (35.0%)</td>
<td>37 (46.3%)</td>
<td>10 (12.5%)</td>
<td>4 (5.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different student life</td>
<td>18 (22.5%)</td>
<td>32 (40.0%)</td>
<td>17 (21.3%)</td>
<td>11 (13.8%)</td>
<td>1 (1.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future work possibilities in Sweden</td>
<td>41 (51.2%)</td>
<td>23 (28.7%)</td>
<td>12 (15.0%)</td>
<td>1 (1.3%)</td>
<td>1 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal challenge</td>
<td>59 (73.8%)</td>
<td>17 (21.3%)</td>
<td>3 (3.8%)</td>
<td>1 (1.3%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International character in studies</td>
<td>48 (60.0%)</td>
<td>20 (25.0%)</td>
<td>8 (10.0%)</td>
<td>3 (3.8%)</td>
<td>1 (1.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future work possibilities in country</td>
<td>18 (22.5%)</td>
<td>24 (30.0%)</td>
<td>22 (27.5%)</td>
<td>12 (15.0%)</td>
<td>4 (5.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellow students recommended</td>
<td>7 (8.8%)</td>
<td>14 (17.5%)</td>
<td>21 (26.3%)</td>
<td>15 (18.8%)</td>
<td>22 (27.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers recommended</td>
<td>3 (3.8%)</td>
<td>10 (12.5%)</td>
<td>22 (27.5%)</td>
<td>14 (17.5%)</td>
<td>30 (37.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Motivations for studying abroad

This part of the chapter correlates to our thesis question: “What factors might or might not have influenced the students when they chose where to study?” As we can see in table 3, where 59 of the respondents answered that the biggest motivation factor for studying abroad, was that they thought that it was a personal challenge. 48 of the respondents also thought that having an international character in their studies was an important factor for choosing to study abroad for one semester. The third largest motivator, which 41 of the students thought to be important for studying abroad, was the importance for future employment possibilities. 18 of the respondents thought it to be quite important for work possibilities in a foreign country.
Furthermore we can see from the table that less than half of the respondents, 37 students, found their ability to improve their language skills as a motivating factor for studying abroad. The importance of participating in a different culture had a quite big importance, 37 thought so, when the decision for studying abroad was made. 50, the sum of “very big” and “quite big”, of the asked students found the ability to experience a different student life, to have a quite or very big importance when deciding to study abroad.

Almost half of the respondents, 37 students, did not find fellow student recommendations to be an important factor when deciding on studying abroad. The table also shows us that 30 of the students found recommendations from lecturers to have a very small importance.

**4.3. How do you value the following statements when choosing country?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 9</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Quite Important</th>
<th>Either or</th>
<th>Quite Unimportant</th>
<th>Very Unimportant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Climate</td>
<td>5 (6,3%)</td>
<td>21 (26,3%)</td>
<td>21 (26,3%)</td>
<td>16 (20,0%)</td>
<td>16 (20,0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation from family</td>
<td>1 (1,3%)</td>
<td>10 (12,5%)</td>
<td>18 (22,5%)</td>
<td>21 (26,3%)</td>
<td>29 (36,3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation from friends</td>
<td>3 (3,8%)</td>
<td>17 (21,3%)</td>
<td>24 (30,0%)</td>
<td>13 (16,3%)</td>
<td>22 (27,5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>15 (18,8%)</td>
<td>26 (32,5%)</td>
<td>22 (27,5%)</td>
<td>9 (11,3%)</td>
<td>7 (8,8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeness to Sweden</td>
<td>0 (0,0%)</td>
<td>7 (8,8%)</td>
<td>9 (11,3%)</td>
<td>12 (15,0%)</td>
<td>51 (63,7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior country experiences</td>
<td>9 (11,3%)</td>
<td>11 (13,8%)</td>
<td>11 (13,8%)</td>
<td>11 (13,8%)</td>
<td>37 (46,3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and family in the country</td>
<td>1 (1,3%)</td>
<td>6 (7,5%)</td>
<td>6 (7,5%)</td>
<td>4 (5,0%)</td>
<td>62 (77,5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation costs to the country</td>
<td>1 (1,3%)</td>
<td>7 (8,8%)</td>
<td>14 (17,5%)</td>
<td>15 (18,8%)</td>
<td>41 (51,2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low expenses in the country</td>
<td>2 (2,5%)</td>
<td>8 (10,0%)</td>
<td>24 (30,0%)</td>
<td>18 (22,5%)</td>
<td>27 (33,8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High education level</td>
<td>21 (26,3%)</td>
<td>32 (40,0%)</td>
<td>17 (21,3%)</td>
<td>6 (7,5%)</td>
<td>2 (3,8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low crime</td>
<td>5 (6,3%)</td>
<td>14 (17,5%)</td>
<td>31 (38,8%)</td>
<td>15 (18,8%)</td>
<td>10 (12,5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4, Evaluation of factors when choosing country

Our questions that we asked in correlation with question nine were to find out what factors influence Swedish students when they choose the country where they decide to study. When we look at table 4, we can see that none of the students who studied abroad during 2007/2008 thought it was very important that the country was close to Sweden. Most of them found it either quite unimportant or very unimportant to study in a country close to Sweden. As we can see in the table, the factor that students found to be most important when they choose country was a high education level. Culture was also an
essential aspect when choosing location. Issues that played a minor role for students were recommendations from family and friends, relatives in the country, costs connected to getting there and living in the country. To some extent the climate had some effect on the students when deciding, also that there was low crime was somewhat important, but surprisingly one third of the students found crime not at all important. When it comes to students prior experiences with countries this played quite a small part. Almost half of the respondents found it very unimportant.

4.4. How did you value the following statements when you chose university?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 10</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Quite Important</th>
<th>Either or</th>
<th>Quite Unimportant</th>
<th>Very Unimportant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to university information</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University reputation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A wider range of courses than KAU</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The geographic location</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation from family</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation from friends</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior knowledge about the university</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What city the university is located</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange student's recommendation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5, Evaluating of factors when choosing university

Our next question in the questionnaire deals with factors that might or might not have had effect on students when they chose university. As we can see in the table, it was important to gain access to information about the university. Other important factors that influence students when choosing university are the reputation of the university and that they offer a wider range of courses than Karlstad University. Just as in the previous question, family and friends have a quite low influence on many of the students when they selected university. There is a quite even span of results between the answers concerning prior knowledge about the university, most of them found it less important. An important factor when choosing a university was in what city the university was located. The geographic location played a quite important role, only 15 students found it unimportant where the university is located. For many students recommendations from exchange students played an insignificant role. As we will discuss later, the Swedish students wish to have more interaction with exchange students at Karlstads University, and in the future this might play an important role when students choose university.
4.5. When organizing your abroad studies, how satisfied were you with the following statements?

**Question 11**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Either or</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information meetings at KAU were well organized</td>
<td>2 (2.5%)</td>
<td>12 (20.0%)</td>
<td>33 (41.3%)</td>
<td>16 (20.0%)</td>
<td>11 (13.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalogue for studying abroad was informative</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>23 (28.7%)</td>
<td>38 (47.5%)</td>
<td>13 (16.3%)</td>
<td>3 (3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homepage for abroad programs was informative</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>11 (13.8%)</td>
<td>42 (52.5%)</td>
<td>16 (20.0%)</td>
<td>8 (10.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with responsible person for abroad programs worked well</td>
<td>8 (10.0%)</td>
<td>16 (20.0%)</td>
<td>14 (17.5%)</td>
<td>21 (26.3%)</td>
<td>19 (23.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with responsible person at foreign university worked well</td>
<td>22 (27.5%)</td>
<td>20 (25.0%)</td>
<td>25 (31.3%)</td>
<td>7 (8.8%)</td>
<td>2 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6, Evaluation of satisfaction

Question eleven was designed to find out what the Swedish students thought about the organization of their abroad studies. Most of the students were either unsatisfied or took no stand concerning information meetings at Karlstad University. We should mention that when we looked through all the survey’s there were some students who did not take part in these meetings. This can probably have some influence on the result for this question. Other information channels that are used to inform students about the exchange programs at the university are catalogs and the university homepage. Quite a few students were not satisfied or did not have an opinion about these when they organized their international studies. Prior to their international studies many students found that the communication with the responsible department at the university was not good enough. Many were on the other hand satisfied with the contact with the responsible department at the foreign university.
4.6. On a scale from 1-5 (1 being the highest and 5 being the lowest) how important do you consider following statements when the university market their abroad programs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 12 Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Mean value</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important with more information meetings</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important with more information at KAU's homepage</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important with interaction with exchange students at KAU</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important with information desk at events at KAU</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important with a more extensive marketing concerning abroad programs</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactivity between returned exchange students and students at KAU</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers attract attention to the possibility to study abroad</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important to inform new students of the possibility to study abroad</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Evaluation of marketing the study abroad programs

This question is connected to our research question of how Karlstad University can motivate more students to study abroad. How they can market the possibility for Swedish students to study one or more semesters outside of Sweden. Looking at the second question in table 8, we can see that the mean value is 1.95, which tells us that the average student thought that this statement was quite important. The standard deviation, 0.92, tells us that it was not a wide spread among the students. If we compare this to question number four, where the mean value is 2.2, it tells us that the average student found this statement to be quite true. The standard deviation tells us that there is a greater spread among the students, concerning this statement. Out of these statements, the last one tells us that most of the students found this to be very important. The standard deviation of 0.86, represents a low spread among the respondents.

4.7. Own comments to what the University can do to influence more students to study abroad.

Question 13

Question thirteen in our survey was our only open-ended question where our respondents could give their own comments and reflections on what they believe the university can do
to influence more students to study abroad. As we have mentioned before we were happily surprised that so many students took the opportunity to give feedback. Some of the students’ comments were:

- “a more structural help and support before the trip. It does not feel like KAU has a good overview of what is waiting the students when we go abroad”
- “more information at each semester start”
- “make former exchange students inform about their host university”
- “better information from KAU”

4.8. Would you recommend other students to study abroad?

Question 14

Our last question in the questionnaire was the following: Would you recommend other students to study abroad? On this question all our respondents answered “Yes”.

- 27 -
Chapter five

5. Analysis

In the following chapter we will analyze the responses together with our main questions that we stated in the beginning. We will support the analysis with the theory that we have described in previous chapters. The analysis chapter will be organized after each thesis question, which will be individually analyzed.

As we can see from the background information most of the respondents were females, this does not come as a surprise while it according to SCB are more female students studying abroad (www.scb.se). We can also see that the most common age for studying abroad was in the range of 21-23 years of age. Therefore we can assume that the students were 19 or 20 years old when they began their studies. This correlates with the fact that the students have free semesters during the fifth or sixth semester, which they can use for international studies. Since most of the students made their decision while they were studying at Karlstad University, we can assume that the university influenced them to take part of international studies. This proves that the university has the ability to affect and motivate students to study abroad.

5.1 What motivates Swedish students at Karlstad University to study abroad?

According to most marketers the consumer behavior is an ongoing process and thus not something that just happens at the moment (Solomon, 1996). As the consumer behavior also includes the thoughts, feelings and the actions that people experience while buying a product or, as in our case, a service (Paul & Olson, 2008) it is important to continue to perform researches about the consumers. The researched students have all undertaken different actions and experienced feelings as they consumed the service of studying abroad. The consumption the students at Karlstad University undertakes is a durable service, i.e. a service that requires other products or services that are connected to the durable service (Solomon, 1996). In our case that could be that the students have to buy travel insurance, or might need to get vaccinated.
Need recognition
Looking at question eight we will study what factors played an important role when students decided to study abroad. This question has very much to do with the first stage in the buying process, need recognition (Palmer, 2005). The whole process starts with a need that students develop. As we can see in table 3, the Swedish students had developed not only one need but many. The needs can be many and they can differ from individual to individual. Why the student decides on studying abroad is dependent on their motivations. A student goes through a process where they want to reach a goal and in the process satisfy a need. In our research the student has a need that they want to satisfy (Solomon, 1996). For the majority of the students, 59, this need was to experience personal challenge. This is a need where feelings were involved.

As the Swedish students at Karlstad University decided to study abroad, they were affected by different push factors, factors that operate in the home country, which motivates them to decide to study abroad (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). From previous studies and articles we found that general reasons why people study abroad are quality and reputation of courses, opportunity to develop communication skills, culture and personal development. As we can see in table 3, the most important push factor, which 59 of the students found important, was that it was a personal challenge (when making the decision to take on international education). Other important push factors, that 48 of the Swedish students found it to be, were that it would give them an international character in their studies. This factor was also highly ranked in the study that Davey (2005) carried out. The third ranked reason for studying abroad is according to our study the possibility for future work in Sweden. Other push factors are language skills and cultural awareness amongst others (Ibid) and according to our study we can see that both these factors are almost equally important for the Swedish students at Karlstad University.

Information search
We now move on to the next stage in the buying process, the stage of searching for information prior to the decision (Palmer, 2005). Here the student will experience a stage of tension or a drive to search for information about the service that will satisfy the need (Solomon, 1996). They have a need and now they need to find a solution for what they are seeking. What we can see from our findings most of the students were seeking the chance to improve their language skills and for future work possibilities in Sweden. There are many types of sources that can support students in the decision making. As can be read in Palmer (2005) these sources can derive from the service provider, often through marketing, or from personal experiences and encounters with others.

How much information the student will search for, is dependent on the level of involvement the student feels for the service. When there is a gap between the consumers knowledge about the service and his/hers need for the service, the consumer will spend a greater amount of time and is more receptive for the information that is available about the service (Solomon, 1996). In our case the gap between the students’ knowledge about studying abroad and the need or wish to study abroad is quite big. The decision to study abroad involves a high degree of risk, which leads to that the student is highly involved in
the process. The student will therefore be very interested in finding information about the country, city, university etc. that he/she chooses to study in, so that the student does not choose wrong, which could affect the students perception of the experience of studying abroad.

5.2. Which factors might or might not have influenced the students when they chose where to study?

Evaluation
After that the student has searched for information about the various universities and countries, he or she reaches the stage of evaluating the different alternatives, which is step three in the buyer process (Palmer, 2005). Here the students have to decide on which country or university to study in. There were different types of factors that affected them and these are the so called pull factors, which make one country/university more appealing to the student than others (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). As the students decided on, in what country to study, they stated that the most significant determinant factor was the education level in the country (see table 4). This is coherent with the first factor, knowledge and awareness, of Mazzarol’s and Soutar’s (2002) research. And as they decided on what university to study at, it was the accessibility of information about the university. 62 of the students thought this was important. The reputation of the university was, for 46 of the students important when they decided what university to study at.

Decision making
When the student has evaluated all alternatives, it is time to make the decision, which is step four in the buying process. Individuals who make decisions are very often influenced by other people (Palmer, 2005), such as family, friends and lecturers, they are called primary influencers. To find out if the decision maker has been influenced by others and by whom, we need to reflect on the results from question eight, nine and ten. From the answers of these questions we can see that the majority, 50 students thought it not to be important with recommendations from family as they decided in which country to study. 35 of the students found recommendations from friends not to be crucial when they chose country. The recommendations from friends and family were also unimportant for the students when they decided on what university to study. 44 respectively 34 of the students stated that it was unimportant with recommendations from family and friends.

From table 4, we can conclude that the cost issues, such as living costs and travel costs, mentioned by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) had a minor impact on the students’ decision. 45 students found the living expenses in the country to be unimportant. The same goes for the travel costs to the host country where 56 of the students found it unimportant. The low crime rate in the country was quite equally divided up between the students. The table also tells us that 26 out of the 80 students thought that the physical climate in the country was important, when they decided where to study.

The least important factor, which corresponded to 62 of the students, was linked to the sixth factor, social links (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). This means that it was unimportant for the students if they had any family members or friends living in the country when
they decided to chose a country as their host country. The second least important reason for choosing a country was the geographic proximity to the home country, Sweden. This had a very low influence on the students studying at Karlstad University to choose where to study.

5.3. What is Karlstad University doing to influence the students, and what can they do to persuade more students to study in a foreign country?

This question relates to the answers that we received in question number eleven and twelve. As table 6 clarifies, students at Karlstad University are not satisfied with the preparation before their semester abroad. The various ways of preparing and finding information for studying abroad at Karlstad University include information meetings, course catalogue, the university homepage and meetings with the responsible person at the international office. The table shows us that students were mostly satisfied with the course catalogue when they searched for information about exchange programs. The students were also satisfied with the contact they had with the service provider and responsible person at the foreign university.

Post-purchase evaluation

The post-purchase evaluation is based on a customer’s satisfaction and dissatisfaction toward a service (Palmer, 2005). As we can see from the result of question fourteen all students who answered our questionnaire would recommend other students to study abroad. The students are satisfied with the experience and service provided to them through foreign universities all around the world. Even if the students are satisfied with their experience there were stages in the process which they were dissatisfied with and had ideas about how things could be better organized. As we can see from the following comments, many students pointed out the communication between the students and Karlstad University as insufficient.

- “a more structural help and support before the trip. It does not feel like KAU has a good overview of what is waiting the students when we go abroad”.
- “a better structure concerning the application process, a more professional treatment from KAU”.

To learn what the university is doing we interviewed the international student guidance counselor at Karlstad University. From this interview we found out that the university is using various means to inform the students about the possibility to study abroad. In order to reach many students they provide information at one of the many events that are organized at the university. They also have information meetings during both spring and fall semester, and students can meet with the student guidance counselor. To reach the students they also use catalogs and share necessary information on their website to the students. It is also a possibility for the students to take part of STARS-rapports, which are travel diaries where previous exchange students share their experiences.
As we interviewed the student guidance counselor we also asked her about what the university can do to persuade more students to study abroad. She suggested that information about the exchange programs should be put on the students own homepage Studentnätet. She also purposed that organized interactions between Swedish students and the exchange students should be formed.

Most of the students expressed the importance of informing new students of the possibility to study abroad as an important factor for the university to focus on when they market international studies. In table 7 we can see that the mean value is 1.61, which indicates that the students found this alternative as having the greatest affect. We can also see that the standard deviation is 0.86 which indicates that the spread among students perception was quite low. The following statements show what improvements can be done by the university:

- “Put emphasis of informing new students at the beginning of their studies. Then follow up with posters etc, in advance of the deadline, otherwise is the risk of people forgetting big”
- “Market the possibility of abroad studies, at the beginning of the studies”
- “More information in the beginning when you arrive at the university”

The second highest ranked alternative to inspire more students to study abroad was to let lecturers attract attention. As the mean value, 1.7, says the average students found the alternative to be very important. The standard deviation of 0.96 concludes that many students had the same opinion.

The majority of the respondents we have researched found the “interaction with exchange students at KAU” to have a great value when the university market their exchange programs. With a mean value of 2.2 and a standard deviation of 0.93, we can assume that the students had the similar opinion concerning this statement. We also found that the students considered it to be important for the university to carry out a more extensive marketing.

Many of the students found that interactivity between former exchange students and students at Karlstad University would increase the interest for international studies. Most of them found it to be on the second place on the 1-5 graded scale

- “I also believe that the returned students should tell about what happens when you are an exchange student.”
- “Make former exchange students tell about their host university. Give tips and advice on how it is at the foreign university.”
- “If you are thinking about studying abroad, there should be the ability to contact former students about information. These contacts should be printed in catalogs etc, but it is also important to keep the contacts up to date.”

As we can see in the table 7 the mean value, of what the students thought concerning “more information meetings”, was 2.46. This tells us that the students found it to be quite important. On the other hand we can see that the standard deviation, 1.07, informs us that there is a wider spread among the respondents opinions. This tells us that students did not find this to be the most important priority for the university to focus on. The
importance of more information on Karlstad Universitys homepage has a mean value of 1.95, which tells us that the average students find it to be between one and two on the scale. According to the table the standard deviation is 0.92, which means that many students agrees with the statement that this is an important improvement for the university. This relates with what we found out when we interviewed the international guidance counselor. She mentioned the idea of increasing the information on the homepage and studentnätet as a possible improvement. General comments from the students were:

- Inform!
- Better information and help from KAU

More than half of the students thought that an information desk at Karlstad University events would increase the number of students applying for an abroad semester. The majority of these students found the alternative to be on the second place on the importance scale from 1-5.
This was also pointed out by the international student guidance counselor; she saw the possibility of using these events as a marketing opportunity for international studies.
Chapter six

6. Conclusions

The conclusions that we make in this chapter are connected to the problem definition that was stated in the beginning of the thesis. The conclusions are also based on the analysis that we presented in the previous chapter. In the chapter we will also look at the recommendations that we give, which can enhance the university’s effort of becoming a more internationally recognized university.

From our research we found that there were many factors that motivated the Swedish students at Karlstad University to pursue higher education abroad. We mentioned many various factors as an influencer and we have seen similarities among our interviewed students and some factors were more important than others. The most common reason for studying abroad was that it was perceived as a personal challenge and the ability to obtain an international character in their studies, was a leading factor among many of the students. Together with this we can see that improving language skills and the possibility for future work in Sweden was also an essential motive for the students.

The most important factor that influenced the students when they decided in what country to study was that the country had a high education level. Recommendations from family and friends played a minor role when deciding on what country to chose. Then financial costs when studying abroad did not influence the students as the decided to take on international studies. As they chose at what university to study, the students found it important to be able to access information about the foreign university. Quite a few students were also influenced by the location of the university and that the university had a wider range of courses compared to Karlstad University. More than half of the students found the reputation of the university to be essential.

Prior to their studies abroad, the students were either dissatisfied or took no notion concerning the organization and preparation of the application process. On the other hand
the students were pleased with the communication they had with the foreign university, but they had some ideas of how the communication at the home university could be more efficient and inspiring. All the students that we interviewed were very pleased with their semester abroad and they would definitely recommend fellow students to take the possibility to study abroad.

6.1. Recommendations

From the findings and the suggestions from the students, we have some recommendations of what the university can do to influence more students to study abroad. As we have seen in our analysis there are several ways of how this can be achieved, but there are a few main areas that the university should focus on. We think that the university should take the opportunity to inform new students about the possibility of studying abroad at the start of each semester. This way the university will reach out to many new students, which might be more effective than by using posters and internet as a source for marketing.

Today, the lecturers do not point out the importance and the possibility for students to study abroad. We believe that the lecturers are fully aware of the importance of obtaining an international character in the students’ education; we therefore recommend the university to involve the lecturers as an information source and to motivate students to take the opportunity to take part of international studies. The university should to a wider extent use the internet as a marketing tool. At the moment students find it difficult to find information about the university’s exchange programs. This information should be distributed to the students own homepage, “Studentnätet”

When students have shown the interest of studying abroad, there should be interactivity with students that have studied in various countries and at universities around the world. Instead of only obtaining general information at the meetings, the interested students can receive necessary details and advices from former exchange students who already have studied abroad.

We also see the importance for the university to use events such as the KEY-day and Hot Spot, to notify students about international studies. The university should use both students who have been abroad and exchange students at Karlstad University, to enlighten students about the foreign universities and countries.

We are fully aware of, that these changes will not be carried out over night, but our opinion is that it is a good start and a base for continuous work towards motivating and inspiring more students at Karlstad University.
For future research we suggest to research on why Swedish students at Karlstad University choose not to study abroad. Karlstad University has a quite large range of universities in their exchange programs, especially at universities in Europe which are not filled by Karlstad University students. But universities outside of Europe are very popular among the students. From our research it shows that most of the students study in Europe. It could be interesting to find out how many students that are studying in English spoken countries respectively non English spoken countries, and why is it so?
8. References


My motivations for studying abroad

During the spring of 2008 we will be conducting a research concerning abroad studies. This is why we are contacting you. The research is aimed to you who has studied abroad during spring and fall 2007, and to you who is studying abroad during the spring of 2008 and to you who will study abroad during the fall of 2008.

The aim of our research is to find out what has motivated you to study abroad, and what Karlstad University can do to motivate more students to study in a foreign country.

The research is carried out anonymously and no one responsible for the research will know who has answered what. The questions are an essential part in our master thesis, and they will be put together in form of statistical charts and diagrams. You can take part of the results when our thesis has been published.

We are asking you to answer the questions and return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope as soon as possible, however no later than the 25th of April 2008.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact us by e-mail.

henrbern02@student.kau.se
gabrmatt01@student.kau.se

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Karlstad, April 2008

Henric Bernunger and Gabriella Mattsson
1 Gender

- Female
- Male

2 Age (during your abroad studies)

- 20
- 21-23
- 24-26
- 27-29
- 30-

3 What program are you studying at Karlstad University?

- Business & Economics
- Health care & Social work
- Technology & Engineering
- IT
- Teaching
- Natural sciences
- Social sciences & Arts

4 At what occasion did you decide to go abroad?

- Before applying to KAU
- During your studies at KAU
- If other, please specify

5 During what semester will/did you study abroad?

- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7-8
- 9-
6 In what of the following regions will/did you study abroad?

- Asia
- Europe
- North America
- Oceania
- South America
- If other, please specify

7 Within what exchange program will/did you study?

- Erasmus
- ISEP
- Free mover
- If other, please specify

8 How important were the following statements when you decided to study abroad?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Either or</th>
<th>Quite unimportant</th>
<th>Very unimportant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It was important to improve my language skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important to experience another culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important to experience another student life in another country</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important for future work possibilities in Sweden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was an important personal experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important to get an international impression in my studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It creates future work possibilities in the country</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important with recommendations from fellow students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important with recommendations from teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9 How did you value the following statements when choosing country?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Quite Important</th>
<th>Either or</th>
<th>Quite Unimportant</th>
<th>Very Unimportant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It was important with the climate as a deciding factor</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important with recommendations from family and relatives</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important with recommendations from friends</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important with the culture in the country</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important with the closeness to Sweden</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important with prior experiences in the country</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important that family/friends lived in the country</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important with low transportation costs to the country</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important with low expenses in the country</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important with a high education level in the country</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important with a low crime level in the country</td>
<td></td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 How did you value the following statements when choosing university?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Quite Important</th>
<th>Either or</th>
<th>Quite Unimportant</th>
<th>Very Unimportant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It was important with access to information about the university</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important that the university had a good reputation</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important that the university offered a wider range of courses than KAU</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important with the geographic location in the country</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important with recommendations from family and relatives</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important with recommendations from friends</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important with prior knowledge about the university</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important in what city the university was located</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was important with recommendations from exchange students at KAU</td>
<td>🟡</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11 When organizing your abroad studies, how satisfied were you with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Either or</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information meetings at KAU were well organized</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Study abroad&quot; catalog was informative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The homepage about abroad studies was informative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The communication with responsible person for abroad programs worked well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The communication with responsible person at foreign university worked well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 On a scale 1-5 (1 being the highest and 5 the lowest) how important do you consider the following statements when the university is marketing their abroad programs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important with more information meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important with more information on the university webpage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important with more interactivity with foreign exchange students at KAU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important with information desk at events at KAU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important with more extensive marketing concerning abroad programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactivity between returned exchange students and students at KAU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important that teachers at KAU inform students about the possibilities to study abroad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to already at the term start to inform students about the possibilities to study abroad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 Own comments concerning what the university can do to get more people to study abroad

14 Would you recommend other students to go abroad to study?
- Yes
- No