

INFLUENCE OF LEISURE ACTIVITIES ON THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE STUDY REGION

Norbert, GRÜNWARD¹ and Oana, DUMITRAȘCU²

¹University of Applied Sciences, Technology, Business and Design Wismar, rektor@hs-wismar.de

²University of Applied Sciences, Technology, Business and Design Wismar, oana.dumitrascu00@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: Analysing the literature in the field of the influence of leisure activities in universities, some gaps were discovered. With the purpose of filling these deficits a comparison study of three universities has been developed, in order to analyse the effect of leisure activities on the attractiveness of the study area.

In terms of comparing the University of Applied Sciences, Technology, Business and Design Wismar, University of Applied Sciences Kiel and University of Applied Sciences Flensburg and to give recommendations of increasing the attractiveness of the study area and study motivation, a marketing research is presented. A hundred and twenty students were questioned regarding the leisure opportunities in the area of recreation, vocational preparation, sports facilities and student satisfaction in terms of the university image and their involvement in leisure activities. In conclusion of the conducted study, the offers of leisure activities from the universities present some gaps and their awareness is low. Diversifying the offer in leisure activities and enhancing the advertising leads to a higher fulfilment of the student's attractiveness.

KEY WORDS: marketing research, leisure activities, study motivation, university marketing

1. INTRODUCTION

East German universities are confronted with a lack of capacity utilization due to demographic changes since the 1990s and the migration of population from the new to the old federal states of Germany.[1] Prospective students are on one hand, inadequately informed, concerning the study opportunities and career opportunities and on the other, uncertain about their personal skills and interests. In case of a study choice, these factors pose a risk of alienation for the decision making, or even the risk of dropping out from the study programme.[2] To avoid this risk, the attraction and retention of students increases its importance.

The image of a study placement is influenced by the university's good reputation, its facilities, its proximity to home but also by the leisure activities and the general atmosphere. These factors affect the study motivation of students, but also the decision making process of prospective students in choosing their university.[3]

The present article deals with the effect of leisure activities on the attractiveness of the study area and study motivation of students of the University of Applied Sciences, Technology, Business and Design Wismar, University of Applied Sciences Kiel and University of Applied Sciences Flensburg, located in the north of Germany. The results are based on a survey, conducted in the winter semester 2011/2012, where students from all disciplines of the three universities participated. The collected data was analysed with the purpose of identifying problems and discussing recommendations.

2. OBJECTIVES

The general objective of this study is to analyse the impact of the leisure facilities at the three universities in Flensburg, Kiel and Wismar on the attractiveness of the study area and study motivation of students. Furthermore, conclusions were drawn in which way leisure activities are perceived by the students. For this purpose, in a comparative study of the three universities 120 students were questioned regarding the level of recreational activities and their impact on the attractiveness of the study area and study motivation of students. The analysis of

this study is the demonstration of approaches and future recommendations.

Specific objectives of the study:

- Assessment of student participation in leisure activities: Are the surveyed students involved in the leisure activities in claim? What factors cause their non-participation?
- Assessment of leisure services in the area of sport and determining the possibilities of sports activities
- Evaluation of the offer of extra-curricular activities in the perspective of career
- Assessment of leisure services in the recreation area
- Determine the differences and similarities of the leisure facilities at the three universities
- Recommendations for University Wismar

3. RESEARCH STATUS ON THE SUBJECT OF STUDY AREA AND STUDY SELECTION FACTORS

The study "Influence of leisure activities on the attractiveness of the study region" turns out to be original, due to the lack of research and literature examined in relation to the German universities, also the qualitative research on the issue raised was hardly found.

The aspects of demographic change in the new states of Germany, the migration from east to west as well as the factors influencing the choice of studies, and also the factors of university connection are analysed as continued.

In the new counties the demographic trend from 2008 leads to a decreased demand for studying and thus a surplus of study space capabilities, as mentioned by C. Heine in "Students in the old and new counties: reasons for the high school choice and reviews higher regions of West and East Germany". [3] The forecasts mention that by 2020, a decline will follow in university entrance qualification in the new federal states by about 37% and an increase is predicted in student numbers in the old federal states.[4]

Furthermore, it is an objective of the East German universities to attract prospective students from West Germany and thus to

face east-west mobility.[5]The mobility of the new to the old countries is 19% and from the old to the new counties only 4%. For most students, the place of study near their origin plays an important role. For the study beginners from the former East Germany living conditions, tuition freedom, the good facilities of the universities, the leisure facilities and the atmosphere at the university location are very important. For the study beginners from the West Germany, the reputation of the University plays a crucial role.[5]

According to the Dresden study "Higher Education in Dresden in demographic change", for 80% of high school graduates and 61% of first year students, the study specialisation is the most important aspect in the choice of study place, and for only 11% of high school graduates and 15% of freshmen major was the study place the most important factor.[6]

C. Hachmeister, M. Harde and M. Langer investigate in their study "Factors influencing decision to study" the decision making process of students in relation to the study, in terms of technical, academic and local election.

The analysis conducted an online survey of 3,600 students from graduating classes. The study showed that the choice of subject is a top priority in the choice of studies, followed by the area and college choice. The decision also depends on the home area, the recreational and the atmosphere at the university. Also the equal opportunity for men and women, the low cost of living and tuition fees of the care and services at the college, the opportunity for personal growth as well as on the equipment, the reputation of the course offerings are important.[7]According to the survey, the decision on the choice of subject depends most on the corresponding inclinations and talents, followed by personal growth and favourable prospects in the labour market.

"Good service and counselling are very important to students," says the online survey of students in "Summary Report No.8: service and counselling for students." In this way the access to higher education could be facilitated and the academic success can grow. Information for the study start through school counselling, student counselling and advice on financial support and housing agency would be very important to the students. [8] Most of the students surveyed felt that the academic advising by mentors and tutors, psychotherapeutic counselling and information for new students are very helpful. Services, such as high school sports, cultural and leisure facilities, computer labs, and career services for students, play an important role. Here, around 80% of respondents indicated to be very satisfied with the quality of the university's sports and cultural and leisure facilities. The quality of the computer pool was evaluated by 76% of the surveyed students as to be very good. The satisfaction with career services seems to be lower.[8]

The topic of higher education marketing became more actual due to the increasing competition among universities. The university marketing is considered to be the conscious market-oriented administration of the whole university, the alignment and coordination of all activities to the needs of target groups and securing all the advantages in the university competition. [9]

The role of university marketing is to increase the number of prospective students and to increase their satisfaction with the university. This is also related to the quality of teaching and the trust placed in professional confidence.[10]

Through university marketing the quality of teaching and the establishment of emotional ties can be promoted, likewise,

through extra-curricular events, the students can be more easily integrated into the academic system of higher education as well as take part in the social integration (e.g. leisure activities in the field of sports, recreation, career orientation).[10]

To reduce the negative effects of demographic change in the new federal states of Germany and the emigration of potential students from East to West, the potentials of the new counties, such as tuition fees freedom, low cost of living, higher education facilities, quality of research and teaching should be utilized. Moreover, the attractiveness of the study site can be increased by increasing the quality of the courses offered, teaching and leisure activities.[11]

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The marketing research process is divided into four phases. First, a study destination is recognized and defined. The research goal is determined by taking into account the initial situation. In the second phase a research plan is developed and the data is collected – gathering data is done through secondary and primary research. After that, the collected data is analysed and interpreted. The data analysis is done using various statistical analysis programmes. In the final phase the results are presented and communicated. The findings will be presented in a genuine and meaningful way to decision makers. [12]

Using secondary research, specific data that already existed as informative material is examined. Certain information regarding the universities of Kiel, Flensburg and Wismar were collected through secondary research. Existing information was used, such as information in the field of leisure activities in sports, in the view of the career and the field of recreation available on the website, posters and brochures of universities, etc. The collection of secondary data facilitates the incorporation into the problem and the development of the primary data. In primary research, the data was obtained using the technique of questioning. First of all, exceptional issues have been clarified by surveying experts. The unavailable information about the universities was provided supplementary by specific university contacts.

A large amount of information is generally provided by the collected data.[12] By the data evaluation, the data was checked, sorted and analysed. The required information was compressed, so that decisions were made.[13] The collected data has been processed using the SPSS programme and analysed. To identify the relationships between the collected data, various methods are used, such as uni- and bivariate analysis. [14]

Through univariate analysis, individual variables are analysed. The bivariate analysis examines the relationships between two variables. It explains how a change in the characteristic values of one variable can lead to the change of the characteristic values of another variable. [15]

5. THE COLLECTED DATA

The target group of the study are students enrolled in the winter semester 2011/2012 at the University of Applied Sciences, Technology, Business and Design Wismar, University of Applied Sciences Kiel and University of Applied Sciences Flensburg, where the surveyed were chosen randomly. A total of 120 students were questioned, where 40 students from the University of Wismar, 40 from the FH Kiel, and another 40 from the Flensburg University of Applied Sciences. 41.7% of the 120 respondents were female and 58.3% male. The majority of respondents are enrolled in the bachelor

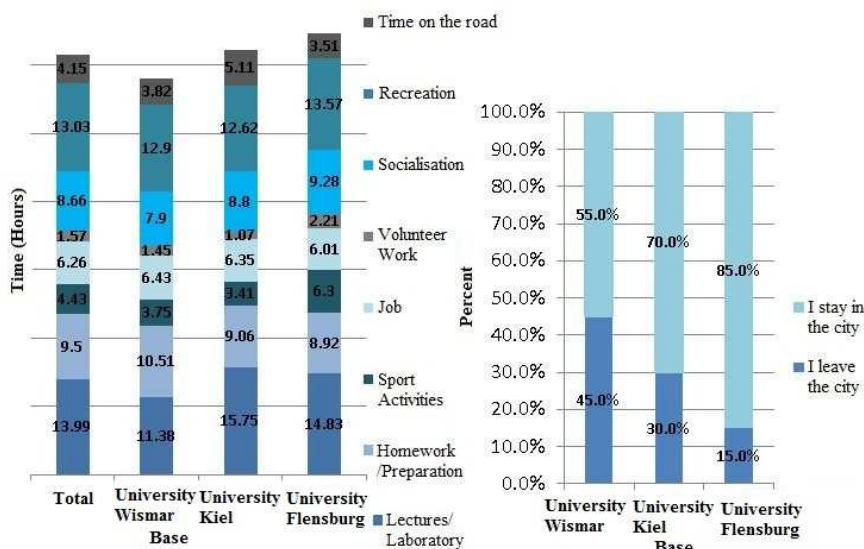
programme, 11.7% participate in a master programme and 3.3% in a diploma programme. The majority of the 120 respondents study in the fifth semester, while fewer study in the third and first semester. 62.5% of surveyed students at the University of Wismar and 45% of students at the University of Applied Sciences Kiel learn in the fifth semester, while at the University Flensburg 35% of respondents study in the first and 30% in the third semester.

6. DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION OF THE RESULTS

Based on the analysis of the data, it can be found that in comparison to the University in Kiel and the University in Flensburg, at the University of Wismar proportionally fewer students participate in leisure activities. Generally, students participate in sports activities and are less interested in other

activities. However, even the participation in sports activities in comparison to the other two universities is less.

In total, respondents spend 13.99 hours per week in lectures and labs, 13.03 hours per week are used for recovery, 9.5 for homework and preparation, 8.66 hours for socialization - like Facebook, telephone, Internet - and 6.26 for a job. In average, the students make 4.43 hours sport, they spend 4.15 hours on the road to university or job and 1.57 hours they involve themselves in voluntary work. The students at the University of Wismar invest more time in homework and preparation compared to the subjects of the other two universities. They also exercise less, have not so many lectures and labs, and they spend less time on their way to university, home or work. On weekends, 55% of respondents remain in Wismar, 70% and 85% in Kiel, Flensburg. Since almost half of Wismar's students leave the city on weekends, and don't spend a lot of their time exercising, certain gaps in various sports result.

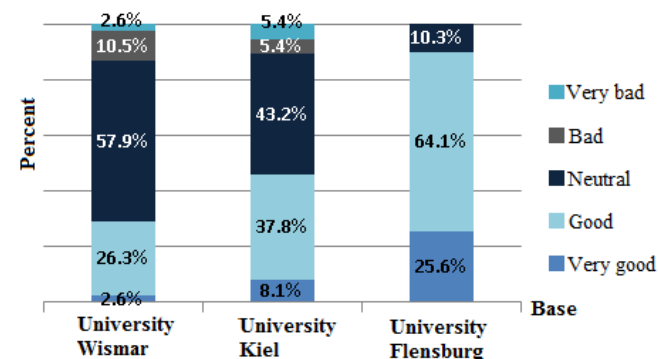


N_{Total}=120
 n_{Wismar University}=40
 n_{Kiel University}=40
 n_{Flensburg University}=40

Figure 1. How much time do you spend with the following activities per week? How do you spend your weekends?

The students who expressed themselves with “neutral” or “probably not” to the statement “are you satisfied with the university?”, weren't influenced by leisure activities in choosing their university. By contrast, the subjects who agreed with this statement have been influenced to 20% and the subjects who totally agreed, to 9.7%. Therefore, it can be concluded that a high level of satisfaction depends on the improvement of leisure services. (See Figure 1:How much time do you spend with the following activities per week? How do you spend your weekends?)

5% of the respondents of the University of Wismar, 7.5% and 2.5% of the Kiel University and Flensburg University do not know about the sports offer. Most subjects of the University of Wismar have a neutral opinion about the sports college, with 10.5% poor and 2.6% very poor, 26.3% have a good opinion and only 2.6% a very good opinion. On the other hand, 25.6% of respondents of the Flensburg University have a very good opinion about the sports offer, 64.1% a good one, 10.3% a neutral and no one has a bad or very bad opinion. 37.8% of respondents of Kiel University found the sports facilities good and 43.2% neutral. (see Figure 2: General opinion concerning the leisure activity offer)



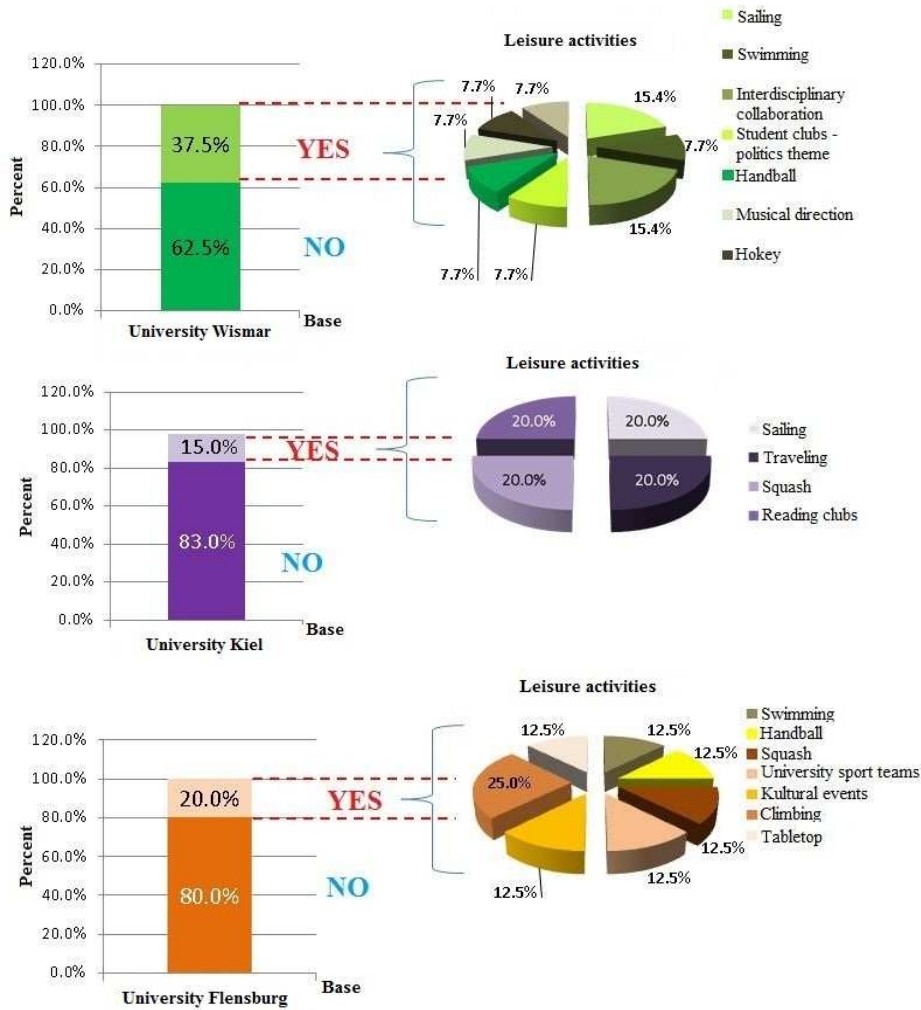
n_{Wismar University}=40
 n_{Kiel University}=40
 n_{Flensburg University}=40

Figure 2. General opinion concerning the leisure activity offer

15% of respondents of the Kiel University, 20% of the Flensburg University and 37.5% of Wismar University would like to introduce another leisure activity at the university. The fact that at the University of Wismar twice as many respondents as in the other universities expressed that desire, indicates possible gaps in leisure activities of the university. 15.4% of these students would introduce more activities related

to interdisciplinary collaboration as well as sailing, swimming, handball, hockey, events in the musical direction, as well student associations or politics would also be important to them. 20% of respondents of Kiel University, which would introduce a leisure activity desire sailing, but also hiking and squash. For 20% of the subjects at the Flensburg University,

which would introduce an extracurricular activity, climbing is important, with 25%, but also swimming, handball, squash, university sports teams, cultural events and board games. (see Figure 3: Is there a leisure activity that you would like to introduce at your university?)

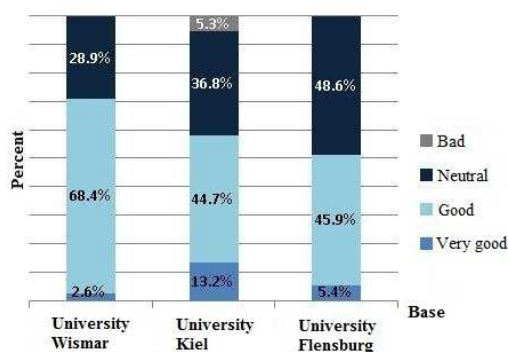


n_{Wismar University}=40
n_{Kiel University}=40
n_{Flensburg University}=40

Figure 3. Is there a leisure activity that you would like to introduce at your university?

5% of the respondents of the University of Wismar, 5% and 7.5% of the University Kiel and University Flensburg are not aware of the offer in the area of professional preparation. Nearly three-quarters of respondents of the University of Wismar have a good or very good opinion about the offer in view of the career, at the Flensburg University and Kiel University only half of the respondents share the same opinion.

(see Figure 4: General opinion about the leisure activity offer in the career perspective)



n_{Wismar University}=40
n_{Kiel University}=40
n_{Flensburg University}=40

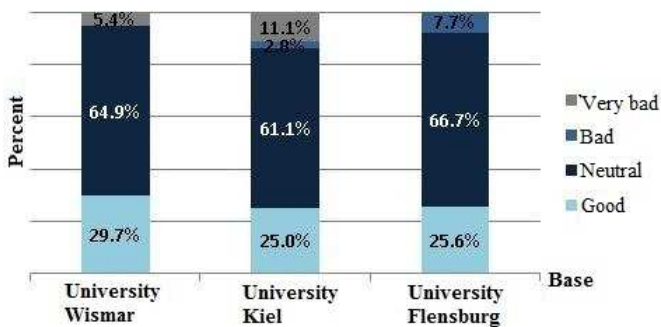
Figure 4. General opinion about the leisure activity offer in the career perspective

Leisure activities in the field of career orientation, especially entrepreneurship education is an important solution to the integration of university graduates in the labour market and for career preparation in generally.[16]

Based on the analysis of the data, it is clear that participation in extra-curricular activities in the area of professional preparation is the highest at the Wismar University and the lowest at the Flensburg University. The student's awareness in the area of career centre at the University of Wismar is higher, and more respondents have a good or very good opinion about it. In the area of language, Kiel's University offers more attractive and diversified services.

Out of the participants there are 7.5% students from the University of Wismar, 10% and 2.5% from the Kiel University, Flensburg University not familiar with the offer in the field of

recreation. A quarter of respondents have expressed a good opinion about the recreational facilities of the university, no one has a very good opinion and the majority is neutral. The consideration of the opinions of the respondents shows that they are not very happy with the offer in the field of recreation. (see Figure 5: General opinion concerning the leisure activity offer in the field of recreation)



n_{Wismar University}=40
n_{Kiel University}=40
n_{Flensburg University}=40

Figure 5. General opinion concerning the leisure activity offer in the field of recreation

After analysing the participation and opinions of the surveyed students regarding the recreation facilities it is clear that the services which each of the universities offer present gaps. However, the student participation in leisure activities at the Kiel University is larger and the offer more attractive, especially in the area of cultural events, theatre, music and artistic events.

Considering the opinion of the respondents of the universities in terms of sports offer, in the area of professional preparation and in the field of recreation it is seen that more respondents of the Flensburg University have a good or very good opinion. University Kiel and University of Wismar are similar overall and less well estimated.

7. CONCLUSIONS

According to the analysis of the collected data it can be stated that the participation of students from the University of Wismar in extra-curricular activities compared with the other universities analysed is rather small. In general, students spend their time with lectures and labs, recreation, homework, projects, jobs and socialization. Reason of not participating in leisure activities is often a time problem.

In the name of the authors it is recommended to improve the university marketing by improving the advertising of the latest leisure activities offer - with the help of flyers, posters, oral publicity- for attracting more students in leisure activities.

The majority of surveyed students at the University of Wismar had a neutral opinion about the sports offer at the university and are not well informed. The offer is not sufficiently known among students, and because of its lack of diversity it is not adequately attractive. The other two universities are able to provide a more diversified and more attractive offer. Since the students are ready, according to their own statement to spend 13.63 € per month for sports and they would like new sports to be introduced. It is recommended the introduction of a monthly contract in the amount of 10 to 15 Euros, in which the offered sports are included. To make the sport offer more attractive, a project for modernisation and expansion of the sports hall should be developed. The basic fee of 10-15 € per month

would involve not only the existing sports but also a growing range of new services (offered by the sports centre of the university itself or in cooperation with companies which are active in sports), to the gradual approach to the other universities.

For a higher fee, the city location on the Baltic Sea and the city flair should be taken into consideration, by developing the offer of water sports, very important for students. In collaboration with the University of Wismar, the attractiveness of the city with the image as a nautical city could be increased. For an extra fee, sailing, swimming, diving and surfing should be added to the university offer.

The offer in the area of professional preparation at the University of Wismar, in comparison to the other two universities is more known. This should be retained by targeted advertising for increasing the participation of the students.

In the area of recreation, the offer is rather low compared with other universities and the students are not satisfied with it. Culture, music and theatre have not been developed enough, so that related organisations and student clubs, various events, competitions, exhibitions could be spread out. Students with common interests could bring their ideas in order to expand and express their talents, interests and potential.

In order to extend the offer in the recreation area, trips with professors and students should be organised. Common activities could be, for example, a barbecue or a boat ride. City visits should be organised by the International Office, where all students can participate.

Since most students have classes in the morning, it is anticipated that the proposed extra-curricular activities should be offered more in the afternoon. In order to improve the quality of leisure opportunities and the needs of students, periodically review questionnaires about leisure activities of the university should be filled out by students. For a better control of the effect of leisure activities on the attractiveness of the study area and study motivation of students, it is advisable to carry out this research each semester, with the purpose of increasing the attractiveness of leisure activities and better match with the needs of the students.

Due to the increasing attractiveness of leisure activities, through advertising and marketing, the image of the university would be improved and more prospective students could be added, the students will be more satisfied, so that the study motivation and the attractiveness of the study location would increase.

REFERENCES

1. Beckmann Julia, Langer Markus, Studieren in Ostdeutschland?Eine empirische Untersuchung der Bereitschaft zum Studium in den neuen Länder, available at: http://www.che.de/downloads/CHE_AP125_Studieren_in_Ostdeutschland.pdf, pp.9, Güters-loh, Germany, (2009)
2. Heine Christoph, Willich Julia, Informationsverhalten und Entscheidungsfindung bei der Studien- und Ausbildungswahl, Studienberechtigte 2005 ein halbes Jahr vor dem Erwerb der Hochschulreife, available at: http://www.his.de/pdf/pub_fh/fh-201001.pdf, pp. 5, Hannover, Germany, (2006)
3. Heine Christoph, Studienanfänger in den alten und neuen Ländern: Gründe der Hochschulwahl und Bwertungen der Hochschulregionen West- und Ostdeutschland, available at: <http://www.hochschul-kampagne.de/dateien/HIS->

- Studienanfänger-Hochschulwahlund-bewertung.pdf, pp.23, Germany, (2008)
4. Beckmann Julia: Die Einstellung zu einem Hochschulstudium in den neuen Bundesländer- Eine theoretische und empirische Untersuchung der Determinanten, Freie wissenschaftliche Arbeit zur Erlangung des Bachelor of Arts im Bereich Kulturwissenschaften (Medien) an der Fakultät Medien der Bauhaus- Universität Weimar, verfügbar unter: <http://www.hochschulkampagne.de/dateien/Beckmann-Hochschulstudium-NBL-2008.pdf>, pp.12, Weimar, Germany, (2008)
 5. Heine Cristoph, Willich Julia, Schneider H., Informationsverhalten und Hochschulwahl von Studienanfängern in West- und Ostdeutschland, Eine Sekundäranalyse der HIS Studienanfängerbefragung des Wintersemesters 2007/08, available at: <http://www.hochschulkampagne.de/dateien/HIS-Infoverhalten-Studienanfänger-2009.pdf>, pp.1, pp.29, Hannover, Germany, (2009)
 6. Killisch W, Lenz K.: Der Hochschulstandort Dresden im demographischen Wandel, Studie des Zentrums Demographischer Wandel der Technischen Universität Dresden im Auftrag der Landerhauptstadt Dresden, Stadtplanungsamt, available at: http://tu-dresden.de/die_tu_dresden/zentrale_einrichtungen/zdw/forschung/abgeschlossene_projekte/hochschulstandort_dresden/Hochschulstandort%20Dresden%20im%20demographischen%20Wandel.pdf, Dresden, pp.2, (2009)
 7. Hachmeister C., Harde M, Langer M.: Einflussfaktoren der Studienentscheidung- Eine empirische Studie von CHE und EINSTIEG-, available at: http://www.che.de/downloads/Einfluss_auf_Studienentscheidung_AP95.pdf, Gütersloh, Germany, pp.63, (2007)
 8. Willige J., Weber S., HIS Hochschul- Informations system GmbH: Kurzbericht Nr.8 Service- und Beratungsangebote für Studierende, available at: <https://hisbus.his.de/hisbus/docs/hisbus-service.pdf>, Hannover, Germany, pp.3, pp.24 (2004)
 9. Meffert H., Müller-Böling D.: Hochschulmarketing- Herausforderung und Erfolgsfaktoren im Wettbewerb, Dokumentation der Tagung vom 15. Januar 2007, available at: http://www.che.de/downloads/AP98_Tagung_Hochschulmarketing__07_AP98.pdf, Gütersloh, Germany, pp.4, (2007)
 10. Langer M., Ziegele F, Hennig-Thurau T.: Hochschulbindung-Entwicklung eines theoretischen Modells, empirische Überprüfung und Ableitung von Handlungsempfehlungen für die Hochschulpraxis, Abschlussbericht zum Kooperationsprojekt Hochschulbindung, available at: http://www.che.de/downloads/hs_bindung_bericht0105.pdf, Hannover, Germany, pp.3, pp.6, (2003)
 11. Krawietz M., Heine C.: HISBUS-Kurzinformation Nr.18, Wahlmotive und Bewertungen des Studienortes bei Studienanfängern im Vergleich der neuen und der alten Länder, Ergebnisse aus der Befragung der Studienanfänger des Wintersemesters 2006/07, 2007, available at: http://www.bmbf.de/pubRD/hisbusstudie_studienstandort.pdf, pp.22
 12. Raab Andrea, Poost Andreas, Eichhorn Simone, Marketingforschung. Ein praxisorientierter Leitfaden, Kohlhammer Verlag, Stuttgart. Germany, pp.14, pp.97, (2009)
 13. Berekoven Ludwig; Eckert Werner; Ellenrieder Peter, Marktforschung. Methodische Grundlagen und praktische Anwendung, 9. Auflage, Gabler Verlag, pp.191, Wiesbaden,(2001)
 14. Dannenberg, Marius; Barthel, Sascha, Effiziente Marktforschung, Galileo Business, pp.215, Bonn, Germany, (2002)
 15. Kamenz Uwe, Pietschmann. Bernd, Vahs Dietmar, Marktforschung, Einführung und Fallbeispielen, Aufgaben und Lösungen, 2. Auflage, Schäffer Poeschel Verlag, pp.176, Stuttgart, Germany, (2001)
 16. YanhongJia, YibinLiao, The orientation of entrepreneurship education of China's universities in the context of sustainable development, Management of Sustainable Development Journal, Volume 4, No. I 2012, pp.33

