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ORGANIZING AN INTERNATIONAL EVENT

"Bridging entrepreneurship education between Russia and Nordic countries"

Seminar 14-16 August 2013

Bachelor's Thesis
Business Management

December 2013

MAMK

	Date of the bachelor's thesis 9 December 2013
Author(s) Petra Paasonen, Anna-Maija Torniainen	**Degree programme and option** Business Management

Name of the bachelor's thesis

Organizing an international event: "Bridging entrepreneurship education between Russia and Nordic countries", seminar 14-16 August 2013

Abstract

Our thesis is a functional work as we organized a seminar "Bridging entrepreneurship education between Russia and Nordic countries" which took place in August 2013. During the three-day seminar there were two separate programmes for professors and students, which we planned together with our commissioner, Business Department of Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences.

In our bachelor's thesis we are focusing on three aspects of organizing a seminar; planning/organization/management, coordination, and evaluation. The overall purpose of the thesis was to identify the process of organizing a successful event. The theoretical context discusses event management extensively. The context is concentrated in the areas the planned and organized event encapsulates. In addition, it describes the cultural factors focusing more closely on the nationalities present in the organized event.

The research was based on both a qualitative and quantitative approach. The data was collected with questionnaires, observation and interviews executed during and after the seminar. The aim of the research was to identify areas for development. The results can be utilized in the development of future events.

Subject headings, (keywords)

event management, project management, international event, 24h workshop, culture, seminar

Pages	**Language**	**URN**
122 + 19 app.	English	

Remarks, notes on appendices

Tutor	**Employer of the bachelor's thesis**
Reijo Honkonen	The Business Department of Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Event management requires constant vigilance and the ability to control and act on changes. Identifying areas for development necessitates practical implementation of an event. The development work of events is enabled by interaction between people. These factors reflect to the objectives and narrate the reasons behind our thesis work; organizing an international event. The overall purpose of the thesis was to identify the process of organizing a successful event and measure the successfulness with questionnaires and research done during and after the seminar. This research focuses on three aspects of organizing an international event; planning, implementation/execution and evaluation. The results indicate valuable development suggestions.

The organization that commissioned our thesis work is Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences is a modern higher education institution offering education in 18 degree programmes, both in Bachelor's and Master's level. Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences is located in Southern Savo Finland. The institution was established in 1992 and at the moment it has campuses in the towns of Mikkeli and Savonlinna. The main campus is located in Mikkeli and the Savonniemi campus is located in the city of Savonlinna. The specific commissioner for our thesis is the Business Department of the University of Applied Sciences.

Events are organized to deepen interaction, networking and cooperation between partners. The event that was planned, organized and managed was called "Bridging entrepreneurship education between Russia and Nordic countries" and implemented in August 2013 in Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. The event was a part of a project. "The Innovative Entrepreneurship in Nordic-Russian Context" -project is carried out by Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences and partner Universities from Russia and Denmark. The purpose of the event was tied to the objectives of the project; increasing networking and cooperation between the partner institutes. This reflects to the purpose of creating the event; to increase cooperation between the Universities and focusing on certain objectives. The aspects of focus were entrepreneurship education, networking, and innovation in an international context.

The project objectives were also tied to promoting students' skills to reflect innovations and reinforce entrepreneurial mind-set. For teaching, the objective was to increase the entrepreneurial teaching competences of the teachers. These factors led to inviting students along as guests in the event and organizing a 24hour Challenge for them. The 24h Challenge for students was arranged in the premises of a real company. The students were given a challenge with which they had to work for 24 hours. The platform for the challenge came from Junior Achievement Finland. Junior Achievement Finland educates students through experiential, hands-on programmes. We were able to get acquainted with the programmes as Turo Numminen who is the programme manager of Junior Achievement Finland came to train us during the planning stage of the event. We were able to get material to be used in the Challenge as we were piloting it for the first time.

The Challenge was managed by three teachers, two from Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences and one expert in the field of long challenges from Denmark. The challenge was implemented as a course called “Innovation Competences”. The course consisted of team-work, presentations, and a final report by the challenge groups. The assessment criteria was built on the usage of professional terminology, gathering of information in the essential sources of information in the field, the usage of the main models, methods and techniques of their professional field, and ways of working in a team. At the end of the event, the students presented their results to the seminar participants and the entrepreneurs of the company who were the commissioners of the challenge work.

The planning of the event programme was a process that lasted approximately for half of a year. The planning was executed by meeting regularly with our commissioner, and using other control systems such as creating and following a budget, and forming a project plan to ensure staying in the schedule and keeping up with the expenses and activities. The constant monitoring in the planning process was the key in achieving the set objectives as we were planning and implementing the event.

The results of the event are based on a quantitative and qualitative research that was targeted for all of the participants regarding the seminar as a whole and a separate research for the students participating in the 24h Challenge. The event questionnaire was targeted to all of the event participants and the questionnaires for the students were split into three categories which were executed the following way: before the Challenge, during the Challenge, and after the Challenge.

We analyzed the results of the questionnaires with SPPS-programme. Throughout the event we also used a qualitative research method observation as a tool to collect data. We observed the event as a whole and during the piloting of the 24 hour Challenge; we used the method to collect feedback and gain development suggestions. We implemented the research using uncontrolled observation. Interviews were also used as a data collection method in the process.

The results of the event discuss the methods used in the research part. The results clearly indicate the success factors and the development needs for the future in the seminar. The organizing process and implementation of the seminar gave valuable information on aspects on which to focus more closely in the future events. The programme should be built in a way that it enables more time for free conversation and communication. The real-life stories of the speakers got positive feedback, which stresses out the importance of including them in the programme. The piloting of the 24h Challenge indicated the areas for the development in the future. The importance lies in the information flow and tying the students fully in the project, making sure the focus is in the given assignment, and the purpose is internalized by them.

After the introduction, the thesis is divided into six sections. The first part describes the theoretical context of event management. After the literature review, the focus moves over to cultural aspects, as the organized event was international and specific nationalities were present in the seminar. The thesis proceeds to the realization part, where the planning and implementation of the arranged seminar are precisely described. After the realization part, the research methods used in the research are introduced and the results are extracted using the methods introduced. Validity and reliability of the research are also examined in the chapter. The thesis is concluded in the conclusion part which contains discussion for future development and gives our personal evaluation of the process.

2 EVENT MANAGEMENT

The term ‘event management’ refers to the practice of managing events. According to Goldblatt (2002, 7) it involves researching, designing, planning, coordinating and evaluating events (Quinn 2013, 37). To define management of special events briefly, it involves designing, planning, marketing and staging events, managing the logistics, legal compliance and risk issues involved, and evaluating and reporting after the event. (Quinn 2013, 37.)

To arrange a well-planned, organized and implemented event requires professionals. Professionals act as supervisors for event workers who are also required to be properly trained and experienced event professionals. The Event manager is the head of organizing the event and responsible for achieving the event and marketing objectives. As a profession, event management is exciting. Still, managing events is demanding and includes a lot of hard work and responsibility. (Mehndiratta 2009, 34.)

According to Saget (2006, 1), a comprehension of the objectives and the organizer units' internal and external clients' sales initiatives act as the fundamental key for an event to obtain success. Looking at the event as a big picture is the first step. The process of strategic event management is all about the network, the relationships. Creating an event network can also become a powerful tool in the strategic marketing. Every event is a communications opportunity. Realization of objectives, understanding and establishing them, comes through conversations with the leaders of a company and lead of an event arranging team. (Saget 2006, 1.)

2.1 Characteristics of events

According to Carter (2012, 4) an event is any gathering of people for a specific purpose. There are multiple types of events and multiple reasons why events are being organized. When the type of an event is known, goals can be set and plans formed. The goals, objectives, and plans reflect the reasons why a certain event is organized, and thus knowing the focus and direction for the event is very important in order to make it successful. Success is strongly linked to the objectives and plans of the event, and to how those are implemented. (Carter 2012, 4-8.)

Shone and Parry (2010, 5) divide events into four different categories based on the concept of events having leisure, cultural, personal or organizational objectives. However, it should be noted that the categorization is not strictly limited and there are frequent overlaps, meaning that certain events might belong to more than one category.

Regardless of the category of the event, there are several characteristics that events generally have in common; uniqueness, perishability, labor-intensiveness, fixed time-scales, intangibility, personal interaction, ambience, and ritual or ceremony. (Shone and Parry 2010, 5.)

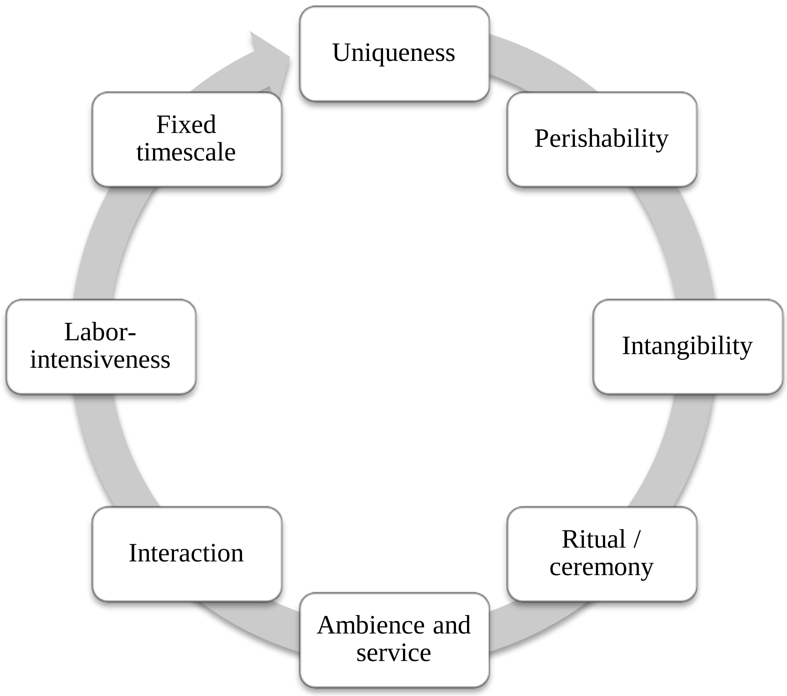


FIGURE 1. Event characteristics. Adapted from Shone & Parry 2010, 16.

Shone and Parry (2010, 4) suggest that events are non-routine occasions set apart from the normal activity of the daily life of a group of people, but they also highlight the specialized nature events generally have. The key element of an event is that every event is different, in other words unique. This doesn't mean that a certain event couldn't or wouldn't be repeated, but that elements in the event make it unique such as the participants, surroundings, or any other variables. When an event is being repeated, for example an annual conference where the structure is the same but the subject different, it is not routine nor is it producing the same item of work repetitively. (Shone & Parry 2010, 4-5, 15-16.)

The perishability of events means that if regarded unique, there cannot be two exact same events. The perishability strongly relates to the use of facilities for events and thus event managers must pay attention to the effective use of facilities and services. For example if a certain facility is unused on one day in a week, the potential revenue of that day is lost; perishable. Also many items used in events are often unique and cannot be used again. In consequence events can be expensive to provide. (Shone & Parry 2010, 16-17.)

Events are related to service activities, and as services are intangible so are events. Event providers are often trying to make the intangible more tangible by offering some tangible item to participants that can act as a memento that the experience happened and can be shown to other people. Even the smallest tangible items such as programmes, guest lists, and brochures help in sustaining participants' idea of how good the event has been. (Shone & Parry 2010, 17.)

Rituals and ceremonies have played an important role in the history, and nowadays many modern events with ceremonial activities are reinvented versions of traditions. Original traditions might be forgotten, but the actual ritual of doing it still continues. Not all modern events rely on old traditions, instead new ceremonies and new traditions are constantly invented. (Shone & Parry 2010, 17-18.)

When thinking of the outcome and success of an event, ambience is the most important element. If an event has the right ambience, it can be a huge success and vice versa. Event managers should pay attention to detail and try to encourage the desired outcome to make the event successful. However ambience cannot be forced. The outcome and success of an event are also very dependent on its audience as people are part of the process. Audience reactions, interactions, and backgrounds can make or break an event, and that is why it is important when planning an event to know and understand the target audience. (Shone & Parry 2010, 18-19.)

Labor-intensiveness of an event depends on the complexity and uniqueness of it. The more complex and unique structure it has, the more labor intensive it is in terms of organization and operation. In order to the service delivery to be efficient there is a need for relatively complicated planning and a high level of communication, which can take a lot of time and effort. Due to this, some events are outsourced to event suppliers such as caterers. The labor-intensiveness of an event is unpredictable as it depends on the type of an event. (Shone & Parry 2010, 19.)

As mentioned earlier, events are non-routine occasions and thus run to a fixed timescale. The timescale can be very short such as a ribbon-cutting ceremony or very long, even years. Events can also be organized in a sequence of short bursts of activity with breaks in between as long ceremonies might become boring. Timing must be taken into consideration to be able to organize a successful event; an event should be interesting and capture its audience's attention. The fixed timescale can be varied too; parties may carry on longer as planned or an event might be otherwise extended or shortened for a specified reason. (Shone & Parry 2010, 20.)

2.2 Planning of events

Planning is basically choosing a right strategy to achieve the desired goal. An event cannot be planned at once because of the changing surroundings. Planning is mostly done during the actual planning phase, but it is required through-out the project, even during the execution and closing phases due to changes and new prerequisites. There can be lots of variables and even when well-prepared, not everything can be foreseen in the beginning. However, planning helps dealing with the uncertainties of events. (Shone & Parry 2010, 90.; Tonnquist 2008, 105.)

The purpose of the planning stage is to establish an overview of what is to be done and in which order; it should lead to a schedule. Thus planning also helps with time management and communication. The event planning process begins with the conceptualization of the event and continues through several planning phases where the ideas are formalized into action plans, which then are executed in order to successfully stage an event. In some cases with new events, planning may start from just a vague hunch or intuition, but can be rather quickly worked up into something more useful and relevant. (Carter 2012; Shone & Parry 2010, 90.; Tonnquist 2008, 105.)

Purpose, vision, and mission

Every event should have a clear statement of purpose and vision. The statement depends on the stakeholders with an interest in the event. Stakeholders for an event may for example include client organizations, the local community, government, potential attendees, sponsors, and volunteers. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 125-128.)

In many cases the statement sets the focus and direction for an event. However in the case of a larger scale, more complex events, a deeper approach might be beneficial. It is fairly common for such events to have both the vision statement and the mission statement which guide their implementation and development. Vision and mission can be either separated from each other or combined. The vision statement declares an event's goals and what it seeks to become and achieve in a longer run. It is often motivational and a source of inspiration. Vision needs to be well communicated and clear so that it is understood by all those individuals who are involved in the event. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 125-128.)

The mission statement describes the purpose of the event and guides the actions and decision making of the event organization. If an event has also a vision statement, the mission must be viewed in terms of fulfilling the vision. The most advanced mission statements seek not only to define the purpose of the event, but identify major beneficiaries and target groups, indicate the nature of the event, and state the operating philosophy of the event organization. The mission statement is the foundation for setting up goals and objectives, and establishing strategies. It also helps in establishing a common direction in a team and promoting unity among its members. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 125-128.)

After deciding on the event's mission statement, the event management must establish goals and objectives. These two are distinct concepts and the terms should not be used interchangeably as both have their purpose in the event process. Goals provide direction for the people involved in the event organization. Depending on the nature of the event, it might not be necessary to create goals. Setting up goals is considered important when the event is more complex and involves rather many stakeholder groups. Then goals can be useful in building on the mission statement, providing focus and direction. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 125-128.)

Objectives quantify the progress towards the goals. Objectives set performance measures and thus allow assessing the success or failure of the process. SMART-formula is a useful tool when objectives for an event are being set. The formula is designed to minimize misinterpretation, and objectives can be tested with it to make sure they are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely. (Shone & Parry 2010, 187.)

Situational analysis

A useful starting point for choosing a suitable strategy for an event is conducting a situational analysis, i.e. SWOT analysis. It provides a detailed analysis of an event's internal and external environment. The external environment consists of factors surrounding the event, which can affect the outcome of an event. Opportunities and threats can be identified through this process. Analyzing the external environment also helps event management in making decisions concerning various and different event activities, such as the target market selection, and the creation of promotional messages. The main factors within the external environment include:

TABLE 1. Analyzing external environment. Adapted from Bowdin et al. 2011, 129-131.

Political/legal	• Laws and regulations
Economic	• Unemployment, inflation, interest rates, level of salaries
Social/cultural	• Changes in population's ethnic, religious, and leisure behavior
Technological	• Technology development
Demographic	• Composition of society in terms of age, gender, education, and occupation
Physical/environmental	• Pollution, waste generation
Competitive	• Competing events attracting similar target markets

After the external environment analysis is finished, it is time for the internal environment analysis. The internal analysis is focused on the event organization's physical, financial, informational, and human resources, and thus showcases the strengths and weaknesses of an event. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 129-131.)

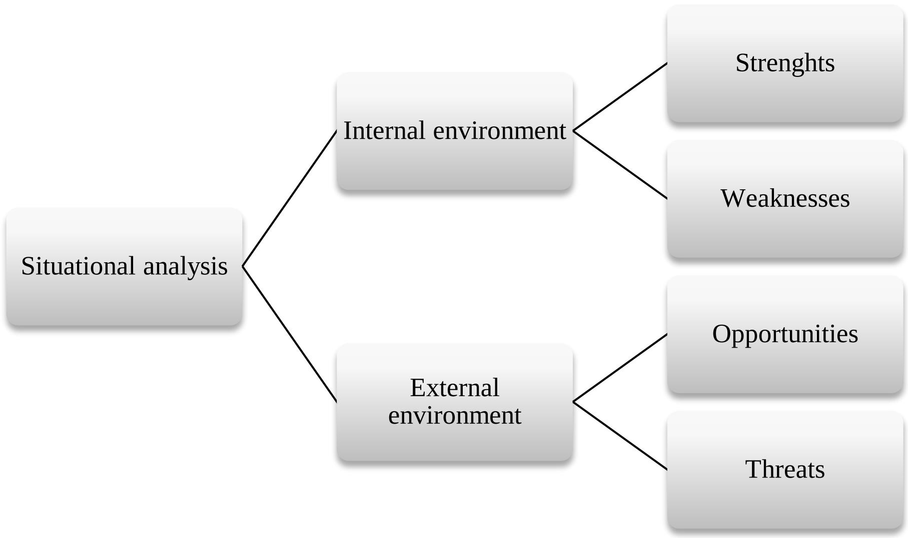


FIGURE 2. Situational analysis. Adapted from Bowdin et al. 2011, 129-131.

2.2.1 Strategy

Environmental analysis provides useful information for event management when choosing a right strategy to achieve the event's predetermined mission, vision or purpose. Thus a chosen strategy should be compatible with the analysis. Summarily a strategy should use strengths, minimize weaknesses, avoid threats, and utilize opportunities. There are different generic strategies which can be adopted by event management; growth strategy, consolidation strategy, retrenchment strategy, and combination strategy. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 131-133.)

Many managers often have the idea that bigger is better, and thus they are striving to make their events bigger than previous ones or larger than other similar events. Growth can mean many things; not just increased revenues, but more event components, more visitors, or a bigger share of the event market. The growth strategy can be suitable when the demand has increased or if the increased revenue is a necessity. The management should keep in mind that to become better, an event does not necessarily have to grow in size. Quality control, careful positioning, and improved planning can be just as effective if they serve a purpose. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 131-133.)

A consolidation strategy means that attendance is maintained at a given level. It can be also called a stability strategy. Maintaining the attendance level, even in the case of higher demand, might give the event organization certain freedom for example with pricing. When applying a retrenchment strategy, the scale of an event is reduced, but value is added to already existing components. Sometimes deleting additional parts of an event helps in focusing on the core activities. The retrenchment strategy is appropriate when the operating environment changes for example due to unfavorable economic environment such as economic crisis, or major changes in the socio-cultural environment. The retrenchment may seem like a negative strategy, but it might be crucial in certain circumstances. A combination strategy includes elements from more than one of the generic strategies. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 131-133.)

Before selecting a strategy, the alternatives can be evaluated by using three main criteria. The first criterion is appropriateness and suitability. Selected strategies need to complement each other and be consistent with the environment, resources, and values of the event organization. Secondly, the selected strategy must be feasible. It has to work in practice with available resources and also meet the identified key success factors. The third criterion is acceptability and desirability. The chosen strategy must be the means for achieving the event objectives. An environmental analysis identifies the important and unimportant, and a strategy has to be capable of either focusing on or disregarding those aspects. In addition, event management must pay attention to possible risk in strategies. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 132-133.; Johnson, Scholes, and Whittington, 2005.; Thompson, and Martin 2005.)

Strategic questioning and operative questions

According to Vallo and Häyrinen (2012, 93-94) the following aspects of the "Strategic triangle" have to be contemplated precisely:

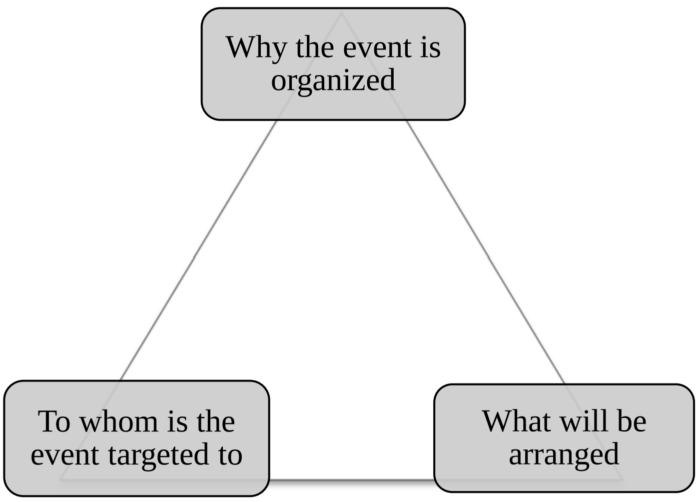


FIGURE 3. Strategic triangle. Adapted from Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 93.

The goal and reasons behind arranging the event have to be clear. It has to be well thought through what the arranging organization wants to communicate via the event. The goal of the event has to be kept clear in the minds of the organizing unit. Another basic question at the beginning stage of event planning is the target group. The elements such as how well the target group is known and how to reach them in the best way show importance in this stage of the planning process. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 93-94.)

Targeting a group of participants is a key tool in arranging a successful event. Vallo and Häyrinen (2012, 111-114) emphasize that the context of a target group has to be known relatively well to modify an event that addresses the targeted group. Multiple target groups can address differing aspects in an event. A good event organizer can relate to the target groups' position. When arranging an event, a key is to remember that the event will be arranged keeping in mind the target group's needs, not the personal interests of the arranging party. Important element is that every event is organized in a way that regardless of the target group the event will be planned and implemented through in a commendable way. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 111-114.)

In the stage of answering the question what will be arranged, the nature of the event and the degree of authenticity have to be determined. At this point, there is a variety of choices, and the right kind of event model can be concluded by asking and answering questions that relate to the needs of the wanted target group and serve the goal of the event. The questions of the strategic triangle above have to be answered by the people in charge of organizing the event. These three questions often lead to inventing the idea for the event. This solution, idea, can in the long run result in a concept that could be advanced in the future events, but the practical implementation can change in time. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 93-94.)

According to Vallo and Häyrinen (2012, 95-98), the operative triangle bases on the three following questions:

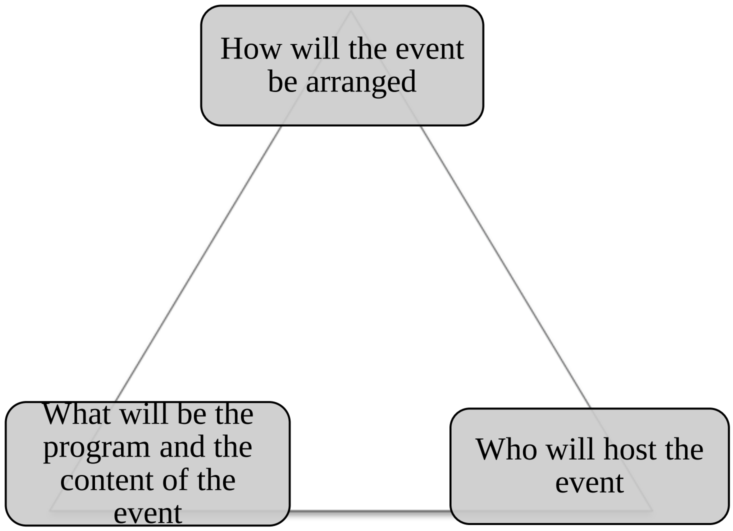


FIGURE 4. Operative triangle. Adapted from Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 95-98.

The operative triangle relates to the implementation of an event. The three questions in the triangle answer to the question of the event’s theme. In the first stage, it has to be defined how the event will be executed to target the desired goals and to convey the desired message. The event has to be arranged in a way that the idea it bases on will be clear throughout the event. The arrangers have to keep clear in their minds that an event is a process where there are three main stages: the planning stage, the execution stage and the post marketing stage. The programme and the content in an event are linked to the goals and the target group. The importance of the target group is the most important factor in this stage of the planning process. The speakers, performers and the programme have to be linked to the wanted target group of the audience participating in the seminar. There is a great responsibility when arranging an event. The role of the hosts is pivotal. Hosting is demanding and it tops off an event. Even if there are challenges and the event faces difficulties, succeeding in hosting can save the whole event. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 95-98.)

Strategic triangles have to be in a balance. In the case of imbalance, some parts of the event will become stronger than others – and usually participants can sense inaction which can in fact be the main thing on their minds after the event is over. The strategic and operative triangles are helpful tools that lead to successful events when properly utilized. The main factors in the organizing process are to keep in mind the idea and the theme of the event. When all of the questions of the strategic and operative triangles are checked and analyzed meticulously, the starting point for executing a successful event is favorable. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 95-98.)

2.2.2 Financial planning and control

Financial planning as well as financial control are important aspects in the event management. Regardless of the type or size of an event, it is important to know how much money can be spent. The majority of events have both income and expenditure, but the financial control is also important in terms of success to those events which are not intended for profit-making. As the event needs objectives, so does the financial planning of events. ‘Event organizers may be faced with a range of financial choices depending on what has been decided about the objectives’ (Shone & Parry, 105). Putting time and effort on the early stages of planning helps ensuring good financial management of the event, and that all possible expenditure and income have been identified. (Shone & Parry 2010, 104-105.)

The overview of the event’s financial aspects must be provided already at the planning stage of an event, but also during the event, and in the end. A budget must be developed before the event, so that the event organizers can determine if the event is likely to be a success in financial terms. Possible investors often want to see the budget beforehand to decide whether or not they will take part in the event. The budget is also needed afterwards as a guide to see if the event has met its financial objectives successfully. (Shone & Parry 2010, 105.)

Budgeting

Budget is an important tool for event management. In many cases most aspects in events need to be paid before any revenue is acquired. Especially cash flow needs continuous attention from the event management. Usually sponsors and other sources for funding need an event budget before committing any resources. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 302.)

Budget is a plan expressed in numerical terms, and as it is a planning tool, it also may be the most important of control plans. The process of budgeting includes costing, estimations of income and allocation of financial resources. The event budget consists of actual and projected costs and revenues which then can be compared; expenses must be proportional with the income. In addition, it is important to calculate the estimations of expenditures in each operational area. There are different forms a budget can take, for example in the case of large and complex events, instead of one inclusive budget, the budget can be broken down into several sub budgets that apply to specified areas within the event. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 302-306.)

The budgeting process can be approached from the project management point of view. In the beginning development of a budget requires forecasting resources needed for the project, in this case an event. Forecasts must include also quantities of those resources, as well as information when they will be needed, and how much they will cost. It is important to remember that with forecasts, there is always a certain amount of uncertainty and also risks involved. (Meredith & Mantel 2003, 336.)

A preliminary budget estimate begins with the project schedule and continues by estimating the cost for every activity in the schedule. After the resources have been planned, their costs must be assessed, and the cost multiplied with the time they need during the project. Estimates should always equal to available financial funds. If the costs are higher than available funds, there is a problem of lack of the financial resources. It can be fixed by doing re-estimation with cheaper resources or even evaluating the project again, and setting up a totally new plan to achieve the objectives. In case these alternatives are not possible, the project manager might ask for a bigger budget or ask permission to change the goal or narrow the project. In any case, the budget and preliminary estimate have to be in balance when the project starts. (Tonnquist 2008, 144,147.)

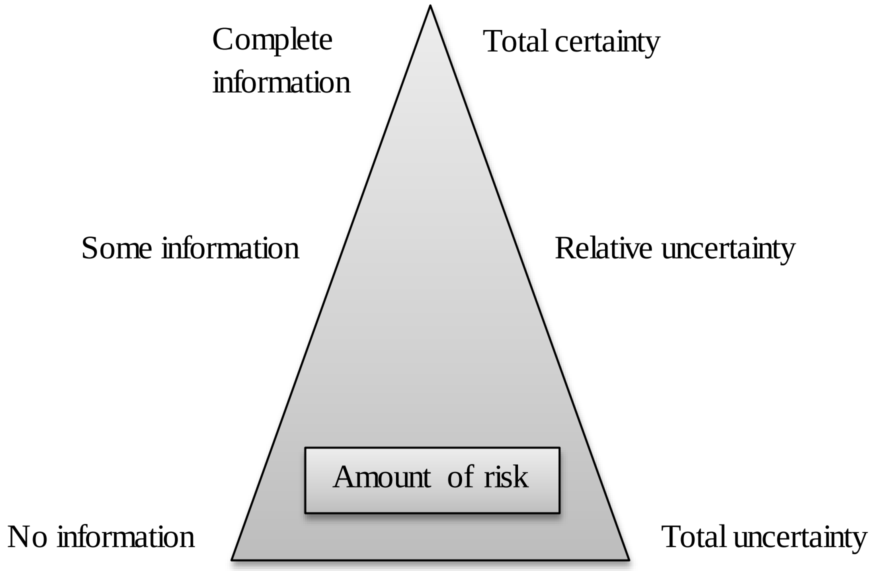
Calculating the cost of a project is relatively easy with the help of a detailed schedule and resource planning. When the duration and cost for each project activity in the schedule is known, it is only a matter of simple calculations. In most cases it might be the best to make a difference between project costs and product costs. The project costs are those costs which occur during the actual project. The product costs are the costs for materials when producing the product, for example project’s result. (Tonnquist 2008, 143.)

There are two distinct ways to calculate the cost of a project; total absorption costing and job costing. The total absorption costing indicates that the project has to take all its costs; direct project costs as well as a reasonable amount of the company’s indirect costs. It can be difficult to define a right balance with the indirect costs. There should be neither too many, nor too few indirect costs. Estimations on work efforts and other resources should also be made as many as it is possible. Job costing includes only those specific costs that occur in the execution of the project itself. The overhead costs have been incorporated by other projects and thus will not as such have an implication on the execution of a new project. (Tonnquist 2008, 143-144.)

Budgeting for projects tends to be more difficult than budgeting for more permanent organizational activities. When budgeting for a project there is no tradition, no past budgets to be relied on. Similar past projects can sometimes serve as guides, but as every project is unique so is the budget. However, in general all project budgets build on the forecasts of resource usage and the associated costs. (Meredith & Mantel 2003, 337.)

2.2.3 Risk management

Success of an event is related to many variable factors within the event, and this uncertainty makes an event special, thus it makes the event also vulnerable to risks. An event risk is generally any future incident which will have a negative influence on the event and its success. Typically risks are seen to be related to safety and financial matters, but they might as well occur in other areas in the event management. Project management sees risks as a measure of uncertainty, which is directly linked to information. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 319.; Heerkens 2002, 142.; Shone & Parry 2010, 172.)



PICTURE 1. Risk relationship between information and uncertainty. Adapted from Heerkens 2002, 142.

Event management and organization should acknowledge the possibility of risks and the importance of taking action to reduce or mitigate them; risks need to be managed. According to Parry (2003), risk management is to look at any aspect of a project or activity to identify its risks. The purpose is to help leading the event through any risks that should occur, and in some cases risk management could even uncover new opportunities. Bowdin et al. (2011, 318) identify four distinct stages in the process of risk management; understanding the context of risk, risk identification, evaluation, and control. The process is applicable to all areas of event management, and should be employed throughout the event. In case the management of an event is approached by using project management practices, risk management becomes an underlying process that is applied in every area of the management. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 318, 320.; Shone & Parry 2010, 172.)

First, it is important to understand and consider the context of risk. The context includes event type, the management structure, stakeholders as well as the general risk environment. The surrounding environment can have a major impact on the event and thus it needs to be considered in the risk management process. The organizational culture of the event company itself can be seen as part of the context. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 321.)

Risk identification is the second stage in the process. Preventing possible problems from happening might require specific skills, experience and knowledge. Bowdin et al. (2011, 321) suggest that a risk assessment meeting could be organized to gather expertise on risk management from all the event personnel. Such a meeting can also be an opportunity to educate and motivate staff in the awareness, minimization and control of risks. Work breakdown structure (WBS), which can be used for planning and controlling purposes, can also assist in the risk identification. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 321.)

Sometimes risk assessment meetings can reveal such a wide range of possible problems that it spreads a pessimistic approach to the whole planning process. This can become a risk on its own, and the event team should acknowledge and anticipate it. The third stage in the process is evaluation where the risks are organized by the event team in order to be managed. Firstly the risks should be described and then mapped according to their probability of occurring and consequences if they do occur. It is crucial for clear communication to describe risks properly. Clear communication helps in avoiding any misinterpretation. Risk assessment meetings are an important tool in the risk management process, and thus need to be managed and focused. At their best, meetings produce extensive and realistic analyses of the potential risks in a risk register. The risk register is the document output of the risk management process. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 323-324.)

Once the risks have been identified and evaluated, the event management must create systems to control the possible problems. Controlling risks is the fourth and final stage in the risk management process. Generally risk management transfers the risks to a part in the event management which is capable and has the necessary resources for handling it. Generally risks are very rarely completely eliminated, but the probability of occurring and consequences are reduced. (Bowdin et al. 324-325.)

Berlonghi (1990) suggests various risk control strategies, such as canceling and avoiding the risk, diminishing the risk, distributing the risk, and transferring the risk. In case a risk turns out to be too great, it might be necessary to cancel the event or a part of it. If a risk cannot be avoided totally, it needs to be diminished into minimum. Sometimes the risk can be distributed across different areas in the event as a precaution.

Then if the risk should actually occur, the impact is reduced. As mentioned in the previous chapter, another way is to transfer the risk. (Bowdin et al. 325.)

2.3 Implementation of events

In project management, implementation is generally a part of the execution phase, but it can be a separate phase as well. However, it is important that the implementation process is planned with care. The implementation stage involves application of all the plans as well as monitoring and controlling the plans. As the organizing progresses, the plans should be tested and confirmed of their relevance. During the implementation, event management should be able to make decisions based on the comparison between plans and reality. Many elements in the event management begin at the planning stage of an event, such as marketing and financial planning, and continue throughout the event all the way to the end. Active risk management should be a part of the planning process, but also present in the implementation stage of events. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 269.; Tonnquist 2008, 239.)

2.3.1 Operational plans

Once the right strategy is in place, it is time to begin with the implementation of the plan. This process can be executed by setting up and using series of operational plans. At this point of the event management process, applying project management practices and techniques can be very useful. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 133.)

According to Bowdin, Allen, O’Toole, Harris, and McDonnel (2011, 133) ‘operational plans are needed in areas which are central to the achievement of an event’s objectives and the implementation of the strategy’. Each event is different so operational plans also vary depending on the event. However, it is common that operational plans are created in areas such as budgeting, marketing, administration, research and evaluation, risk management, programming, merchandising, and staffing. Each area with an operational plan requires its own set of objectives that assist the overall event strategy; action plans and schedules; details of individuals responsible for handling the various aspects of the plan; monitoring and control systems, including a budget; and an allocation of resources. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 133.)

Many events are not a one-time thing, but occur at regular intervals and thus so called standing plans can be utilized in many operational areas. Standing plans are invented policies, rules, and standard procedures, which aid the event management by reducing decision-making time as the plans have been already established. Thus similar situations in repeat events can be handled in a predetermined and consistent way. Policies guide decision-making, for example an event may have an established policy of hiring only staff members that meet certain criteria. Policies follow procedures which are basically detailed instructions. Rules guide and govern actions of individuals involved in the event process in specific situations. Event management should keep in mind the rapidly changing nature of events, and constantly be prepared to adapt and adjust the strategic plan and the operational plans due to changing circumstances. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 133-135.)

Useful project management techniques

Event management and project management have similarities. Many techniques developed and used for managing projects can be applied in event management. As events, projects are also unique, time limited operations. “A project is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result” (PMBOK GUIDE 2008, 5). Projects are temporary meaning that they have a definite beginning and an end. However, the temporary nature does not mean that projects would necessarily be short-lived as those can have long-lasting social, economic, and environmental impacts. The project ends when the defined objectives have been met, or it is evident that the objectives cannot be met. There might not be the need for the project anymore. (PMBOK GUIDE 2008, 5.)

As mentioned above, there are various different techniques which can be adapted from project management to fit event planning purposes. Those techniques include the use of work breakdown structures, project planning techniques including identification of critical tasks and external dependencies, Gantt charting and risk assessment. (Shone & Parry 2010, 187-188.)

The work breakdown structure means that the job, in this case an event is broken down into its component parts. It is the first stage in the planning process so basically what has to be done, and no specific details are needed yet. It is similar to an organization chart as it is hierarchical, and it starts at the top with the actual event or a major event activity and flows down the chart to the ending point. (Shone & Parry 2010, 188.)

Event management can benefit from various different project planning techniques too; for example the identification of critical tasks and external dependencies. If a work breakdown structure has been drawn up, critical activities for an event can be easily identified. Critical activities are those which strongly relate to the success of the event. Event planning consists of a sequence of activities, and critical activities are the ones which need to be completed first in order to proceed. Thus event planners recognize the activities central to the event process and can concentrate on those. Deadlines can be set, and time management becomes easier as the identified critical activities set the pace when they need to be completed on time in order to continue with the following activities. These follow-on activities are called dependencies. (Shone & Parry 2010, 188-189.)

In addition to dependencies, there can also be external dependencies which are not in the direct control of the event planners. Shone and Parry (2010, 189) state that the more external dependencies a project has, and the more unusual they are, the more risk there is of the project going wrong or failing completely. Thus an initial work breakdown sheet must be revised into a more detailed version which shows the sequence of activities and most importantly how long each activity takes. All activities must be clearly identified in order to stay up to date on the process. However, the activities need to be clear enough; they should not be over specified in order to leave space for creativity. (Shone & Parry 2010, 189.)

To show the activity sequences visually, Gantt charting can be used. It is a method often used in project management and it shows the various activities needed to be done in a time-sequence order. It shows how much time each task should take and when those should be completed. Gantt chart also helps identifying what can happen if a critical activity is not handled in time. However, Gantt chart has its limitations. It does not necessarily show the resources needed to handle the activities. Nor does it necessarily show if the activities are well organized in terms of staffing. Gantt chart is not very suitable for large scale projects, but it can still be of help in event planning. Shone and Parry (2010,191) suggest that this planning technique might be best applied backwards; starting at the end and working back in order to find out how long handling an activity will really take. The latter is very important with the chart, because without accurate information it is useless. (Shone & Parry 2010, 191-192.)

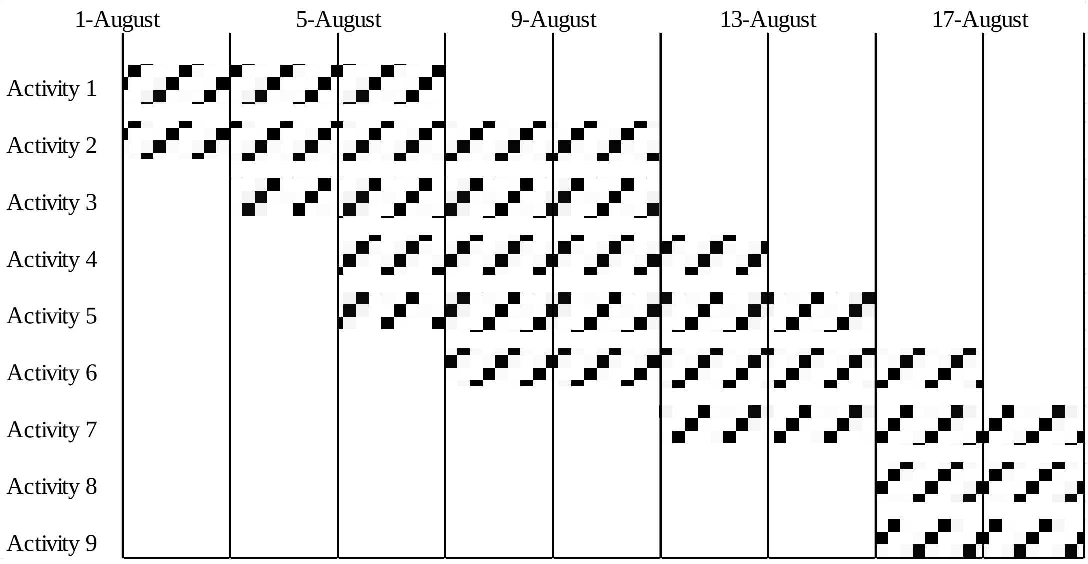


FIGURE 5. Gantt chart. Adapted from Shone & Parry 2010, 190.

2.3.2 Event marketing

Event marketing should start at the planning stage of an event and continue through the implementation to the end. Marketing should not only be seen in the sense of selling and advertising, but in a broader sense of satisfying customer needs by exchanging products or services for something of a value. Kotler and Armstrong (2006, 5) define marketing as a process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return. When the needs of a customer have been understood; the product provides superior value; and when priced, distributed and promoted effectively, it will also sell easily. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 179-181.; Kotler and Armstrong 2006, 5-6.)

Consumers are the key in marketing, and companies want to form strong and profitable relationships with their customers. Organizations must fully understand and satisfy their customers' needs and wants, in order to win customers from competitors. Marketing function is responsible for creating and executing programmes that will give the organization long-term competitive advantage. Events create awareness for a company: they allow the company to show the marketplace what they have to offer in its best light; to show the breadth of products, services and solutions that clients can rely on (Saget, 2006, 3). (Czinkota and Ronkainen 2010,19.; Kotler and Armstrong 2006, 46-47.)

The service concept

Services can be looked at through the benefits they offer, and the features and specific attributes linked to those benefits. Actual service offerings can be divided into distinct levels which relate to customer need-satisfactions, benefits and features. Three main levels are the core benefit or service, the expected service, and the augmented service. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 209.; Lovelock & Wirtz 2004; Woodruffe 1995, 125.)

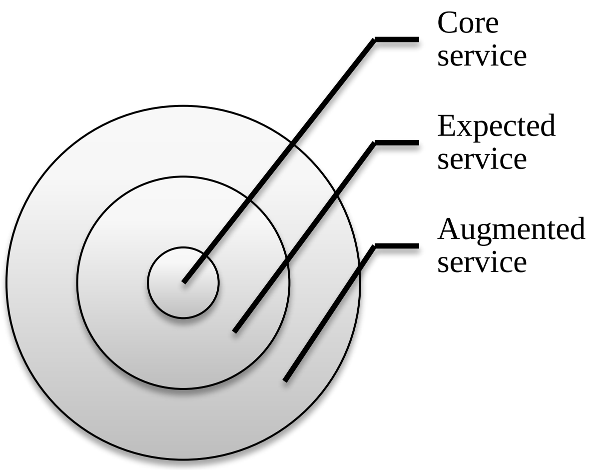


FIGURE 6. The service concept. Adapted from Woodruffe 1995, 125.

The core benefit/service is concerned specifically with customer need satisfaction; it satisfies the need or solves the problem of a customer. The expected service refers to the expectations customers have on the services available to fulfill their needs. Thus it reflects the need-satisfaction standards required or expected by customers. The augmented service basically means augmenting or making the service offering better. By fine-tuning the marketing mix, service providers strive to differentiate their services from competition in order to influence the choice of consumers. Adding extra features anad benefits to the expected service helps attracting potential customers. Woodruffe (1995, 126) suggests that in augmenting the service, innovation is often the key. (Woodruffe 1995, 125-126.)

Even though events are considered as services, the marketing concept can be applied to them as well as it is applied to basic products. Events as services are still very different from products as events must be experienced to consume them. The delivery and consumption of an event must happen at the same time. Because of the immediate consumption, the quality of the event experience for the consumers can vary daily or each time the event is organized. Event managers and marketers must find a way to manage the changing quality of the experience. In most cases the people who take part in the event, as staff members or visitors, are central to the delivery of an event. Employees enable many functions within the event, and how the employees succeed has a direct effect on the event experience the consumers get. Likewise the behavior of the visitors affects the level of enjoyment of other people attending the event. Thus managing the quality of the event experience depends largely on the management of an event's human delivery and on the behavior of the visitors. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 181-185.)

Events consist of multiple functions, and the outcome and the experience for consumers depends on the execution of all the different functions and how they work together. Thus event marketing has to work closely with an event's human resources management and operations management. Cooperation and synergy between these departments ensure that consumers' needs and expectations have been understood and fully met. This relationship between the departments is called the services trinity. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 181-185.)

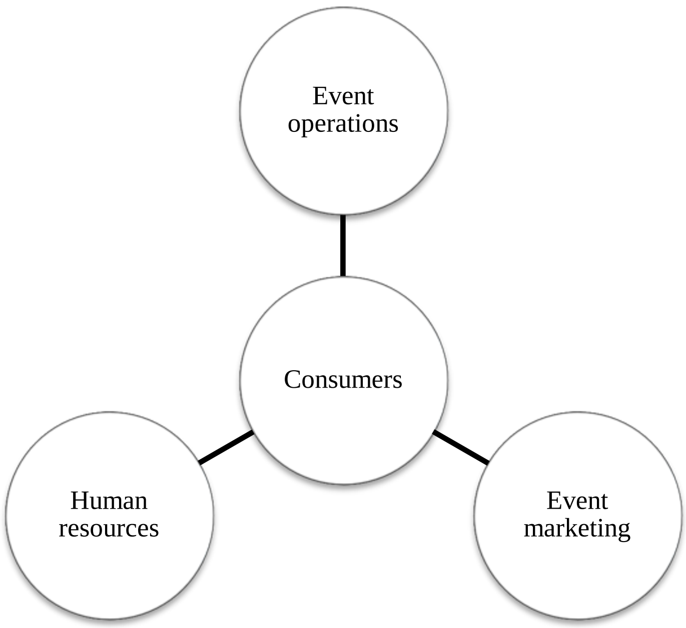


FIGURE 7. The services trinity. (Adapted from Bowdin et al. 2011, 183.)

As other services, events are intangible by nature and thus have only experimental qualities. Event marketers often aspire to add tangible qualities to an event, but still primarily it is an intangible experience for the consumers. The challenge for event marketing is to be able to provide the potential consumers with leads about the nature of the event experience in advance. Another challenge for the marketing function is to manage the perishability of the event. As events are delivered at the same time they are consumed, the demand and supply must be well understood in order not to waste any supplies. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 181-185.)

Event as a whole needs a strategy, but so does the event marketing function. The event marketing strategy should be constructed in a way that it aims to achieve the overall event objectives. Basically strategic event marketing combines the business and marketing objectives and the environments in which they occur with appropriate marketing strategies to answer to the consumers' needs. (Kotler and Armstrong 2006, 46-47.)

Market segmentation, target marketing and market positioning

It is impossible for one company to be able to serve all consumers in a given market; consumers are different and want different things from events. Most companies can serve some market segments better than others. Thus it is important that companies divide up the total market and choose the best segments to serve, and then create an appropriate strategy for serving the chosen market segments profitably. This process consists of three distinct steps; market segmentation, target marketing, and market positioning. (Kotler and Armstrong 2006, 47.)

The market segmentation is the process of 'dividing a market into distinct groups of buyers, who have distinct needs, characteristics, or behavior and who might require separate products or marketing mixes' (Kotler and Armstrong 2006, 47). The market segmentation can occur in various ways based on geographic, demographic, psychographic, and behavioral factors. It should be noted that there are certain characteristics for the chosen market segments. First of all, chosen segments should be measurable; characteristics of a segment, such as a social status, age, and gender of the consumers, must be accessible to the event marketing. Secondly, it is probably not worth targeting too small segments and thus any chosen segment should be substantial in size. Chosen segments should also be accessible by normal marketing communication channels, and actionable by the organization in terms of the marketing budget and other resources. (Bowdin et al. 199.; Kotler and Armstrong 2006, 47.; Morgan 1996)

It is the marketer's job to decide which segments should be served in order to achieve the company objectives. Before making the selection of which market segment or segments a company should enter, each segment should be evaluated based on its attractiveness, which is the process of target marketing. The target market should be chosen based on how it matches the company's offerings and thus can be the most profitable. The company should be able to generate customer value and also sustain it on the chosen target market. (Kotler and Armstrong 2006, 47-49.; McCabe 2009, 145.)

Companies can either enter only one or many segments in a given market, depending on their goals. Generally companies with limited resources might be wise to choose to target only one or a few special market segments or market niches. In some cases a company might decide to target several segments that are somehow related, for example segments that consist of different kinds of customers who share the same basic wants. Sometimes companies can even serve the whole market by offering a complete range of product or services. However, normally companies start up by serving only one segment and if they do it successfully they might continue by adding more segments. (Kotler and Armstrong 2006, 47-49.; McCabe 2009, 145.)

After determining the suitable market segments for the company to enter and serve, it is time for positioning the product or service. The position of a certain product means the place it has on consumers' minds compared to that of its competitors. It is important that marketers develop unique market positions for the company's products/services as consumers won't buy the product if they see it as similar to other products on the market. When marketing has positioned the products in a way that those differentiate from the competing ones in the minds of consumers, it can give the company a strategic advantage on the target market. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 205.; Kotler and Armstrong 2006, 49-50.; McCabe 2009, 145.)

In event marketing, events can be positioned in various different ways for example based on the existing reputation, price or quality, or the purpose of the event. Regardless the way a product is positioned, it should be kept in mind that if a company positions its product in a certain way, it must also deliver accordingly. When the position has been chosen, it must be effectively delivered and communicated to target consumers. The whole marketing programme should support the positioning strategy. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 206.; Kotler and Armstrong 2006, 49-50.; McCabe 2009, 145.)

Another part in strategic marketing, after segmentation and positioning, includes developing and operationalizing the marketing mix elements. Kotler and Armstrong (2006,50) describe the marketing mix as a set of controllable, tactical marketing tools that the firm blends to produce the response it wants in the target market. The marketing mix consists of activities a company can undertake in order to influence the product demand. As there are numerous possibilities, they can be collected into four groups of variables; the “four Ps”: product, price, place, and promotion. Product means those products and/or services the company offers to its target market, and price is the amount of money customers need to pay for those. Place includes all those activities that make the product or service available to the target market, such as channels, inventory, and logistics. Promotion means the activities that communicate the value of the products to the customers. Promotion includes advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations. (Czinkota and Ronkainen 2010, 20.; Kotler and Armstrong 2006, 50.)

Event ’services marketing’ mix

There are different variations to the original marketing mix and it has also been adapted to meet the marketing purposes of the event and other services. Described below is an adaptation of Getz’s (2005) event marketing mix, presenting nine closely related components of events marketing. Each of these components is considered important in terms of strategy and can be divided into five distinct groups. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 208-209.; Woodruffe 1995, 127.)

The first element in the event ‘services marketing’ mix is the event product experience; the core service. In the same group belongs also event’s programming and packaging. Programming means the variety of components involved in the event and the quality or style of those components. Packaging is the mix of opportunities within the event or marketing of the event with other external attractions, accommodation, and transportation. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 208.)

The first element in the second group is the place; location or several locations where the event is held and its physical setting. The physical setting is concerned with the layout of the venue relative to consumer needs. Another element belonging to the same group is the on-site event processes; the activities during the event. The third group consists of people and partnerships. People are all those individuals who take part in the event, such as cast, audience, hosts, and guests. By partnerships is meant the stakeholders of an event such as possible sponsors and media. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 208.)

The next element is price or other exchange of value to attend the event. The last element in the mix is the integrated marketing communication. Marketing communication is concerned with the media and messages which are used to build relationships with the event markets and audiences. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 209.)

FIGURE 8. Event 'services marketing' mix. Adapted from Bowdin et al. 2011, 208-209.)

2.3.3 Control systems

Control systems monitor and ensure that actions follow the implemented operational plans. These systems enable performance to be constantly compared to objectives.

Control affects every area of the event management and its basic nature remains the same in each of the areas. Control has to stay up-to-date on the event planning and respond to possible problems. Control may mean changing, adjusting, updating of event plans in order to keep the process on the right track. Budgets, meetings, and reports are generally central to the control process. Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris, and McDonnel (2011, 294) state that 'event planning can be effective only if the execution of the plan is carefully controlled'. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 294.)

Beniger (1986) has described control by identifying two complementary activities. The first activity is information processing, which is a necessity for all planning. When an event has its goals, event planning is aiming to achieve those goals, and it allows for continuously comparing the goals against the progress of planning. The other activity is reciprocal communication or feedback. When an area of an event is controlled, there has to be ongoing interchange between the controlled area and its controller. Both of these activities rely on effective communication within the event organization. (Beniger, 1986; Bowdin et al. 2011, 295.)

Generally the control process consists of three main steps: establishing standards of performance, identifying deviations from the standard, and correcting those deviations. These steps are also called the control cycle (Burke, 2003). The cycle is applied repeatedly with varying frequency depending on the scale and complexity of the event. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 295.)

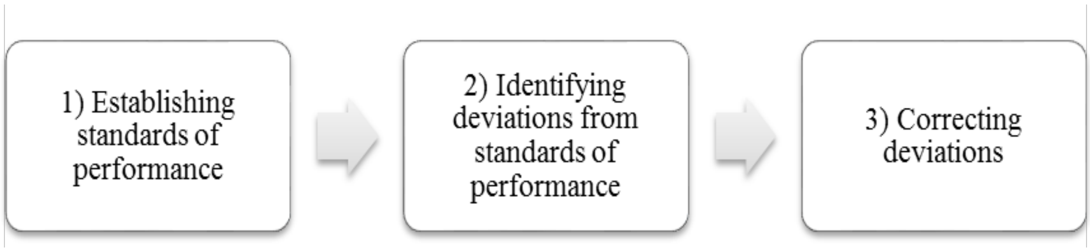


FIGURE 9. The control process. Adapted from Bowdin et al. 2011, 295

Controls can be divided into two different types; operational and organizational. Operational controls are utilized in the everyday running of events, whereas organizational controls relate to the overall objectives of the event organization. In addition, Gullet and Hicks (1976) suggest that controls can be categorized according to their timing; predictive, concurrent, and historic. Predictive control generally attempts to predict and identify possible problems and deviations from plans before those even occur. Concurrent control functions in the present; it identifies problems and deviations as they occur. Historical controls are generally organizational. Those analyze and review already concluded events in order to improve subsequent events. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 295-296.)

In order to keep the planning process, event management must develop appropriate control mechanisms. These mechanisms have several key characteristics. First of all they should be meaningful and efficient, meaning that they should be used only in areas that contribute to the success of an event. These specific areas must be identified in the event plan. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 297.)

Controls should also be simple as they must be communicated to many levels within an event. Controls have to be relevant. They are prepared for specific areas in the event management and then distributed to individuals responsible for carrying them out. It is important that the mechanisms are timely and flexible. Possible problems and deviations must be noted early before they have time to develop further. Controls must respond to changes and adaptations of the event plans until the last moment, which then may require flexibility. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 297.)

The most useful control mechanisms suggest actions to be taken when it is necessary. If any gaps in the plan should occur and those are not addressed with appropriate corrective actions, staff easily becomes confused and management overloaded with unsolved problems. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 298.)

Control methods

Control methods point out deviations from the event plan, which then can be corrected by event management. Some control methods are very simple and straight forward whereas some can be very complex and might require expertise in financial reporting. The most common control methods are probably reports which follow and evaluate the progress of an event. Reports are conducted by teams or individuals who are responsible for certain areas of an event. Reports are then presented at management or committee meetings. The frequency of the meetings depends on the proximity of an event. Normally annual events have monthly meetings throughout the year and increase to weekly meetings when the event gets closer. The purpose of the reports is to assist in decision making in meetings. Reports point out possible gaps in any area of an event, which then can be closed by the individuals responsible for that area. This is also called management by exception as it assumes that everything is running well and that any routine matters are handled by subcommittees. Event coordination interferes only if any significant deviations from the event plan should occur. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 298-299.)

A project status report is a review of the progress of an event. They can also be called as work in progress (WIP) reports, which is a common term used in the event industry. In case of large and complex events, WIP reports often include headings: WBS, funds committed, risked register and variances or exceptions. WBS means areas which are filled according to their progress. Sometimes the commitment of funds is informal, but still affects the amount of funds available. Informal commitment means for example oral contracts. Risk register basically showcases a list of risks and their status on how they are treated. Variances or exceptions are any possible changes to the original event plan. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 299.)

It is impossible for event management to control every area of an event. Event activities can be delegated to specialist groups, for example subcommittees. Each subcommittee is obliged to solve any possible problems before reporting further. Delegation is of great help to event management as delegated groups are responsible for controlling their own areas of specialization, and thus the event manager doesn't have to even try to control everything. Subcommittees restrain their actions to their own area and the job of the event manager is to stay up to date on any problems that should appear across the different subcommittee areas as sometimes solving a problem on one area of an event can result in problems in another area. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 299.)

Quality

Defining and controlling the quality of services is more difficult than the quality assurance of products. There are several characteristics in service industries which make the service quality control less manageable; however it should be treated as important as in manufacturing. The level of quality expected is harder to predict within the service industries. There are several characteristics which have an effect on the service operations, such as the intangible nature of the services, image of the providing organization, and behavior of delivery person(s). According to Ross (1999, 15) the most significant problem with the delivery of services is that it is generally measured at the customer interface. During the delivery of the service there is a definite interaction between the supplier and consumer, and thus if any problems should occur, it is already too late to fix those. (Ross 1999, 15.)

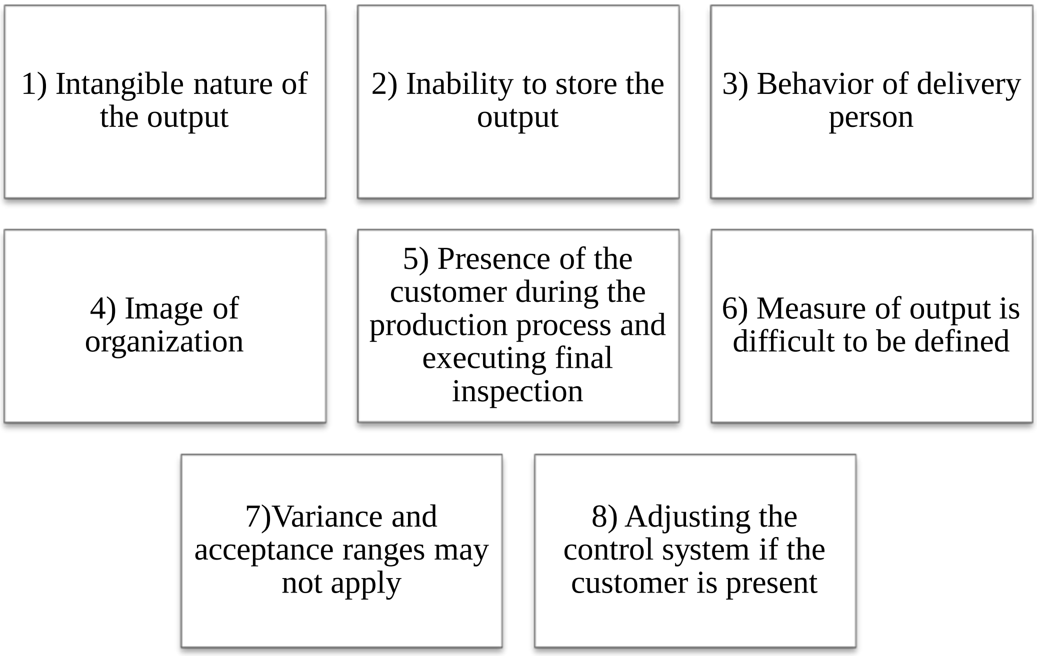


FIGURE 10. Characteristics affecting service operations. Adapted from Ross 1999, 15.

In project management, quality and the level of ambition are closely connected. Resources and time are based on the demands for the end result. Thus the project goal, together with the time and resources available should be considered when establishing the quality standard that a project should follow. (Tonnquist 2008, 156.)

The quality of a particular event and the event organization itself can be controlled with various different systems. The quality control is dependent on customer feedback as well as on the performance of the event personnel in delivering quality service. In total quality management (TQM) the aspects of quality controlling are integrated with the overall strategy of an event. The total quality management aims at continuous improvement in the quality of services within an organization. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 299.)

Management system

Bowdin et al. (301) suggest that the most thorough way of developing control methods is to establish a management system. The project management system is applicable for events. A system resembles blueprints which are used in designing a house. The blueprint shows what is to be done and how in order to all the parts to fit together. It also points out any inconsistencies that might occur. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 301.)

A work breakdown structure (WBS) combined with a schedule and a task list is the blueprint for an event. If there is no such a blueprint, the event management will not be aware of possible gaps in the event plan until they occur or it is otherwise too late. An efficient management system separates the most significant problems in need of instant attention from minor problems. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 301.)

2.4 Evaluation of events

Evaluation of an event concentrates on its impact and level of success. When honestly and critically executed, evaluation is a source for valuable information and a key for further improvement both in individual events and in the whole industry. Event managers should acknowledge the importance of the evaluation stage in terms of the whole event management process. It should also be of a high priority for event managers to distribute the evaluation for stakeholders and other interest groups. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 412-413.; Shone & Parry 2010, 245.)

There are two key evaluation issues; whether or not the event has met its objectives and what could be improved for the next time if there will be one. Sometimes it might be the case that there were activities in the event which went well but could be strengthened further. It might also be the case that there are activities that went so well they don’t need any improvement and thus are best left untouched. Sometimes it might be that certain activities went badly and will need improvement. (Shone & Parry 2010, 246-247.)

Events have both tangible and intangible impacts. The tangible impacts include economic costs and benefits, and they can be measured easily for example with a survey. The intangible impacts can be impacts on the social life and well-being of a community, the sense of pride generated by events, and long-term positioning of a place or tourist destination. It is often more difficult to measure the intangible impacts, but still they should not be forgotten in the evaluation. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 421.)

Basically the event evaluation is concerned with observing, measuring, and monitoring the implementation of an event, in order to assess the outcomes accurately. Based on those, a profile can be formed, which indicates the basic features and important statistics of an event. The profile gives feedback for event stakeholders and it can be used as a tool for further analysis and improvement. Evaluation can be based on a formal or more informal research, from which the latter is common in case of small events. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 413-414.; Shone & Parry 2010, 246.)

To be able to improve the event in the future, it might be necessary to execute some formal or structured research and observation. Problems cannot be identified and prevented from happening again if there isn't enough information on the origin of a particular problem. There is a variety of sources of information, which are shown in the table below. (Shone & Parry 2010, 246.)

TABLE 2. Sources of information for evaluation. Adapted from Shone & Parry 2010, 246.

Visitor observation	• Questionnaires, visitor perceptions
Co-ordinators	• Observations and notes
Sponsors	• Views of publicity, level of awareness
Staff and volunteers	• Views, comments, logbooks
Mystery guests	• Participant observation
Security	• Reports about any incidents, crowds
Specialists & department leaders	• Reactions and notes
Council	• Community views

The event management process benefits from the evaluation process as inputting and analyzing data enables more informed decisions to be made. The event planning becomes more efficient and the event outcomes improve. When the management gains information from an event, it can be incorporated in the planning of repeat events to improve the whole process and its outcomes. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 413-414.; Shone & Parry 2010, 246.)

Evaluation can be useful at a general level too. The lessons learned from the previous experiences of any individual event contribute also to the overall knowledge and effectiveness of the events industry. The event evaluation also helps in spreading and developing innovation in event communications, products, and technologies. This is not only leading to better and constantly improved individual events, but also to an ever-growing knowledgeable events industry. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 413-414.; Shone & Parry 2010, 246.)

2.4.1 Event evaluation process

Evaluation process should be present throughout the event management cycle, but there are three key periods when it especially should be undertaken. Already very early during the research and planning stage, some kind of evaluation usually takes place. This pre-event assessment can be called a feasibility study which determines what level of resources is needed, and also whether or not the event should be organized at all. The feasibility study often might include a market research on target audience reactions towards the event, and also research and predictions on attendance figures, costs, and benefits. At this stage the event can be compared with previous similar events and their outcomes. Based on the study targets might be established against which the success of the event will later be measured. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 414-415.)

Events consist of various variables and event planners should always keep up with the constantly changing situations and environment. During the stages of implementation, an event needs to be monitored in order to adjust any event governing factors if and when necessary. For example, when the event budget is monitored throughout the implementation stages, it may result in cutting of the expenses or on the contrary freeing up money for other expenditures. Monitoring of the event can lead to necessary changes and improve the delivery of the event, thus making the outcome better. It is vital to the quality control, but it also provides information for the final evaluation and also for the future planning of events. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 414-415.)

Post-event evaluation is the most common of evaluations. How an evaluation turns out to be depends very much on the purpose of the event and for which audience it is meant for. Post-event evaluation is mostly gathering statistics and data from the event, which is then interpreted in relation to event objectives. Sometimes the objectives are translated into measures that can be applied to indicate the success of an event. The Important aspect of usually the evaluation is forwarding the results of an event and the evaluation for key participants and stakeholders. The post-event evaluation may also include questionnaires or surveys of the event participants. The purpose of the questionnaires is to examine audience opinions and clarify the level of satisfaction with the event. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 415.)

Questionnaires and surveys vary in their content depending on the purpose and the needs and resources of an event. The simplest questionnaires are often feedback forms targeting event partners and stakeholders, and they can often be designed and distributed within internal resources of the event organization. Surveys are used when the event management wants to receive statistical information on audience profiles and reactions, on visitor patterns, and expenditure. Surveys can be conducted by direct interviews with participants or by written forms. Generally face-to-face interviews generate higher response rates. Regardless of the scale and approach, there are a few important aspects that event management should consider before conducting a survey. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 419-420.)

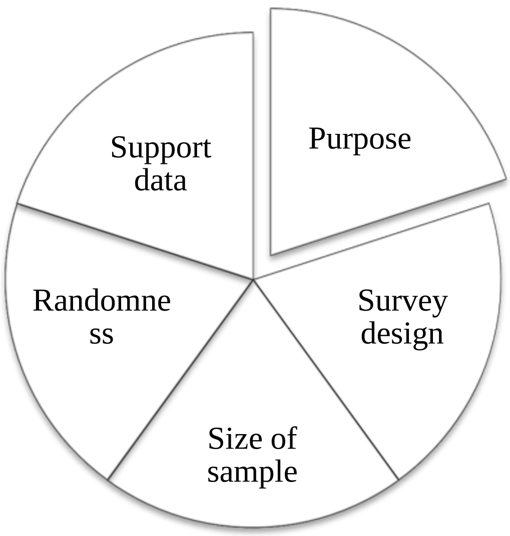


FIGURE 11. Survey characteristics. Adapted from Bowdin et al. 2011, 419-421.

Every survey should have a clearly defined purpose; what is wanted to achieve with conducting it. Surveys with a clear purpose are likely to be well-targeted and thus lead to effective results. The design of a survey should be kept simple and the questions unambiguous. Usually if the design and content are too complicated, the focus will be lost, in which case the effectiveness of the survey also suffers. It is recommendable that the survey questions are tested beforehand. The size of sample, ie the number of respondents should be relative to the whole audience in order to provide representative sample. The selection of the sample should be random, so that the respondents are not chosen based on any bias of age, sex, or ethnicity. When calculating the outcomes for an event, a collection of support data is also sometimes needed. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 420-421.)

2.4.2 Media coverage

Media coverage, depending if it is positive or negative, can make or break an event. Thus it is an important aspect of event management, which needs to be taken into careful consideration. What kind the media coverage will turn out to be, depends on the event outcomes, the impact the event has on the community, and the built-in relationships with the media. The coverage can for example include articles in the newspapers, and radio and television interviews. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 427.)

Recording and monitoring the media coverage is an important part of the documentation of an event, which can be then used in the event evaluation. It can also be utilized in profiling an event for possible future sponsors and partners. However, it should be kept in mind that the coverage is not always positive and it is always wise to analyze the content. Negative attention from media can hurt the reputation of an event and thus has an effect on the stakeholders of an event too. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 427.)

It is possible to estimate a monetary value for the media coverage of an event. Generally it is valued three times the cost of corresponding advertising space. The valuation is based on the assumption that consumers are likely to find the editorial coverage more reliable than advertising itself. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this kind of valuations are only approximate. However it can be beneficial when utilized as a comparative assessment of the media coverage. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 427.)

3 CULTURAL ASPECTS

Moran R, Harris, and Moran S. (2011, 10) define culture as human means of adapting to circumstances and transmitting this coping skill and knowledge to subsequent generations. Culture defines individuals, influence on their behavior, and also give them a sense of belonging. Within working places, culture has an influence on behavior, morale, and productivity. It also includes values and patterns that have affect the attitudes and actions of an entire organization. It is possible for cultures to change, but it is generally very slow. (Moran et al. 2011, 10.)

3.1 Hofstede dimensions of national culture

Professor Geert Hofstede conducted a study of how values in the workplace are influenced by culture based on a large data base of employee value scores collected by multinational corporation IBM between 1967 and 1973. The data base covered altogether more than 70 countries from which the first 40 largest countries were used, but later on the analysis extended to 50 countries and three regions. Based on the findings the countries could be distinguished from each other by values which then became the Hofstede dimensions of national culture. First there were four dimensions: Power distance, Individualism versus collectivism, Masculinity versus femininity, and Uncertainty avoidance. Each country was scored using a scale of 0 to 100 for each dimension; the higher the score the more that dimension is present in society. Later on a fifth dimension called Long-term orientation was also added to the theory. Even later on in 2010 another sixth dimension: Indulgence versus restraint was presented. (http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html [Referred 14.11.2013].)

The first dimension power distance (PDI) showcases the distribution of power and the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. The power distance is based on the fact that all individuals in a society are not equal and how a society deals with inequalities among people. If the power distance is at high level, a hierarchical order is accepted in the society; everyone has their place and no further justification is needed. Low power distance societies strive to equality in the distribution of power, and in the case of inequalities there must be justification for it. (http://geert-hofstede.com/dimensions.html [Referred 14.11.2013].)

Individualism (IDV) is the high side of this dimension, whereas the low score means collectivism. Individualism in societies means preference for loose-knit communities, where individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate family only. On the contrary collectivistic societies prefer a tightly-knit community, where individuals expect their relatives or other members of a certain in-group to look after them in exchange for unquestioned loyalty. In individualistic societies people's self-image is defined as "I", whereas in collectivistic societies the self-image is defined as "we". (http://geert-hofstede.com/dimensions.html[Referred 14.11.2013].)

The foundation for the dimension masculinity versus femininity (MAS) is what motivates members of a society. Masculine societies have a preference for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success. In masculine societies success is defined by winning and being the best. These societies embrace this kind of value system early at school and it continues throughout organizational behavior. The masculine societies are generally more competitive than feminine societies. Feminine societies strive for cooperation, modesty, caring for others and quality of life. Success in a feminine society arises from the quality of life and instead of being competitive, feminine societies tend to have focus on common understanding and standing from a crowd is not seen as admirable. (http://geert-hofstede.com/dimensions.html [Referred 14.11.2013].)

The uncertainty avoidance (UAI) expresses a society's level of convenience with uncertainty and ambiguity. This dimension is based on how a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known; are people striving to somehow control the future rather than just letting it happen? Societies which score high on uncertainty avoidance maintain strict codes of belief and behavior, thus these societies have zero tolerance for abnormal behavior and ideas. The societies with low uncertainty avoidance score value practice over principles. (http://geert-hofstede.com/dimensions.html [Referred 14.11.2013].)

A fifth dimension called long-term orientation versus short-term orientation (LTO) was added in 1991 based on the research by Michael Bond. This dimension explores societies' search for virtue. Short-term oriented societies generally are concerned with establishing the absolute truth and the members of these societies are normative in their thinking. They respect traditions and focus on achieving quick results, and their tendency to save for the future is relatively low. Long-term oriented societies are quite the opposite; people believe that truth depends on a situation, context, and time. Traditions are adapted due to the changing environment, tendency to save and invest is stronger, and results are achieved with great perseverance. (http://geert-hofstede.com/dimensions.html [Referred 14.11.2013].)

In 2010 a sixth dimension 'indulgence versus restraint' was presented, which is based on Michael Minkov's analysis of the World Values Survey data for 93 countries. Indulgence stands for societies that allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives which are related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint stands for societies that discourage gratification of needs and also regulate it with strict social norms. (http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html [Referred 14.11.2013].)

An important point in Hofstede's dimensions of a national culture is that culture only exists by comparison. The country scores on the dimensions are relative; societies are compared with each other. Without making the comparison between the different societies, the score is meaningless. The country scores have been proved to be quite stable over decades. Generally shifts in culture are global or continent-wide, meaning that cultures in many countries shift at the same time together, and thus their relative positions remain the same. (http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html [Referred 14.11.2013].)

Finland

Finland scores low on the power distance with only 33 points. The Finnish society can be characterized as being independent and hierarchies are only for convenience if exist at all; equal rights are very much valued. Within organizations power is decentralized and control is very much disliked. Managers trust on the capabilities and experience of their team members and employees expect to be consulted. Power distance being low, superiors are accessible, leaders coach the staff, and management facilitates and empowers the subordinates. Attitude towards managers and those in higher positions is informal and generally on a first name basis. Communication is direct and participative. (http://geert-hofstede.com/finland.html [Referred 15.11.2013].)

Finland scores 63 in the second dimension and it is an individualistic society. The members of society prefer loose-knit social framework and individuals are expected to take care of themselves. Within organizations contracts are based on mutual advantage, and hiring and any promotion decisions should be based only on individuals' merits. Management is the management of individuals rather than of groups or teams. (http://geert-hofstede.com/finland.html [Referred 15.11.2013].)

Finland scores quite low, 26, on the dimension of masculinity versus femininity, which makes it a feminine society. People live their lives with their focus on "working in order to live". Management is based on common understanding and supporting employees. Any conflicts should be resolved with compromising and negotiation. As people preferably choose their well-being over statuses, they value equality, solidarity, and quality in working lives. (http://geert-hofstede.com/finland.html [Referred 15.11.2013].)

Finland, with a score of 59 has a medium high preference for avoiding uncertainty. Uncertainty makes people feel uncomfortable and thus there is an emotional need for established rules whether those work or not. Security motivates individuals and it brings certainty to people's lives. Generally time is money, and people have an inner urge to work hard and keep themselves busy. Thus also precision and punctuality are highly valued. (http://geert-hofstede.com/finland.html [Referred 15.11.2013].)

Finland is a short term orientation culture with a score of 41. In short-term oriented societies people respect traditions and strive to establish the normative. It is common that in these societies people generally haven't got the tendency to save for the future and are impatient for achieving results as quickly as possible. It is typical for western societies to be at the short-term end of this dimension, and the same applies to the countries in the Middle East. (http://geert-hofstede.com/finland.html [Referred 15.11.2013].)

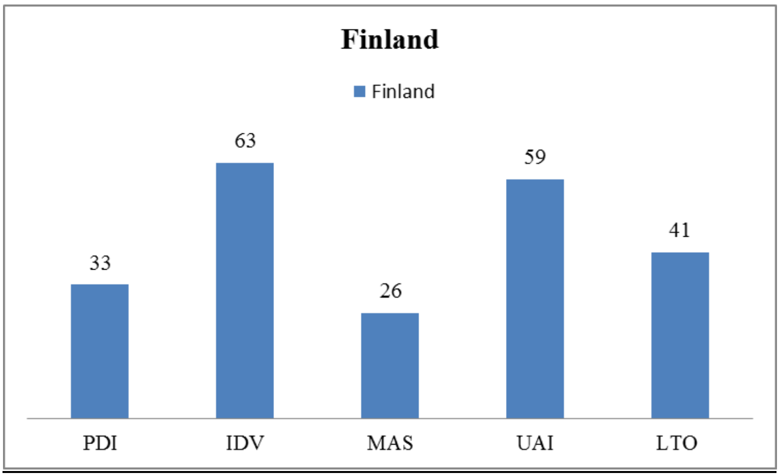


FIGURE 12. Finland. Adapted from http://geert-hofstede.com/finland.html [Referred 15.11.2013].

Denmark

Finland and Denmark both are Nordic countries and thus national cultures of these two countries resemble each other. However, they should not be confused as being exactly the same. Denmark scores very low, only 18 points on the power distance. The Danes are not leaders by nature, instead they coach, and it is very important to have employee autonomy. As in Finland, the Danish society believes in equality and independency. Managers are accessible and trust in their employees' experience. Management facilitates and empowers. Atmosphere within workplaces is informal, and communication is preferably direct and involving. (http://geert-hofstede.com/denmark.html [Referred 15.11.2013].)

On the second dimension, Denmark scores 74 points, which makes it an individualistic society. The members of a society are expected to take care only of themselves and their immediate family. This applies also to the business world, as creating relationships is not in a key role when starting to do business. As mentioned earlier the Danes prefer a very direct form of communication and small talk is kept at a minimum. (http://geert-hofstede.com/denmark.html [Referred 15.11.2013].)

Denmark again scores low, with only 16 points on the masculinity versus femininity, and therefore is a feminine society. The balance between life and work is important, as is it important that all are included. The Danes have a very egalitarian mindset, as equality alongside with solidarity and quality in the working life are very much valued. Considering the importance of balance between life and work, free time as well as flexible work hours and place are appreciated. An effective manager is considered to be supportive of the staff and involving others in the decision making processes. Managers are willing to work hard to achieve consensus, and if any conflicts should occur, those are resolved by compromising and negotiation. (http://geert-hofstede.com/denmark.html [Referred 15.11.2013].)

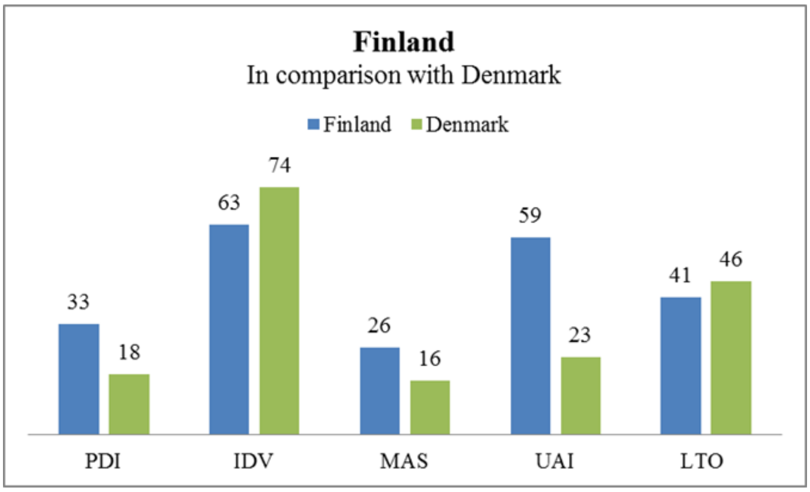


FIGURE 13. Finland in comparison with Denmark. Adapted from http://geert-hofstede.com/finland.html [Referred 15.11.2013].

Unlike Finland, Denmark scores low on the uncertainty avoidance with 23 points, meaning that the Danes are quite at ease with uncertainty in their working life. They do not need lots of structure and predictability, therefore it is convenient that plans change and new things emerge. Curiosity is natural and encouraged, and innovation is highly valued. Creative industries flourish in Denmark. What comes to long-term orientation, Denmark scores 46 points, which makes it a short-term orientation culture, same as Finland and typically other western societies too. However, with 46 points it is very close to the middle. As the Danes are short-term oriented, business life is focused on the present instead of what might happen in ten years. As the focus is on the current, rationality and analytical thinking are in a key role. (http://geert-hofstede.com/denmark.html [Referred 15.11.2013].)

Russia

With a score of 93 points, Russia is one of the most power distant societies in the world. Russia is very centralized country, and there is a great discrepancy between the less and the more powerful people, therefore status symbols are very important. In business life it is very important that behavior reflects and represents the status roles. The approach in business is always top-down and appropriate authorization for any task is a must. (http://geert-hofstede.com/russia.html [Referred 15.11.2013].)

Unlike Finland and Denmark, Russia scores low on individualism, and with 39 points it is considered as a collectivistic country. The Russians need other people in getting along with their everyday life as well as in the business life too. Family, relatives, friends and even neighbors are considered very important. In the business life, personal, genuine, and trustful relationships are a crucial source for obtaining information, getting introduced or succeeding in negotiations. Communication style is quite indirect. (http://geert-hofstede.com/russia.html [Referred 15.11.2013].)

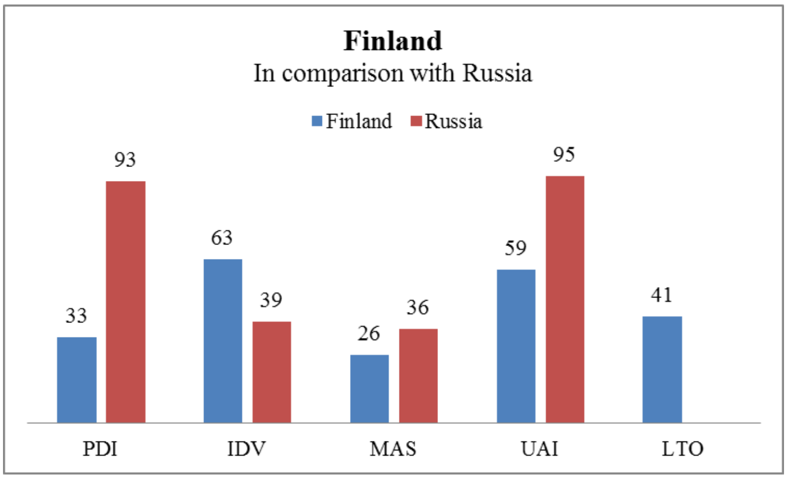


FIGURE 14. Finland in comparison with Russia. Adapted from http://geert-hofstede.com/finland.html [Referred 15.11.2013].

Even though status symbols are considered very important in Russia, it scores rather low, with only 36 points on the masculinity versus femininity dimension, making it a feminine culture. Status symbols are related to the high power distance, and dominant behavior is accepted only from leaders/managers, but not appreciated among peers. Generally in both their everyday and business life, the Russians understate their personal achievements and talk modestly about themselves. (http://geert-hofstede.com/russia.html [Referred 15.11.2013].)

Russia is a society with a high score of 95 on the uncertainty avoidance. People feel very uncomfortable in ambiguous, uncertain situations, which might explain the extremely complex bureaucracy of the country. In business meetings presentations are not prepared at all when the focus is on the relationship building or then they are very well prepared and detailed. In addition detailed planning and briefing is common as is the preference for having context and background information. When meeting with strangers, the Russians tend to be very formal and distant which is a sign of respect. (http://geert-hofstede.com/russia.html [Referred 15.11.2013].)

Comparison between Russia and Denmark

The cultures of Russia and Denmark differ quite a lot in terms of each national dimension. The biggest difference is the power distance where Denmark scores very low and Russia scores very high. This indicates that the Danish society puts high value on equality amongst people, whereas the Russian society values hierarchy where status symbols are important. (http://geert-hofstede.com/russia.html [Referred 15.11.2013].)

Comparison between individualism and collectivism within these two cultures resembles the comparison of Finland and Russia. Denmark and Finland are both individualistic cultures as opposed to Russia which is a collectivistic culture. Rather unexpectedly all of these three cultures are on the feminine side of the masculinity versus femininity dimension. These similar scores indicate that all these three societies value the quality of life over the competition of the highest achievement. (http://geert-hofstede.com/russia.html [Referred 15.11.2013].)

In addition to the power distance, another great difference between the Danish and Russian societies is in the uncertainty avoidance. Denmark scores low on this dimension, which indicates that people within the society are embracing change and innovation. What comes to Russian society, the results indicate the opposite; people tend to be rather conservative, and they need rules and regulations to feel comfortable in their lives. The last dimension, long-term orientation, cannot be compared between Russia and Denmark as there are no scores available of Russia. (http://geert-hofstede.com/russia.html [Referred 15.11.2013].)

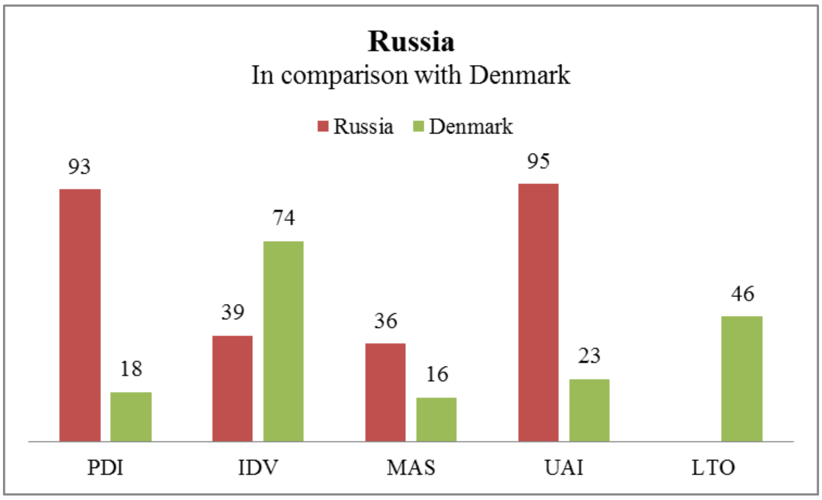


FIGURE 15. Russia in comparison with Denmark. Adapted from http://geert-hofstede.com/russia.html [Referred 15.11.2013].

3.2 Cultural synergy

According to Moran, Harris, and Moran (2011, 233) synergy is a cooperative or combined action, and occurs when diverse or disparate individuals or groups collaborate for the common cause. Shared perceptions and experiences, insights and knowledge can at their best lead to increased effectiveness. Synergy begins with colleagues, then extends to organizations, and ultimately involves even countries. The variety and differences of the people and societies in the world can lead to a mutual growth and accomplishment, which couldn't be achieved without the contribution of each party. Synergistic actions, such as sharing of distinct perceptions and cultural backgrounds, can be used for improving and strengthening problem solving and decision making processes. (Moran et al. 2011, 233-234.)

Some cultures are more synergistic and cooperative than other cultures, which on the contrary are more individualistic and competitive. Within high-synergy societies, mutual advantage and common good are very important and emphasized, thus a win-win situation is considered ideal. The society strives to use community resources for the commonwealth and power is used for the benefit of all members in the society. The high-synergy society is an open system of secure people, who are generally considered to be kind, gracious, helpful, friendly, and generous. Any existing belief system, religion, or philosophy is comforting and life in overall is consoling. These societies generally have low rates of crime and mental illness. (Moran et al. 2011, 234-235.)

Low-synergy societies are by nature uncooperative, individualistic, and very competitive. The society does not encourage collaborative actions and social arrangements are self-centered. People within these societies tend to be aggressive and hostile towards one another, which can often lead to either psychological or physical violence. Power is used for personal profit and overall individual benefit is emphasized, while poverty can be totally ignored. Power elites are common and accepted, as well as the exploitation of poor and minorities. The low-synergy societies are closed systems with insecure people, who tend to be suspicious, ruthless, and jealous. Unlike in the high-synergy societies, the rates of crime and mental illness are high. (Moran et al. 2011, 234-235.)

Highly synergistic cultures are often also highly monocultural. It is easier for people living in monocultural societies to find a common understanding with each other, as one group makes up the majority of all the people within the system. In some countries it might be the case that there are multiple different groups, with different and even conflicting beliefs, values, religions, and cultures, living in proximity with each other. (Moran et al. 2011, 234-235.)

Cross-cultural conflicts

Conflicts cannot be avoided in human interaction and communication whether it is due to cross-cultural conflicts or not. Thus conflicts must be learnt to be resolved. It is very important for managers to learn how to resolve any conflicts efficiently and keep them from spreading to other parts of an organization. Unresolved conflicts can have severe negative influence, which extends far beyond the conflicting parties, to the whole organization. When ignored, conflicts may decrease productivity and weaken morale. By studying organizational conflict, it is possible to learn how to get along better with others. Within a working place, supervisors can learn how to predict a beginning of a conflict and how to utilize a productive response to conflicts. Supervisors can also learn how to help their employees to resolve conflicts when they occur. (Moran et al. 2011, 235-236.; Schneider & Barsoux 1997, 9.)

When it is a matter of a cross-cultural conflict, it can be difficult to predict individuals' behavior towards it. However, there are certain guidelines which explain a likely behavior from a dualistic point of view, where cultural traits can be separated to be more individualistic or more collectivistic by nature. (Moran et al. 2011, 235-236.)

TABLE 3. Comparison between individualistic and collectivistic cultures in terms of behavior towards conflicts. Adapted from Moran et al. 2011, 235-236.

Individualistic cultures	Collectivistic cultures
• Emphasis on analytic, linear logic.	• Emphasis on holistic logic and group-oriented, collective normative expectations.
• Separation is made between the conflict and involved parties.	• Integration of the conflict and conflicting parties.
• People tend to be direct and confrontational.	• People tend to be indirect, non-confrontational, and passively aggressive.
• Dealing with conflicts: ➢ Solution and action orientation ➢ Open and direct communication ➢ Linear logic with the use of rational and factual rhetoric	• Dealing with conflicts: ➢ Priority is in saving face and one's relations ➢ Intuitive, affective, ambiguous, and indirect rhetoric strategies. ➢ Point-logic styles of communication.

4 REALIZATION OF THE BRIDGING –SEMINAR

This chapter outlines the description of the event and introduces the co-operatives vital for the seminar implementation. The chapter focuses on the important background factors for enabling the execution of the seminar and describes the process of planning, keeping inside identification of the event, and the reasons behind the realization. The implementation of the seminar “Bridging entrepreneurship education between Russia and Nordic countries” is described closely in the chapter. The chapter goes through the whole process of planning, organizing and implementing the event.

4.1 Description of the seminar

The overall purpose was to organize a successful international event. The size of the event was determined at the beginning stage of the start-up process, as it acted as the platform of planning the frame. We decided to arrange a small-scale seminar in the autumn 2013. The idea was to bring students as part of the target audience of the seminar participants. The students would be invited as guests in to the seminar with the other participants, professors and professionals.

The objectives included organizational and cultural factors. The partner organizations would be acting as a major part in the event. The idea was to focus on certain aspects such as entrepreneurial, innovative and cultural ones. The marketing of the event would be targeted towards certain partner universities of Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. The purpose of the seminar was to strengthen networking between the partner universities and pilot a 24-hour workshop for the students in the event.

The event was organized to increase cooperation between the partner universities and the focus of the event was determined in certain aspects: entrepreneurship education and innovation. These factors acted as the platform as we started to form the big picture of how the event would be built and what kind of activities would be included. The innovation aspect and entrepreneurial attitude led to an idea of executing a separate programme for the students and arranging a 24-hour Challenge for student participants (see Junior Achievement Finland, page 52).

Commissioner

The organization that commissioned our thesis work is Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. The specific commissioner is the Business Department of the University of Applied Sciences. Marja-Liisa Kakkonen, the Head of the Department of Business Management was our client. With our client, we had meetings on a regular basis from January 2013 to August 2013, as we processed, planned and organized the seminar.

Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences serves the area of Eastern Finland with two campuses in the cities of Mikkeli and Savonlinna; the main campus in Mikkeli and Savonniemi campus in Savonlinna. Mikkeli UAS is a modern higher education institution, offering high quality education and a variety of different study fields. There are degree programmes available at both bachelor's and master's levels. Altogether there are 18 degree programmes to choose from, three of which are in English.

There are over 700 new students starting in studies leading to a degree every year, and the total amount of students is about 4500. The fields of study are the following: humanities and education, natural sciences, natural resources and the environment, tourism, catering and domestic services, social services, health and sports, technology, communication and transport, social sciences, business and administration. The staff in Mikkeli UAS is highly educated. There are approximately 400 staff members, of which 200 are full-time lecturers. About 40 of the lecturers hold a doctoral or licentiate degree. (http://www.mamk.fi/muas [Referred 24.10.2013].)

According to the strategy of Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences (2013), the purpose of international activities is to increase the multicultural know-how of all the members –employees and students of the institution. The possibility of developing international know-how increases the attractiveness of the institution. The cooperation with Russia is a key element in deepening the internationalization process. The cooperation with the country includes the fields of training, project activities and exporting of services.
(http://www.mamk.fi/instancedata/prime_product_julkaisu/mamk/embeds/mamkwwwstructure/20831_Mamk_2017_strategia_low.pdf [Referred 2.11.2013].)

Innovative Entrepreneurship in Nordic-Russian Context

The information of the project bases on interviewing our commissioner, Marja-Liisa Kakkonen. The project Innovative Entrepreneurship in Nordic-Russian Context is part of the Nordic-Russian Cooperation Programme in Education and Research. The project started in June 2013 and will end in June 2015. The event that we planned is a part of the project. The event was the first of six planned activities in the project. Innovative entrepreneurship in Nordic-Russian context -project is carried out by Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences and the partner universities from Russia and Denmark (figure 16). The seminar as a part of the project had the same purpose and goal as the project has; networking and cooperating between the partners. All of the partner institutions of the project would be participating in the organized event. In addition part of the funding for the seminar came from the project.

The purpose of the project is to strengthen networking between the partner universities. Strengthening co-operation between the higher education institutes and with their industry partners in Russia and the Nordic countries is also mentioned as an objective of the project. The specific objectives of the project are promoting students` skills to reflect innovations and enhance entrepreneurial mindset, training students´ understanding of value creation for customers/markets, and increasing the entrepreneurial teaching competences of the teachers. The specific objectives will be achieved by training them through innovation pedagogy and creating the entrepreneurial, innovative, and interdisciplinary module.

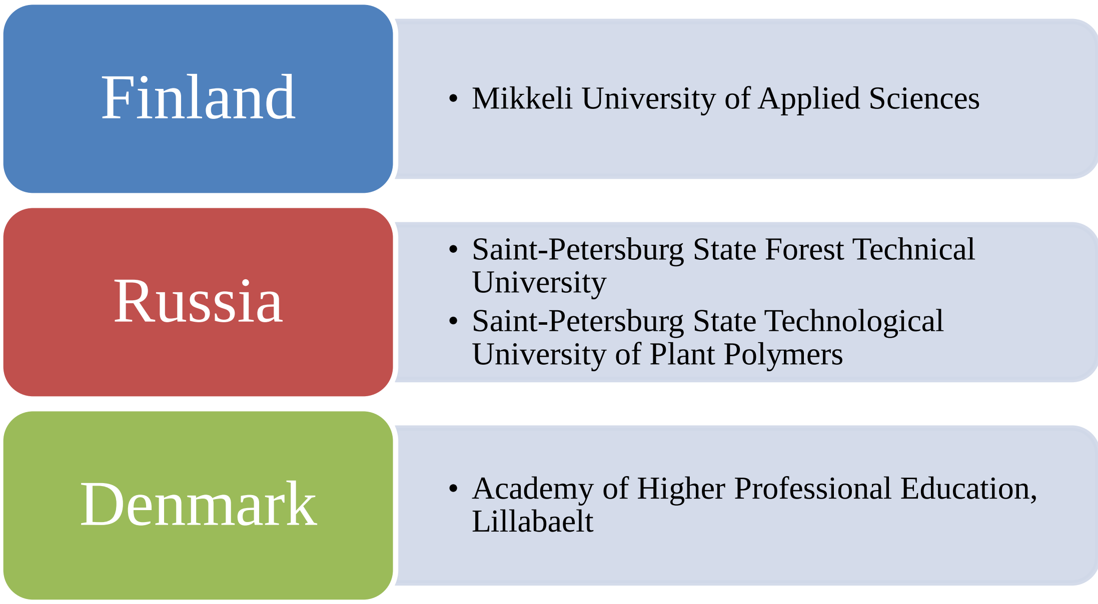


FIGURE 16. Partners in project Innovative entrepreneurship in Nordic-Russian context.

Junior Achievement Finland

The platform of Junior Achievement Finland was used and utilized in the event as the plan was to execute the programme for the students. The information bases on the web-pages of Junior Achievement Finland. Junior Achievement Finland educates students on topics related to workforce readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy through experiential, hands-on programmes. These programmes aim at helping young people to be ready for the real world by offering educational methods to generate innovation and inspiration, and methods to apply entrepreneurial thinking. Junior Achievement Finland offers education in multiple programmes. One of the programmes is the JA Challenge:

"JA Challenge is a one-day innovation programme for businesses and college level education institutions. It is organized in collaboration with JA-YE Finland, a business partner and a college level institution. The programme begins with the business partner issuing a challenge to students. This challenge has to do with some aspect of running a business, for example marketing, new product ideas, product development, customer service or business models. During the day students will create their own solution to the given challenge in groups and present it to the jury who then chooses and rewards the best solution. The goal of JA Challenge is to harness students' skills already during their studies and provide an interaction link between schools and businesses." (http://finland.ja-ye.eu/pls/apex31mb/f?p=17000:1002:7727901765275580:::1002:P1002_HID_ID,P1016_HID_INSTITUTION_ID:11204,6 [Referred 22.10.2013].)

JA Challenge refers to the 24-hour Challenge that was implemented to the students as a part of the event. The Challenge is an event that is carried out in cooperation with companies. During the event, the representative company gives the students a challenge. The Challenge is something that the company can take benefit from and use in developing their business. The event lasts for one day, 24 hours. The day keeps inside getting familiar with the company, mentoring during the Challenge, and judging the results of the Challenge work. (www.finland.ja-ye.eu/ [Referred 22.10.2013].)

The national office of Junior Achievement Finland organizes these types of challenges in cooperation with organizations and companies. The language of the programme is Finnish or English. JA Challenge is a 24-hour innovation camp that proceeds in an entrepreneurial way. The theme is given by the commissioning company or can be free-choice in some cases. Junior Achievement Finland offers the implementers of their programmes all the tools, guidebooks and needed materials that can be used and exploited during the challenges. (www.finland.ja-ye.eu/ [Referred 22.10.2013].)

Living Labs -training

Living Lab training is a part of the seminar programme and partly used as a method in the 24 hour Challenge. Living Lab refers to User-Driven Service Development. Heikkanen & Österberg (2012, 11-15) divide the core elements of the activity as user driven approach, open innovation, ecosystem, and a real-life setting. Living Lab roles are divided into providers, users, beneficiaries, and developers. The Living Lab method enables multi-disciplinary activities. The method offers an open environment enabling innovation implementation. The User-Driven Service Development is a useful tool for all the participants in the activity as it is a meeting point of different skills, and the participants develop their own skills also by learning from others. The Living Lab method is a good way for students to gain valuable real-life experience. Heikkanen & Österberg (2012, 11-15.)

The purpose of the activity is to gain more competitive products and services, creating value and satisfaction to clients. Companies are able to develop their products and services, and also to continue to apply the method independently in the future as they have become familiar with the activity and how to apply it. For educational institutes the method enables producing experts who have the skills to apply the method. In addition, the inhabitants and residents of areas benefit from the development of products and services. (Heikkanen & Österberg 2012, 13-15.)

The Living Lab method is a way to answer to the defined goals of universities of applied sciences. Considering the advantages, Heikkanen and Österberg (2012, 17) point out that the activity enables close cooperation and networking with companies and operators in the society. This enforces the possibility to develop the activities and cooperation between operators in universities of applied sciences. (Heikkanen & Österberg 2012, 17.)

4.2 The planning process

The start-up for the seminar planning process was in the spring 2013. In the beginning of the planning stage, we had regular meetings with our commissioner and contemplated the content that the seminar would be built upon. The process of creating a frame for the seminar started by defining the purpose for the event: to whom it is targeted and how it would be executed in a suitable way. The aim was to execute a successful event, and measure the successfulness with questionnaires and research done during the seminar. Observation was also determined as one of the research methods.

In the early stage of the planning process, we determined the frame the seminar would be built upon. The event was about to be implemented to increase cooperation and activities between the earlier mentioned partner universities. Through our meetings and discussions, networking and cooperation became the actual body for the seminar. The idea was to arrange a seminar that also stresses out entrepreneurial and cultural aspects. Innovativeness was another aspect that was included in the event frame, and therefore the workshop for the students was decided to be executed.

It was realized that the name of the seminar should depict the content clearly. The seminar was planned as a part of the earlier mentioned project Innovative Entrepreneurship in Nordic-Russian Context (see page 50) so the name should reflect the background factors and purpose of the seminar. After pondering the right name for the event, the name formed to became: “Bridging entrepreneurship education between Russia and Nordic countries”. The name described precisely the purpose of the seminar, and gave a ground to build the programme based on the networking theme, among the other included factors.

The seminar was decided to take place in August 2013. In this case, the timing and the size of the seminar walked hand in hand. The timing was challenging because of the holiday season. We estimated the amount of participants to be approximately 50 persons. The targeted guests were the professors, professionals and students of the institutions from Denmark, Russia and Finland.

After the name, frame and timing for the seminar were determined the process of creating the first marketing materials began. The logo was designed in cooperation with the marketing department of Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. The logo was based on an idea that it demonstrates and reflects the name of the seminar. We wanted to emphasize the elements “bridge” and “networking” between the countries in the logo. (Appendix 1.)

At the beginning of the planning process we assessed the labor-intensiveness of the seminar. It had to be ensured that there would be enough staff members to take care of all the necessary actions during the seminar. The process of planning the seminar would be hard work for us as we were working and studying partly at the same time, but we were determined to take full responsibility of the activities in planning, organizing and executing the event successfully. We estimated that there is no need for "extra hands" during the seminar, as we were on the scene constantly, and if not, the commissioner Marja-Liisa Kakkonen would be present and in charge of the activities.

As some of the factors that would be included in the seminar had already been determined and the base of the topics the seminar would concentrate on defined, it was time to choose the right strategy to achieve the desired goals. We had to internalize the fact that planning is a continuous process, which meant fully focusing on the details included in the planning. Being able to manage changes and act on them had to be internalized as changes occur on a constant basis in the planning stage, and a responsibility has to be taken.

The process started by establishing an overview of the seminar. The seminar had to be built in a way that the implementation corresponds to the purpose. Factors such as appropriateness and suitability had to be kept in mind when putting the frame of the seminar together. The seminar plan had to be the kind that it could be implemented in practice. The content also had to be built up keeping in mind the fact that it would attract the targeted group of participants' interest.

4.2.1 Marketing and media

To begin marketing the event, we started to plan the seminar invitation letter (appendix 2) after identifying the key subjects the event would be built upon. The aim was to attract attention, so we put a lot of focus in the planning of the content and design to create interest. After determining the structure of the content and outlook of the letter with our commissioner, we started to plan a frame for the letter.

The invitation letter consisted of a welcome part and the preliminary programme was announced in it. The letter included important dates for the registration and paper submissions as a publication was made based on the seminar subject. As we had determined the participation fees, they were included in the invitation letter, and we ended up setting an early registration benefit for the participants who signed up in the spring. The students were able to register free of charge in the case they registered early. The reason behind this was to get early registrations and to get a clear picture of the amount of participants at an early stage to ease the process of planning the seminar.

Other important details, the registration link and the e-mail address for the seminar were announced in the invitation letter. The registration form was created with the Webropol-programme. The seminar letter included information of the seminar host, Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. We added a link to the web-pages of the host and other useful links were also published in the invitation – links to hotels' webpages, and other links to get acquainted with the city of Mikkeli.

Another aspect in the practical issues was to determine the pricing for the seminar. As we had already targeted the participants as professors, experts and students, we were able to assess the pricing in the most suitable way. To prompt participants, the pricing of the seminar was planned in a way that by registering early, one would get discounts and students would be free of charge with the professors. The "early bird" discount aimed at getting people to register in time to enable us estimate the amount of participants as it would affect what would be arranged for the seminar.

The invitation letter was sent directly to the partner institutions of the project Innovative Entrepreneurship in Nordic-Russian Context. We also designed a marketing spot for the event in the web-pages of Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. The webpage included information of the seminar, the link to the registration, and a preliminary programme. The webpage was monitored and edited as the programme of the seminar was updated.

Press call

Before the event, we made a press call aiming to attract the media attention. The press call was organized via the marketing department of Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. The publicist sent the invitation to media connections in the Mikkeli area.

The press call aimed at informing the press about our piloting of the 24h Challenge as a part of the seminar. (Appendix 3.)

The press call gave information of the event as a whole. The 24h Challenge was introduced as a workshop that develops innovativeness and problem solving skills by using new learning methods. The press was welcomed to both, the seminar in Mikkeli and the 24h Challenge in Haukivuori. Ikihyvä Ltd, the company that the students were going to spend 24 hours in, was mentioned and information of where the company is located was given to the press. The press call also mentioned the countries where the guests were coming from.

As the event was a part of the project Innovative Entrepreneurship in Nordic-Russian Context, the project was mentioned in the press call. The press call was viable for us, as we were able to attract the local media in Haukivuori and the teachers were interviewed for a local radio station.

Publication

Before the seminar, the Russian partners in the project Innovative Entrepreneurship in Nordic-Russian Context planned to execute a publication (appendix 4) with the organizing partner Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. In the earlier mentioned invitation letter, it was announced that the best papers would be selected and published after the seminar. The papers were planned to be presented during the seminar.

The first part of the publication concentrated on education. It dealt with cultural differences and co-operation between Russia and Finland. There was also a release of user-driven innovation process. The second part concentrated on projects. The part included releases of intensive weeks as a way of internationalization, development of entrepreneurship, implementation of entrepreneurial marketing, and lessons learned joint project planning. The publication is peer-reviewed and was written by eight persons from Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences and partners from Russia. The publication is available as a hard copy and as an electronic version.

4.2.2 Seminar programme

The planning of the programme was a process that lasted approximately for half a year. The planning started at the early stage of the process, and the programme was constructed step by step as the event became closer. We had regular meetings with our commissioner, and through our discussions a preliminary programme was created, and based on that, the marketing process began. As mentioned earlier, the preliminary programme was set up on the webpages of Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences.

The purpose of the evening programme in the seminar was to offer new memorable experiences for the participants. Arranging the evening programme gives a good balance and acts as a counterweight in an event. Planning programme for evenings offers the possibility to get acquainted with the other participants and network with people in a relaxed way. It is also a good way to arrange cultural experiences and enable the guests to enjoy the nature in Finland as enjoying the beautiful nature has a big role in the Finnish society.

The planning for the evening programme consisted of pondering multiple different ideas with our commissioner. We contacted several restaurants and places in the Mikkeli area, asking for offers, and finally choosing the ones that suited our purpose. The evening programme consisted of a cruise in the lake Saimaa with m/s Jaarli, including a trip to 4000 years old Astuvansalmi rock paintings and a dinner at Kallioniemi, in Ristiina. We also included a dinner in a local restaurant Sali & Keittiö. For the last day of the seminar, we planned a Russian menu in the restaurant Pruuvi for the professors as the students were given free time to shop and get acquainted with the city.

We started to plan the frame for the seminar programme more accurately as the group of the participants became clearer. As we were aware of the aspects the programme would be based on, our commissioner proposed ideas of good speakers for the seminar. The frame for the seminar programme was built upon the name “Bridging entrepreneurship education between Russia and Nordic countries”. The subjects discussed were determined in the beginning of the planning process, so the main focus was on entrepreneurial, cultural, international, and innovative factors. It was decided that the seminar would be hosted by our commissioner; Marja-Liisa Kakkonen.

Speakers

The seminar programme needed expedient speakers, and specific persons were chosen and asked to speak in the seminar. As the subjects for discussion had been identified, the speakers had to be professionals in the specific fields. The chosen speakers for the seminar are introduced in the following paragraphs.

Hilde Hoefnagel is an international coordinator from Artesis Plantijn University College, Antwerp, Belgium. She comes from the department of Education Management. Meg Sønderlund is a senior lecturer from DK-Academy of Higher Professional Education, Lillebaelt. Both of the ladies have knowledge and interesting perspectives towards cultural factors, and would be giving a session on cultural factors together.

Ville Majanen is the Managing Director of Digi Electronics Ltd, e-ville.com. Mr. Majanen is an entrepreneur and a former student of Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. He lives and operates his business in Hong Kong, China. Mr. Majanen has succeeded as an entrepreneur in international business. Mr. Majanen brings an interesting aspect to the seminar with sharing his personal story in becoming an international successful entrepreneur.

Matti Koiranen's title is Professor Emeritus. He comes from Jyväskylä University School of Business and Economics. He is an expert in the field of entrepreneurship and brings much expertise and know-how to the seminar. Mr. Majanen and Mr. Koiranen were also to arrange a panel discussion of entrepreneurship which would enable deeper discussion on the topic and include the audience to participate in the conversation.

Kimmo Rönkä is the Managing Director from Movense Ltd. Mr. Rönkä is an expert in the field of Living Labs - User-Driven Service Development. The seminar is a good place to introduce the guests to the Living Lab method which is a useful, innovative tool in developing services and products. The method is also useful in educational aspect in educational institutes as it can be exploited in teaching.

4.2.3 Financial planning and risk management

Control and risk management have to be included when planning events. In events, anything can happen and there is always some amount of uncertainty present, which has to be taken into consideration throughout the event management process. Changes are a part of the process in event management which makes it vital to stress out meticulousness and constant adaptation to the changing environment in the planning stage of the event.

To ensure that the planning would proceed and lead to the aimed results, it is vital to monitor the activities. Controlling activities has a key role in event management. Our commissioner was in charge of the administration of the event. Still, we were responsible for the activities which needed to be implemented to proceed in the planning process. To control the progress, we had regular meetings with our commissioner throughout the process of planning the event. We started to plan the event in January 2013 and the work continued until August 2013 when the seminar was executed in practice.

The practical arrangements in event planning consist of multiple factors that have to be monitored and controlled throughout the process. Therefore, we created an excel sheet in which we arranged all the activities that had to be taken care of, and planned a schedule to be followed. We divided the activities in a way that they would be implemented in a certain period of time. The created “action plan” enabled us to follow our tasks and helped in anticipating the necessary time and timing to implement different activities.

As our seminar was a relatively small scale event the level of uncertainty was not that high, and thus the amount of identified potential risks was not high either. By a careful planning of the event activities we were able to reduce the risk level to a minimum. When identifying potential risks we also assessed the consequences if a potential risk should actually occur during the event. As said, there weren’t too many risks, so the consequences were not severe either. Probably the biggest risk was weather as we had planned outdoor activities for the first day; the boat trip and we also wanted to exploit the outdoors during the 24-hour Challenge. As the weather in Finland tends to be quite unexpected, we were prepared for the bad weather by ensuring that in the boat there would be enough room to be inside, and the same within the Challenge. In that way we were able to reduce the risk of the weather ruining the activities.

Budget

To monitor expenses throughout the planning process, we created and followed a certain budget. As event management refers to constant changes, a budget is vital for following expenses and planning activities. The budget was the main tool for us in the planning stage of the seminar. Within the budget we were able to list and categorize all the different activities and related expenses, and thus following the event's financial aspect was made easier. Following-up the expenses was especially important on the commissioner's point of view as the estimated budget and available funds for the event need to correspond. The budget is also important in terms of the sources for funds. The budget indicates the expenses, and if the event activities support the objectives of the funders.

The budget was built based on the schedule for the seminar. The schedule shows all the main activities which need funding, so it was a logical way for starting to construct the budget. We identified all the activities within the event, and estimated the resources and costs for those activities. The expenditures for the event included for example expenses for the guest speakers, expenses for the social programme, and expenses for all the needed materials.

The funding for the event was covered by two different operators; the funding was partly covered by Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences and partly by the project Innovative Entrepreneurship in Nordic-Russian Context. We made a clear distinction in the budget in terms of the sources of funding to follow up the expenses also separately. The budget is not disclosed as an attachment in the thesis as the content is private.

Cultural factors

As the guests for the seminar became clearer, we started to consider cultural factors that would have to be taken into account when planning the event. Cultural factors are introduced more precisely in the chapter 3 called Cultural Aspects (see page 38). As the nationalities of the guests were known, we were able to take cultural factors into account when planning the event.

The international aspect gives value to the event as different perceptions and backgrounds can bring added value to conversations and education. The main advantage is learning from each other; learning by different perspectives. Still, these things cannot happen if the cultural factors are not taken into account. As the 24h Challenge has participants from different nationalities, it is vital to monitor the group-work in multicultural groups to ensure minimizing conflicts and misunderstandings that are often the case in a multicultural environment.

4.2.4 Producing the materials

The actual organizing process started weeks before the seminar. The practical organizing before the seminar included producing all the necessary materials such as the name lists, guides, programmes, nametags, and seminar bags. Producing the necessary materials was time-consuming, as there were multiple different materials to be produced which included not just printing, but also laminating and modifying the data in a way that it fitted our purposes.

We also prepared folders for us organizers in order to have all the necessary materials and information with us at all times. The folders aided in staying up to date. We included in the folders the lists of the participants, all the programmes, reservations and the menus of the restaurants included in the evening programme as well as our task lists.

The days before the seminar kept us busy. The premises of the seminar had to be checked and everything had to be ready for the seminar to begin. We needed to place the marketing material promoting Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences and make sure that there were everything needed, such as a flipchart, at the auditorium where all the main activities during the seminar took place. It was also important to arrange IT-support in case there would be any complications with technical matters.

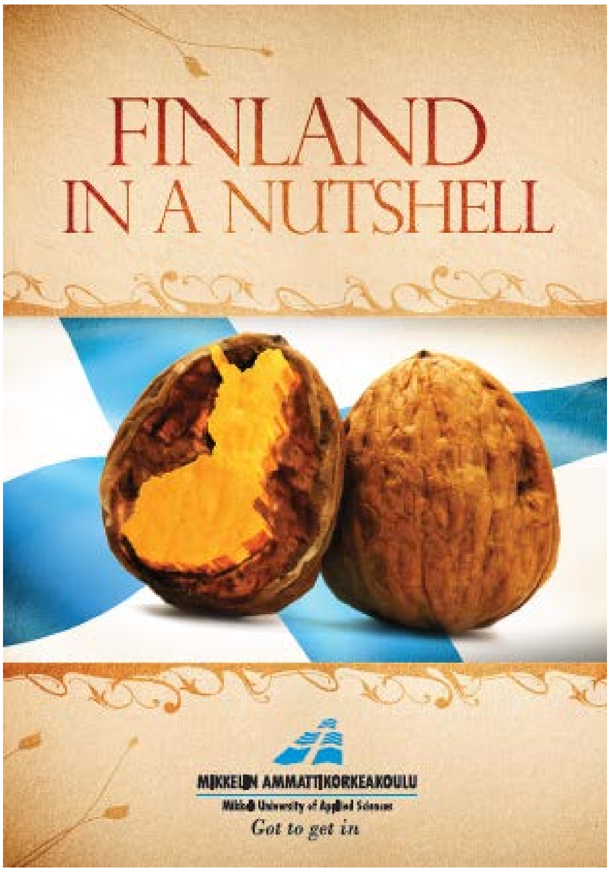
In addition to making the premises ready, we also had to produce and arrange the materials for the seminar and the 24h Challenge. There were also several different certificates for the participants and we needed to have those signed and ready. First of all, we prepared official certificates of participation for the Russian professors as they needed those for their institutes back in Russia (appendix 5). It was very important that the certificate was signed by the representatives from each of the participating schools. It was also important that the representative person was in a high position.

Other certificates we produced were related to the JA Challenge and thus meant for the students. There were certificates of participation (appendix 6) as well as certificates for the Challenge winners (appendix 7). As we had access to ready-made JA Challenge materials, it was easy to modify the ready forms to fit our Challenge. However, it was still rather time consuming as there were many students, and we needed to pay careful attention to spelling their names correctly.

We designed seminar bags with the seminar name and logo (picture 2). The outlook of the bags was designed in cooperation with the marketing department of Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. The purpose of creating the bags was to welcome the participants and provide them with helpful material. As within events it is important to try somehow to make the intangible nature of the event more tangible, the purpose of the bags was also to give the guests something to remember from the seminar and Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences.

PICTURE 2. The logo of the seminar bag.

We had to produce different bags for the students and the rest of the participants as students' programme (appendix 8) differed from the rest of the participants' programme (appendix 9). Otherwise, the seminar bags had the same content. The bags contained the seminar programmes, pens, notebooks, some Finnish candy, leaflets, and a brochure/map of the Mikkeli area as well as a hairband that promoted Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences.



PICTURE 3. Leaflet included in the seminar bags.

Questionnaires

To gain and indicate the results from the seminar, we designed questionnaires. The objective was to get an overall perspective of the seminar execution as a whole, and examine the piloting of the 24h Challenge more precisely. The seminar questionnaire (appendix 10) aimed at getting information regarding the seminar programme and to evaluate the success of the event. It was directed to all of the participants including the students.

The 24h Challenge questionnaires were spread into three questionnaires: before the Challenge (appendix 11), during the Challenge (appendix 12), and after the Challenge (appendix 13). The aim was to clarify the expectations of the students, how their expectations met the realization, and most importantly gain development suggestions for the future as we were piloting the Challenge. The objective for both of the questionnaires was to get precise feedback from the seminar guests to ensure the availability of development suggestions for the future.

4.2.5 JA Challenge

The participants of the event included international students, so the idea was to do something new and different. We decided to arrange a 24h Challenge for the student participants. The idea was a total focus for one day, working 24 hours in multi-cultural groups. There was an all set platform that we could use in the piloting of the programme for the students. Junior Achievement Finland was an expert in the field of long challenges for students.

We were able to educate ourselves about the Challenge as Turo Numminen the programme manager of Junior Achievement Finland became to train us for the Challenge. He was the expert in the field of the 24-hour Challenge. Junior Achievement Finland had a platform which we were able to exploit. The platform consisted of materials including guides for the students, nameplate-models, certificates for participants and winners among multiple other tools to use. The meeting with an expert was helpful as it was the base for our plans concerning the 24-hour Challenge.

First we had a plan for the Challenge to take place in the campus area of Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. After the meeting with Turo Numminen, our commissioner had an innovative idea. The idea was to execute the Challenge in a real-life environment with an actual client. It became reality that we had the opportunity to execute something innovative and new as we were able to collaborate with a company in Mikkeli area.

The students would implement the Challenge as a course from which they gained three credits. The scope of the course was 3 ECTS. The course was called “Innovation

Competencies". The course would focus on the development work made for the company.

The course was described to the students before the Challenge. The description was that a local company gives challenges that the students would be solving for 24 hours. The course would consist of team-work, a presentation and a final report. The assessment criteria was built on the usage of professional terminology, gathering of information in the essential sources of information in the field, usage of the main models, methods and techniques of their professional field, and ways of working in a team.

4.2.6 The cooperative company

The cooperative company in the 24h Challenge for the students was Suomen Ikihyvä Ltd. The company operates in the field of health care for elderly people and people suffering from memory disorders. Suomen Ikihyvä Ltd is located in two locations, Ristiina and Haukivuori. Both of the premises are nearby the city of Mikkeli. We concentrated on the Haukivuori premises as it was the location the students would implement their 24h Challenge in. (http://www.ikihyva.fi [Referred 24.10.2013].)

Päivi Valli is the Managing Director of the company. The company Suomen Ikihyvä Ltd was founded in 2008. At the moment the company employs 40 persons including the staff in both of the business premises. The business premises in Haukivuori were opened in the spring 2012. The company offers supported housing for elderly people and specializes in treating memory disorders. Rehabilitation, domiciliary care, training and consulting are among services. Ikihyvä in Haukivuori is the home of many elderly and memory disordered people. (http://www.ikihyva.fi [Referred 24.10.2013].)

We visited the company with our thesis commissioner in the summer before the seminar. We discussed with the entrepreneurs, got acquainted with the business premises, clientele and the wishes of the entrepreneurs regarding the Challenge. We also discussed the practical issues related to the Challenge. The entrepreneurs were eager in participating in our piloting and willing to let the students use their premises as their location.

After meeting the entrepreneurs and visiting the company premises, it became clear that the company would be ideal for our piloting purposes. The fact that we could be in a real-life environment inspired us as the results would be much deeper as the Challenge would be implemented in the ideal place, the actual business premises where it all happens. The fact that the students could operate in the company to whom they were completing their Challenge work was a way to increase the innovativeness in the process.

The nature of the business was the type that behavioral factors needed to be emphasized for the participating students. The customers live in Ikihyvä, and therefore the Challenge is taking place in the home of the customers. A home is a person's "personal space", which has to be respected. Therefore it was important to stress out behavioral factors for the students before the Challenge. Also, the fact that the students would spent the night in the business premises means that the customers of the company are sleeping, and they shall not be disturbed by the groups of students working in the company premises.

4.2.7 Implementation plan of the Challenge

The Challenge was planned to be implemented in practice by three lecturers, two from the Department of Business Management in Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences and one expert of the 24-hour Challenges from Denmark. The professional from Denmark, Flemming Bech Thøisen, was an expert in organizing and implementing these kinds of Challenges. Reijo Honkonen and Sami Heikkinen were the lecturers in charge of the Challenge from Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences.

The idea was that the students would spend 24 hours in the business premises of the company, creating innovative solutions to a Challenge given by the co-operative company and the teachers. As there would be an expert of long challenges present in the workshop planned for the students, he would be participating also as a mentor for the other teachers in the Challenge.

As we had planned a separate Challenge for the students, the arranged seminar would materially consist of multiple different programmes. We found implementing different programmes for the students and other participants useful, as it would be much clearer for the guests and also decrease any confusion. This is the reason why we implemented different programmes for students and other participants of the seminar. Besides differing seminar programme, the students also had their separate Challenge programme (appendix 14).

Before the seminar, we sent a welcome letter for the students (appendix 15). The welcome letter kept inside vital information for the students. The course description of the course “Innovation competencies” was given in the letter, and the assessment criteria of the upcoming Challenge were introduced for the students. The students were announced that further information they would get in Mikkeli, in the beginning of the Challenge. Before the Challenge the students were also sent information via e-mail, as they were given advices on how to dress up warmly and in case possible, taking their laptops and sleeping-bags with them as they could be useful for them during the Challenge.

Arranging the teams

The student participants were from different countries and as the idea was to have multicultural groups in the Challenge, we arranged the teams before the Challenge in a way that the nationalities were spread evenly. This way we were able to eliminate the complexity of forming the teams just during the Challenge itself. In case the teams would have been formed at the scene, it would have been more time consuming. Another reason for pre-teaming the students was that we were able to produce the materials such as workbooks and name tags for the teams before the Challenge. We were again able to utilize the ready materials so we needed to just modify the ready forms into our purposes. We had divided the teams by colors; each team had a distinct color. So we made also their name tags in different colors to identify the members of each team more easily.

4.3 Implementation of the seminar

This part describes the seminar “Bridging entrepreneurship education between Nordic countries and Russia” by our personal observation in detail from the beginning to the end. We had prepared the event for months before the execution, and as the day became to implement the event as well as planned, we were excited and eager to see if the planned event would match our goals in practice.

4.3.1 The first day of the seminar

On the first seminar day, the participants were welcomed in a registration point in the University. The participants were registered and given the seminar bags into which we had gathered all the necessary information. They were welcomed and were able to enjoy morning coffee in the restaurant Dexi next to the registration. We faced some surprises as all of the students that had registered to participate did not arrive, and we also had one new participant which was found out at the moment of the registration. This meant new arrangements in a rapid speed for us as all of the team materials had been laminated and prepared based on the registered students. Luckily the changes did not mix our arrangements as we were able to rearrange the groups and prepare new materials for the new groupings.

After the registration and morning coffee, the programme started together with the students, as the seminar was opened and everyone welcomed by the rector of Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. After the opening ceremony, the Head of the Business Management Department welcomed the participants and gave the information concerning the 24h Challenge, as the students were about to start their journey towards the Challenge premises. The participants were able to ask questions related to the Challenge to make sure that everything was clear. On the first day, the participants excluding the students continued the seminar programme in Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences.

The first day programme for the professors and experts included sessions on cross-cultural communication by Hilde Hoefnagels and Meg Sønderlund, and cultural aspects in setting up a business in Hong Kong by Ville Majanen. When asking our thesis commissioner Marja-Liisa Kakkonen who was present during the first days programme, the first day of the seminar went as planned. For the first evening of the seminar, we had planned a Finnish evening for the professors and experts. The evening started with a cruise in Lake Saimaa from Mikkeli harbor. The cruise took the guests to see Astuvansalmi rock paintings and after the sightseeing the boat took the guests to enjoy a dinner at Kallioniemi, Ristiina. It was raining quite much during the first day, so luckily we had ensured that there were inside spaces for the guests in the boat in case the weather would be rainy.

4.3.2 24h Challenge

Before the Challenge, the students had been given information of the course “Innovation Competencies” they were about to attend (see page 65). The journey towards the 24h Challenge with the students started by a bus drive towards the company premises in Haukivuori. Besides the teachers, we had two Russian experts along as they wanted to observe the Challenge as it would be a learning experience for them as well.

In the bus, the students were given some information regarding the Challenge, but the Challenge work was still unannounced. The students became familiar with the type of business the company operates as we were driving towards Haukivuori. Our plan was to do a research during the Challenge and the bus drive was the perfect occasion to implement the first part of the questionnaire. The students were asked to answer an inquiry of their expectations to get research material to analyze the success of the event afterwards. The bus was an ideal place to execute the survey, as the students were all gathered in the same place, and we were able to monitor that everyone answered the questionnaire.

As we reached our destination, we were welcomed by the entrepreneurs of the company. We started the day by gathering together with the entrepreneurs of the company and teachers. The introduction process started with a mini brief regarding the Challenge. After briefing we moved to the location where the students would be working throughout the Challenge and had a welcome dinner that the company had prepared for the participants.

During the dinner a journalist from a local magazine was also there to interview us related to the Challenge. The journalist observed us for a while and interviewed us about the purpose of the Challenge and what the students were going to do during the next 24 hours. The press representative also took some pictures as we were enjoying the welcome dinner.

After the dinner we got acquainted with the business premises and the surrounding areas of them. We walked in the surrounding areas aiming at giving inspiration of the closeness of nature and environment for the students as it would be useful for the students to get acquainted with these issues regarding their Challenge work. Afterwards, the teachers, students and entrepreneurs gathered together and the real briefing for the actual case started. The company had arranged a capacious space for the students where they could work and spend the next 24 hours indoors. After we had gathered in the premises, the entrepreneurs gave information about the company, the reasons they do business, and how they do business. The students were able to ask questions before they would get started with their work.

Teaming up

The students were divided into small teams that were already determined in the planning stage of the seminar and they had some time to get to know each other before they started processing the Challenge work. The students were teamed up and given name tags. The name tags were divided by colors, different groups having different colored tags. The teachers briefed the students the case, and the needed materials were given to each participant. The materials included a workbook with information and instructions for the actual task of the Challenge as well as the schedule on how the Challenge will proceed.

The entrepreneurs told more about their business, giving facts and information related to the field of business in Finland and their own motives and ways to do business. The entrepreneurs were really eager in getting young people's opinions and fresh ideas related to how they could market their services in a wider context in Finland and Russia. They were also interested in all sorts of new ideas to improve their services and becoming more appealing to larger target groups. Thus, the entrepreneurs emphasized the fact that the company operates in a customer-oriented manner, even though making profit is crucial for every business.

Idea generation / Brainstorm

After the information session was over, the students started to form ideas firstly by taking "idea-walks" individually. The students were able to go anywhere, such as walking in the beautiful nature surrounding the company area. During these idea-walks the students pondered innovative ideas in their own privacy and made notes of their ideas. After the walk it was time to share the ideas in the teams. The teams gathered together to brainstorm. After sharing every member's ideas, the teams discussed and deliberated one idea that they would concentrate on developing in the Challenge work. Every team member was given a guide book to help in the Challenge by Junior Achievement that they could follow as they processed the teamwork. The teachers were available for each team in case they needed advice and guidance.

Group work requires an effort from each member of the group. Multiple factors can affect the effectiveness and the atmosphere of the group. It is common for students to wish working in groups with people they already know. However, the utility of working in groups comes specifically when working with people from different cultures and backgrounds. The versatility of a group can be a huge advantage when exploited in a right manner. When we were dividing the groups, some of the students asked us to change the groups in a way that they could work in the same teams with their friends. We were glad that we had already divided the groups before the Challenge, as it might have been more difficult on the spot.

As the teams started to work in teams, they were worried of the lack of internet availability. Some of the students were able to get Wi-Fi connection, some not. The purpose was not to base the task on information. The task was to be innovative, to form ideas based on the unique factors that most of the information was given to the students as they were able to execute the Challenge in the real-life environment, the company premises. The surroundings and the ability to grow ideas based on what they see were emphasized to the students as they seemed to be concentrating their energy on the lack of Internet.

After the teams had formed their ideas and started to process their work step by step, the entrepreneurs had arranged a bonfire by the lake where all the participants gathered to enjoy a typical Finnish evening with barbecue dinner and peaceful landscape. During the dinner the teams communicated their ideas to the whole group and were able to share their thoughts and ask questions related to the Challenge. The bonfire was also an opportunity for the students to see what kinds of experiences the company can already offer its customers, in a real-life environment. There was also conversation related to the fact that there is cooperation between the entrepreneurs around the area. During the dinner a local entrepreneur came to tell about his canoe services, which the company was already able to use with their customers.

Working in teams

After the get together by the lake, the teams returned to the house where they continued their group work. The teachers monitored and assisted the groups to ensure the groups progressed in their Challenge. The team-work noticeably differed in different groups. It was obvious that in some groups conversation flied freely and in some cases the groups did not communicate that much. This is why it was good that the teachers assisted and monitored the group-work constantly to make sure each group made progress in their task. The teachers assisted the students until midnight, and were available throughout the night in case of an emergency. The students had some sleeping bags in case they wanted to take a rest once in a while. They had time to process and finalize their challenge work until the next morning.

During the night some of the students were working late, and some tried to get some sleep. They had the night to prepare their work in its final form, so depending on the group, the students spent their night working or resting. The students were able to rest in the same place where they worked in groups. There were a couple of mattresses on the floor that the students were able to use if they needed rest.

Presentation training

In the morning after a demanding night, the students had a presentation training session, when a teacher from Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences came to give instructions on how to form and implement a well-structured and executed presentation. Presentation skills were a part of the challenge as the teams would be evaluated based on the ideas and the presentations. After the training the students returned their teams' results for the teachers and were able to enjoy sauna and swimming to wash up and experience a real Finnish sauna. At midday the bus came to pick the group up, and the demanding 24 hours were over. The students were driven to their hotels, and they were able to go to rest and sleep to recover from the Challenge.

4.3.3 The second day of the seminar

The second day of the seminar consisted of sessions by Matti Koiranen, Ville Majanen and Kimmo Rönkä. Matti Koiranen's session focused on teaching entrepreneurship in higher education. After this session, Ville Majanen shared his story about how he became an entrepreneur after finishing his studies in Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. After the presentations by the two professionals, they had a panel discussion where they discussed issues based on their presentations. Conversation topics were related to the entrepreneurial teaching methods and the importance of entrepreneurial learning and teaching. Also the audience had an opportunity to ask questions and take part in the discussion.

In the afternoon the programme continued with Living Labs training (see page 52) by Kimmo Rönkä from Movense Ltd. The speaker gave an outlook and examples of the User-Driven Service Development. The method was not familiar to most of the people in the audience, so including some new educational aspects was a good decision when planning the programme for the event.

In the evening the whole group of the seminar quests gathered together in a local restaurant to enjoy an international dinner. During the dinner the participating students had arranged some programme and performed during the evening. The students had planned nice singing and dancing performances. The atmosphere in the dinner was informal and relaxed; people were communicating and networking freely with each other.

4.3.4 The closing day of the seminar

The third day of the seminar was the closing day. The day started with the morning coffee possibility and the day was opened with the results of the 24h Challenge as the students had presented their results to the whole seminar audience. The entrepreneurs of the company that was the commissioner in their Challenge work were also present to evaluate the presentations. The groups presented their ideas one group by one, and after all the groups had given their proposals and presented their ideas, the evaluation team which consisted of the teachers and the entrepreneurs grouped to evaluate the presentations and ideas of the teams to decide the winning teams of the Challenge.

The evaluation was based on two different criteria: the best presentation and the best idea.

After the decision of the winners was made, all of the groups were called one by one back to the stage to get feedback of their ideas and presentation. After the feedback session was over, the winners were announced and called to the stage. The members of the winning teams were awarded with winner certificates and Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences hoodies. All of the students were also awarded with certificates for participation. After the students had been awarded, they were given the opportunity to go and have some free-time and end the seminar on their behalf as their work had already been done and they were eager to get familiar with the city and do some sightseeing and shopping. All of the groups had come up with really good ideas during the Challenge. The entrepreneurs saw that some of them would be viable and the company could actually use the ideas in their service development.

The day continued with the professors and experts giving paper presentations based on the publication (appendix 4) that was an outcome of the cooperation between the participating organizations in Russia and Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. The subjects that were introduced focused on cultural differences, co-operation, user-driven innovation, entrepreneurial aspects and internationalization. After the papers were presented, it was time to close the seminar. Our commissioner closed the seminar officially but the quests still had programme in the evening. We had arranged a Russian dinner at a local restaurant. The evening programme was directed for the professors and experts. The purpose for the dinner was to have also a more informal ending for the seminar, where guests would still have time to socialize in a more relaxed atmosphere.

5 RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter focuses on introducing the research and data collection methods used in our research. The approach on the research is both qualitative and quantitative. The analysis is based on observation and questionnaires implemented during the event and a telephone interview with the managing director of the co-operative company. This chapter also introduces the different evaluation criteria for a research.

5.1 Quantitative research

Quantitative data can be counted and expressed numerically. ‘Statistics is branch of mathematics that is applied to quantitative data in order to draw conclusions and make predictions’ (Wilson 2010, 212). Statistics are used in analyzing past and current data, and in forecasting future projections. There is a variety of different quantitative analytical techniques which can be utilized in analyzing and interpreting data. These techniques include everything from simple tables to multivariate tests. (Wilson 2010, 212.)

In quantitative data analysis, it is important to have a representative sample. However that doesn’t mean that the sample would have to be large in size. It is not always needed to have large quantities of data for the analysis. The quantitative analysis can be divided into descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics summarize and describe data, while the inferential statistics are used for making reasoning in relation to a wider population. (Wilson 2010, 212.) (Silverman 2000, 3-5.)

Quantitative data analysis as a process consists of four stages. The first stage involves preparing data so that it is ready to be analyzed. The second stage is summarizing and presenting data using tables and graphs, which is usually the first step in the actual analysis. On the third stage of the process, data is described by using suitable statistical methods, often descriptive statistics. Finally in the last stage, the strength of the relationships between different variables is assessed. (Wilson 2010, 212.)

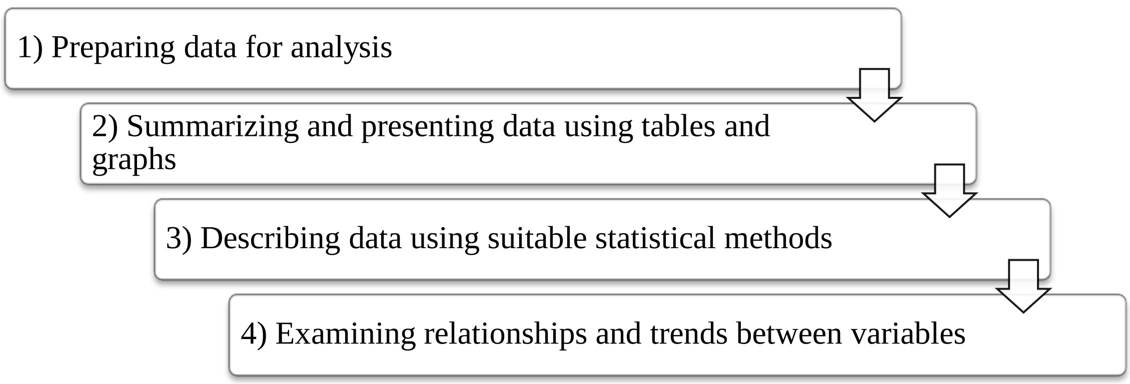


FIGURE 17. Process of quantitative data analysis. Adapted from Wilson 2010, 213.

5.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative data analysis is exploratory by nature. It can involve an eclectic mix of data sources; observations, spoken word, written text and visual data. The main qualitative data collection methods are observation, interviews and focus groups. Moreover it often deals with large amounts of raw data. It is useful to come up with a plan on how to analyze the data effectively. However, there is no definite approach to carry out qualitative data analysis and different authors suggest different kinds of approaches. (Silverman 2000, 7-8.) (Wilson 2010, 253-254.)

Wilson (2010, 255) proposes four generic steps in the qualitative data analysis. First step is the transcribing of data. It is likely that a qualitative analysis is based on an interview transcripts or field notes taken from observational research which have to be transcribed. This is likely to be a very time consuming part in the analytical process and must be completed before moving on to the next step. The next step is reading and generating categories, themes and patterns; coding. The reading process helps in identifying patterns and themes in the data whereas coding is simply choosing elements of the data relevant to the research. Coding the data can be inductive (emergent coding) or deductive (priori coding). When the approach to the coding of the data is inductive, categories will develop through examining the data whereas when the approach is deductive, the categories are determined prior to the analysis. The approaches can also be combined when there will be more flexibility. (Wilson 2010, 255;258.)

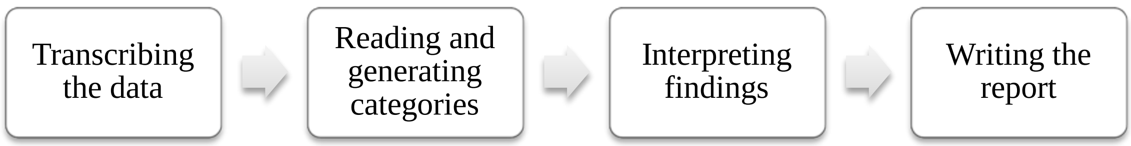


FIGURE 18. Steps in qualitative analysis. Adapted from Wilson 2010, 255.

Step three is interpretation, which means basically developing a deeper understanding on the findings. It is not enough to reduce and code the data and develop patterns and categories, as a research should not just illustrate findings, but also to interpret those findings. The interpretation of the data is looking for connections between the identified categories within each transcript. The final stage in the process is to write the actual report. (Wilson 2010, 262.)

5.3 Data collection

The primary data collection refers to a method where the data is collected by using a range of collection tools. The primary data collection doesn't rely on already existing data sources and thus the collected data are unique to a particular study. There is a variety of data collection methods which can be utilized in the primary data collection. Three main collection tools include interviews, questionnaires, and observation. (Wilson 2010, 135-136.)

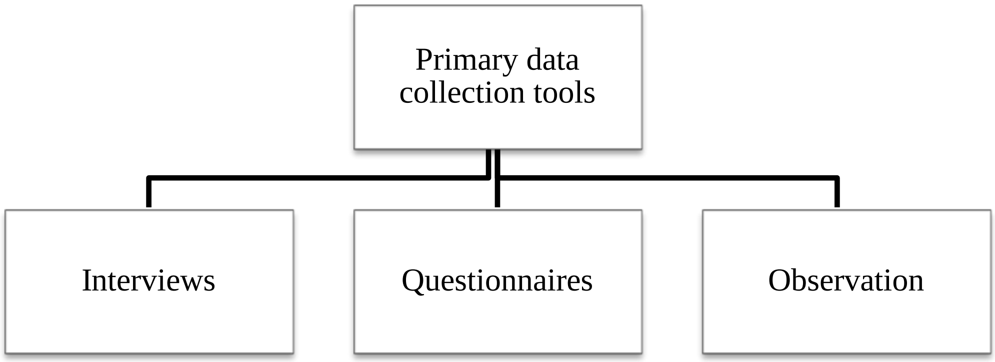


FIGURE 19. Primary data collection tools. Adapted from Wilson 2010, 137.

Secondary data have been collected by other researchers; individuals, groups, or a body working on behalf of an organization. It can include for example annual reports, promotional material, parent company documentation, magazines, journal articles and newspaper reports, and governmental printed sources. It is typical for researches to begin with secondary data analysis and after that the outcome of the analysis destines if a primary research is needed or not. The secondary data can be classified in different ways. It can be classified based on its format into electronic or written, and then these groups can be divided based on whether their intended target audience is academic or commercial. (Wilson 2010, 170,174.)

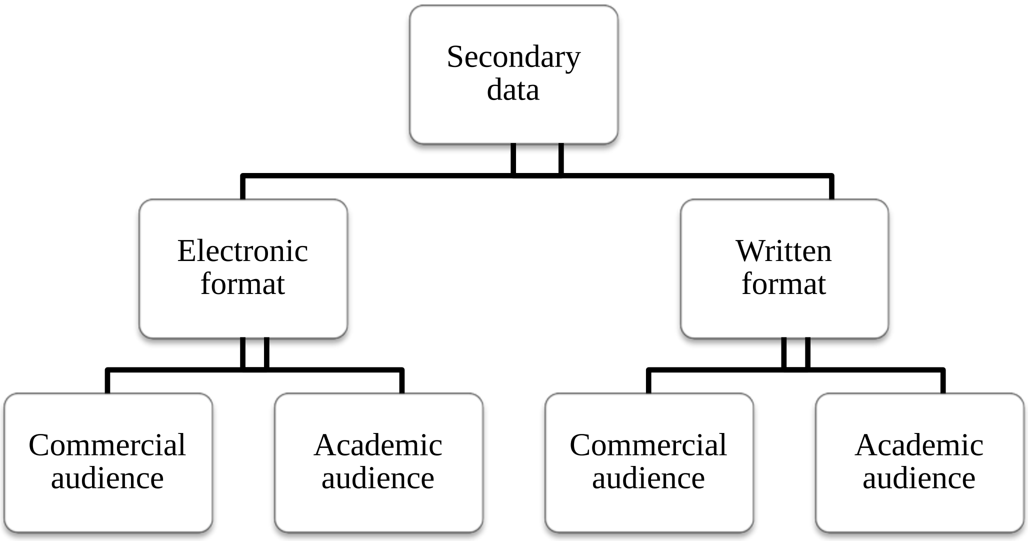


FIGURE 20. Classification of secondary data. Adapted from Wilson 2010, 175.

The use of primary data might be necessary when secondary data is not available. If a topic of a study is fairly new, it might be that the number of academic publications is still very limited. Sometimes it might be the case that available existing secondary data is not appropriate for a particular study. Thus the nature of a study can determine whether to use primary or secondary data or both. (Wilson 2010, 136.)

A mixed methods approach to data collection

The three main primary data collection methods (interview, questionnaire, observation) don't have to be chosen in isolation. Generally qualitative and quantitative data collection methods are separated, but research methods can still be mixed. Thus different triangulation methods can be used in the primary data collection. Triangulation is an especially useful method in complex researches. According to Denzin (1970) triangulation is 'collecting information from a diverse range of individuals and settings, using a variety of methods'. (Wilson 2010, 164.)

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Lowe (1991) identify four types of triangulation, which are data triangulation, investigator triangulation, methodological triangulation, and triangulation of theories. The data triangulation refers to a method in which data can be collected at different times or from different sources. In the investigator triangulation, researchers collect data independently on the same phenomenon and then compare the results with each other. The methodological triangulation refers to using both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. Finally the triangulation of theories refers to an approach where a theory is taken from one discipline and used for explaining a phenomenon in another discipline. (Wilson 2010, 164.)

According to Strauss (1987) using a triangulation approach in data collection can reduce the risk of chance associations and of systematic biases. If a study has been done using only one method, there is a chance it is more vulnerable to errors linked to that particular method that has been used. When multiple methods are used for collecting different types of data, the study provides cross-data validity checks. Whether or not to use a mixed methods research normally depends on the general research approach, access to data, previous research, and time and financial constraints. (Wilson 2010, 164.)

Questionnaires

Brace (2008, 7-8) describes a questionnaire as a vital part of the survey process. The first step in the stage of planning a questionnaire is to be aware of the objectives to strive at expedient results. In case the specific objective has been determined the questions should be formed in a way that they enable getting the most suitable answers leading towards the wanted results. In case the research is exploratory, the focus should be in the type of data that needs to be collected. The most suitable way to collect data should also be determined in the case of explanatory research. (Brace 2008, 7-8.)

Phillips & Stawarski (2008, 2) divide question types of a questionnaire to the following groups: open-ended questions, checklists, two-way questions, multiple-choice questions and ranking scales. The advantage of open-ended questions is the unlimited answers. Respondents have much space to answer freely. A checklist-question consists of a list of items. The respondents are asked to check those that apply in the situation. Two-way questions have two alternatives, such as yes and no, from which the respondents choose the most suitable alternative. Multiple-choice questions enable several answers. In a multiple-choice question the respondent selects the most applicable alternative. The final question type, ranking scales, asks the respondent to rank a list of items. (Phillips & Stawarski 2008, 2.)

Brace (2008, 7-8) stresses out the importance of defining the sample, the target group, before any questions can be asked. At this stage of the research plan, the sampling method and the way to collect the data must be determined. These stages are important to ensure the questionnaire answers to the research objectives. (Brace 2008, 7-8.)

There are certain advantages in using questionnaires as a data collection method. Firstly, questionnaires allow obtaining accurate information. Secondly, questionnaires are a cost-effective and reliable way to gather feedback that can be qualitative and quantitative. Finally according to McClelland (1994, 22) ‘a survey questionnaire can provide accurate and relevant data through thoughtful design, testing and detailed administration’. (Wilson 2010, 148.)

There are also some disadvantages in using questionnaires, which should be taken into consideration. Questionnaires often tend to be administered in a way that makes them impersonal; if any confusion should occur, the respondent cannot ask for clarification. This might lead to inaccurate data or no answer at all from the respondent. Another potential problem is the misinterpretation of questions, and in that case, the response cannot be used in the final analysis. (Wilson 2010, 149.)

Data needs to be analyzed after it has been collected. Brace (2008, 8) emphasized that the analyzing method has an influence on the form of the questionnaire and the way that it is structured. Determining the method to analyze the results can help in determining some questions that have to be included in the questionnaire. The data analyzing method and the way the questionnaire has been formed should respond to each other. (Brace 2008, 8.)

Observation

Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad (2010, 93-94) describe observation as a physical and a mental activity. The authors narrate observing from a researcher´s perspective in the following way: “Observation is selective. A researcher does not observe anything and everything, but selects the range of things to be observed on the basis of the nature, scope and objectives of his study.” The purposeful nature is also stressed out. The observation should be built on a specific purpose. It is expedient that the observation should happen in a natural setting where the observed person's behavior can be evaluated in a real context. (Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad 2010, 93-94.)

Observation is a useful method for collecting data. Phillips & Stawarski (2008, 28-29) have described observation basing on observing participants and focusing on changes in their behavior. Commonly a staff member or a person close to the subject observed can act as the observer. Still, the authors emphasize that a third-party observer can act more objectively even though using an external observer can be more costly. The authors stress out the fact that observations should be systematic. The process has to be well planned to ensure a successful implementation. There is importance in knowing how to interpret and report the observed data. (Phillips & Stawarski 2008, 28-29.)

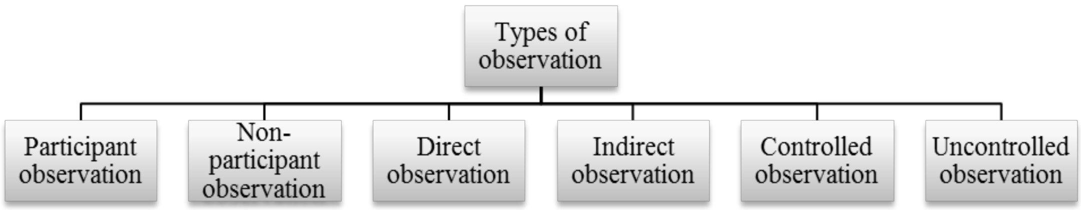


FIGURE 21. Types of observation. Adapted from Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad 2010, 94.

Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad (2010, 94) divide observation in two following classifications: participant observation and non-participant observation. The participant observation is an activity where the observer is part of the observed group or phenomenon. The observer acts as an observer and also participates in the activities with the group the observation focuses on. This method allows a deeper understanding and deeper insight of the experiences of the group observed. The downside in this method lies in the emotional aspects, as in case the researcher participates in the observation emotionally, the objectivity of the research is lost. In the case of non-participant observation, the observer does not participate in the activities of a phenomenon. This method requires skills for observing the phenomenon or the group in an unnoticed manner. (Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad 2010, 94.)

Personal observation of an event is referred as direct observation. Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad (2010, 95) see the flexibility and the ability to observe the event as it takes place as an advantage of the direct observation. The availability to change the focus during the observation also reinforces the foundation for extensive results. The problem of the method is the wide scope of the observation. The observer could be unable to cover all relevant occasions that take place during the research. (Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad 2010, 95.)

Indirect observation is the reverse version of direct observation. The observer does not have to be physically present when observing indirectly. Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad (2010, 95) describe the method as less flexible compared to direct observation. The researcher has to rely on research made by others. There is a risk for incorrect results as the researcher is not able to verify the accuracy of the results. (Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad (2010, 95.)

In controlled observation the observed group is aware of the fact that they are being observed. This limits the credibility of the research, as the awareness of the observation may affect the behavior of the observed. The method is highly controlled as the what, how and when to observe are determined precisely. Uncontrolled observation can be exploited in participant observation. The observation is executed in a way that no techniques are used during the research. The research bases on observing by listening and looking at the observed. (Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad (2010, 95.)

Interviews

There are three types of interview methods; structured, semi-structured and unstructured. The structured and standardized interviews consist of a fixed set of interview questions for all participants. There are mostly ‘what’ questions. In some cases, standardized questions produce fairly short answers, which make it easier for the researcher to compare the results between respondents. Generally structured interviews also permit a greater number of questions to be answered, as the respondents are supposed to give short and precise answers to these questions. However, it should be kept in mind that short answers might limit the interviewees. Thus some potentially interesting data might not be revealed during the interview. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 81-82.) (Wilson 2010, 146.)

Unstructured informal, open and narrative interviews are typical for qualitative research. Unstructured interviews are used when a particular topic is explored from the participant's point of view. The interview often begins with a broad question and continues depending on the answers given by the interviewee. Sometimes the interviewer might not ask any direct questions, but invites the interviewee to discuss particular themes. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 82.) (Wilson 2010, 146-147.)

According to Fontana and Frey (2000) unstructured interviewing differs from structured interviewing in several ways. Firstly, even though there is some guiding questions or core concepts, there is not any structured and formal interview protocol. Another thing is that when the interview is unstructured, it allows for moving the conversation in any direction of interest. Because of the nature of the interview, it can produce insights that a researcher cannot anticipate beforehand. However, the interviewer must know how to interact with the interviewee in order to have the best results. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 82-83.)

A semi-structured and guided interview is basically a hybrid of the structured and unstructured approach. It consists of an outline of topics, issues, or themes, but the wording and order of questions can vary in each interview. The flexible nature of semi-structured interviews allows the interviewer to introduce questions depending on the answer of the interviewee. The tone of the interview is often informal and conversational. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 82.) (Wilson 2010, 147.)

Telephone interviews can be used to collect primary data in both qualitative and quantitative research. Those can be a good alternative to face-to-face interviews and there are many advantages in conducting a telephone interview. It can usually be administered easily and over a short period of time, so it is a fairly quick way to collect data and also the costs are low. As telephone interviews don't require much of planning or special arrangements, only an interviewee's consent and access to telephone, it is ideal for a wide geographical coverage. Thus it is also often linked to cross-cultural research. Because of its easiness and low costs, it is possible to develop a large sample size. Interviews made on the phone can also be recorded. (Wilson 2010, 142.)

5.4 Evaluation of research

The three concepts of reliability, validity and generalizability provide a basic framework for the evaluation of research in social sciences as well as in business research

(Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 291). Reliability is a classic evaluation criterion which is commonly used in quantitative research. Reliability refers to the extent to which a certain measure, procedure or instrument produces the same result on repeated trials. Therefore, the question of reliability is related to the establishment of a degree of consistency in research in the sense that another researcher can replicate the study and come up with similar findings (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 292).

Yin (2003) suggests three principles which can help in establishing reliability in a study. The first principle suggests that it is useful to use multiple sources of evidence. When data has been collected from multiple sources, an investigator has the possibility to cover a broader range of historical, attitudinal and behavioural issues. Thus the findings of a study are likely to become more accurate and convincing. Secondly, it might be advisable to develop a formal database for a case study project. A database allows for other investigators to review the evidence directly instead of being limited just to the written report. The third principle is maintaining the chain of evidence, which allows an external observer to follow the derivation of any evidence from original research questions to case study conclusions. It is also important that the external observer can trace the process in either direction; from the conclusion back to the research questions or vice versa. (Wilson 2010, 118-119.)

Another classic criterion for the evaluation of research is validity. The validity deals with the findings/conclusions of a research and whether those give an accurate explanation or description of what has happened. If it is said that research conclusions are valid, it basically means that the conclusions are true and certain. In qualitative research, validity is defined rather differently; the aim is to provide the research a guarantee that the report or description is correct. Validity can be established by using for example these common methods: analytic induction, triangulation or member check. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 292.)

The validity of a research can be improved in different ways. First of all, the research questions and objectives should be clearly defined, understood and workable. Secondly, it is advisable to engage possible research stakeholders in the process. Thirdly, any measures used in the research should be related to the initial research questions and objectives. Finally the measures used should be compared with the measures of previous research. (Wilson 2010, 122.)

Generalizability refers to the ability to extend the research results into a wider context. In the case of quantitative research, generalizability deals with representative samples whereas in qualitative research it means a well-grounded and argued selection of research cases or people. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 293.)

According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, 293), Yin (2002) makes a distinction between 'statistical' generalizability and 'analytic' generalizability. This helps in seeing the differences in the quantitative and qualitative research logic. Analytic generalizability compares the empirical results of a study with a previously developed theory. It is a case of replication, when at least two or more cases support the same theory. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 293-294.)

6 RESULTS OF THE SEMINAR

Within this chapter the focus is on analyzing and presenting the results of our research. The results indicate the successfulness of the seminar and the piloted 24-hour Challenge for the students. The results are based on quantitative and qualitative primary data collection methods: questionnaires, observation and interview (see chapter 5).

We designed and targeted a questionnaire for all of the participants regarding the seminar as a whole (appendix 10) and another three questionnaires for the students that focused on the 24h Challenge (appendices 11, 12, 13). The questionnaire for all the seminar guests was implemented in the end of the closing day of the seminar. The questionnaires for the students were split into three categories which were executed in the following way: before the Challenge, during the Challenge, and after the Challenge. As the questionnaires were both quantitative and qualitative by nature, we needed to analyze the quantitative, statistical part of the questionnaires with SPPS-programme.

Throughout the event we also used a qualitative research method observation as a tool for collecting data. We observed the seminar as a whole and during the piloting of the 24 hour Challenge to collect feedback and development suggestions. Our approach to observation was the uncontrolled and direct observation method. We were closely monitoring the students from the beginning of the Challenge to evaluate their behavior by listening and watching them.

Another data collection method for our research was interviews. We arranged a telephone interview with the managing director of the co-operative company. We aimed to find out about the company's point of view of the Challenge. It was important in terms of evaluating the success also to know how the Challenge had succeeded in the company's perspective.

6.1 Questionnaires

As our research is based on both quantitative and qualitative analysis, the questionnaires were formed to respond to the both analyzing methods (see pages 80-81). When we started creating the questionnaires we knew our target group and the objectives of our research. The questionnaires (appendices 10, 11, 12, 13) aimed at getting results of the satisfaction of the event as a whole. Another goal was getting development suggestions, as they are vital for improving the activities in the future.

The questionnaire intended for all the participants of the seminar included open-ended questions, two-way questions, multiple choice questions as well as ranking scales of different aspects of the programme. The main point was to collect data on the respondents` satisfaction with the seminar and development suggestions. When we were designing the questionnaire, we wanted to create simple and clear questions in order to avoid any misinterpretation by the respondents. It was also important to include questions that would serve the purpose of our research.

The Challenge questionnaire included open-ended questions, two-way questions, and ranking scales. We wanted to find out about students' expectations and satisfaction with the Challenge. In addition, with the ranking scales questions we aimed to find out more about the Challenge as a learning experience. Again the design of the questionnaire followed the objectives of our research. The questionnaires also needed to be rather short as we didn't want them to take too much time from the students so that they would be interested in answering to all the questions with care.

As mentioned earlier in the chapters, both questionnaires included different types of questions. The point was to keep the questionnaires respondent-friendly. With the open-ended questions we wanted to ensure that the questions did not limit the respondents too much. We wanted that they would be able to write freely any comments they had about the seminar and/or the Challenge.

The questionnaire for the whole group of the participants was conducted on the last day of the seminar. The amount of the respondents was 30. In terms of the questionnaire to provide with enough data for the quantitative research, we needed to have a representative sample. However as our research is only based on the seminar we organized and the purpose is not to compare it to other seminars or in any way generalize the results in relation to a wider population, the size of the sample doesn't have to be larger in size. As we received 30 responses, meaning that almost every participant responded, our sample can be considered representative for our research purposes.

The same applies to the Challenge questionnaires, as we received 16 answers from two of the first questionnaires and 15 answers from questionnaire conducted after the Challenge. As there were 16 students participating altogether in the Challenge, we can consider our sample representative.

The quantitative analysis of the questionnaires began with preparing the data so that it was ready to be analyzed. We input the data to the SPSS programme and were able to summarize and present the data in tables and graphs. We also used Microsoft Excel in the preparation and presentation of the data. The analysis is based on descriptive statistics; we summarize and describe the collected data with the help of tables and figures. The collected data also allowed for comparison to be made between variables.

The qualitative analysis process began also with preparing the data; we assembled all the responses in one file to be able to easily continue with the process with coding of the data. We used inductive coding and thus developed categories as we were going through the data. When we had organized our data we started the process of interpreting and writing down the results.

6.1.1 Results of the seminar questionnaires

We wanted to collect information of the amount of participants on separate days of the event. According to the respondents, the amount of participants varied during the event from 23 to 28 participants. The results showed limitations in accuracy, as there were participants who were present only during some sessions in two other days and not when filling in the questionnaire was implemented. This affects the validity of the interpretation of the results. As the amount of the respondents was 30, and the questionnaire was answered by the guests on Friday, the results show that the results are not totally reliable. According to the results, the amount of the participants on Friday was 25, but still the questionnaire was filled up by 30 participants on the closing day of the seminar.

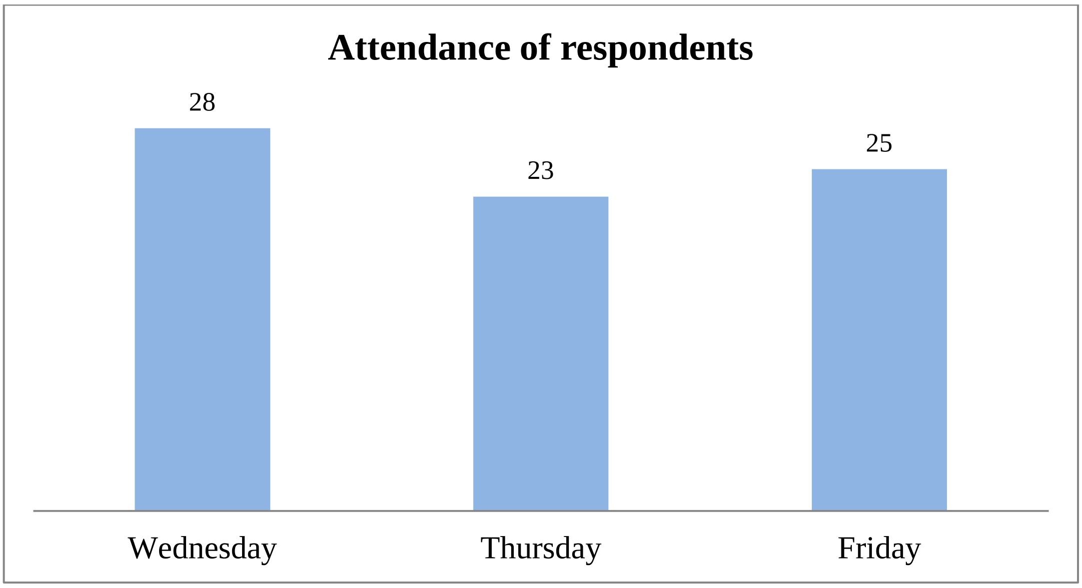


FIGURE 22. Attendance of respondents.

Most of the respondents, 50 percent, were students. The number of professors among the respondents was 43.3 percent and other respondents 6.7 percent. This makes the students the biggest group of participants in the event. The students were in a big role in the seminar, as they had their own special programme. The programme was divided quite equally between the students and other participants that acted as the other half among the seminar guests.

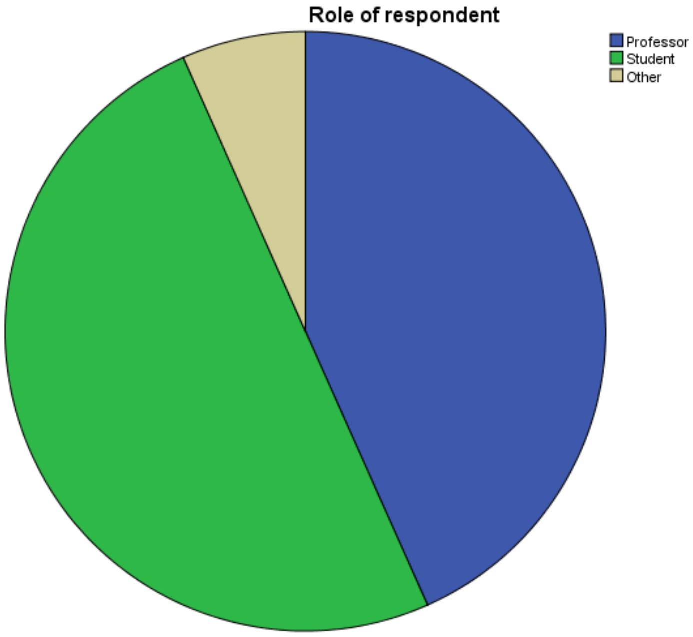


FIGURE 23. Role of respondent.

We wanted to find out what the guests enjoyed mostly in our event. There were matters that amplified in the answers of the respondents. The atmosphere was mentioned as one of the things the guests enjoyed the most. This meant that we had succeeded in creating a nice atmosphere as it is the base for a successful event. The multi-cultural environment was also a factor that was mentioned enjoyable in the feedback.

A couple of matters came to prominence in the feedback. One of them was the programme. The guests seemed to enjoy the programme during the three-day seminar. Meeting new people was another matter that was mentioned multiple times. As the objectives of the event were related to co-operation and networking, this indicates the fact that people had been networking and getting acquainted with each other during the seminar.

Future recommendations from the respondents

When the participants were asked for future recommendations, some issues emerged from the results. More time for networking was recommended. As the networking had succeeded in some level, if we reflect to the earlier results where networking was found to be one of the most appealing matters during the seminar, it is something that should be paid attention to in the future. Time for networking should be arranged and find solutions to ensure that networking is taking place. More conversations could be included in the programme and think of ways to enforce networking e.g. during the evening programmes.

The schedule was mentioned as quite tight. The Finnish people tend to be punctual. The results indicate this fact quite straight-forward. We can develop our style of arranging schedules by adapting to other cultures. In this case, we could have planned the programme schedule by evaluating the participant countries styles in time-management and adapted these in to our programme plan. In the future, this could be a good way to develop the time-management in a multi-cultural environment, firstly getting acquainted with other cultures` habits and styles.

The respondents suggested that the programme should include more time for discussions. Another wish related to the programme was having more time for the panel discussions and unofficial discussions. These answers highlight the importance of arranging more time for discussion in the programme. The time for discussion will enable sharing information from different perspectives, which leads to the fact that the sessions will become much more educative and fruitful for all of the participants.

What comes to the 24h Challenge, it was recommended that more participants should be included in the programme for students. Since during the seminar the holiday season was on, Finnish students were still on their holidays and it was hard to get participants willing to participate during their holiday. Therefore, to enable the growth in the amount of the students, the timing of the event should be planned in a way that the semester in studies is in progress and more students are willing to participate.

The fact that the 24hour Challenge was piloted for the first time affected the amount of students as it would have been much more difficult to arrange an event in real company premises for a huge amount of students. As it was smaller, the instructors were able to concentrate on the teams` work at a much deeper level than in a larger group.

It was suggested that the event could include more real-life stories. This comment referred to the speaker Ville Majanen’s presentation (see page 59). Real-life stories are always interesting as they tell about reality and can act as inspiration. As entrepreneurship had a role in the event, the fact that Mr. Majanen shared his story with the seminar audience seemed to be one of the most liked factors in the seminar programme. For the future, these kinds of real life stories could be lifted to a higher role in events as they seem to interest people and what comes to students, real-life stories can even affect their future plans. The stories of becoming entrepreneurs should be shared more to increase and enhance entrepreneurship by real-life stories.

One of the respondents suggested concentrating more in more cooperation. This reflects the fact that these kinds of events are needed and have to be arranged in order to network and interact. Cooperation is useful for all participants as each party benefits from new experiences and shared knowledge. This was the first kick-off seminar under the Innovative entrepreneurship in Nordic-Russian context –project and the cooperation will continue with seminars in Russia and Denmark.

The event was described as “a new, unique experience” by one of the respondents. This made us really happy as we were able to create something new and unique instead of organizing a common event that was familiar to all of the participants. Since the purpose of the event activities was also to bring out and show the foreign guests the Finnish scenery, it seems that it was conveyed to the participants.

The speakers received praise in the feedback. The speakers in the event were professional people from different fields. The variety of the speakers seemed to please the audience. The fields which were cultural, entrepreneurial and innovation linked factors were all different but all vital to be combined to meet the objectives of the event – and they seemed to be organized in an effective way in the programme.

Ratings of the event aspects

We asked the respondents to rate the following perspectives of the event: programme, organization, information flow, materials, scheduling and timing, atmosphere, social programme and networking (table 4). Next we go through the results that rated the event from different perspectives.

The results indicate that 50 % of the respondents rated the programme excellent. 27 % rated the programme as satisfactory, 15 % as good. This indicates that we had succeeded in creating the programme quite well. The organization of the seminar was rated excellent by 53 % of the respondents. There were similarities between the rating between the programme and organization, as 17 % rated the organization good, as in the programme rating. 27 % of the respondents rated the organization satisfactory.

Information flow divided opinions. 31 % thought the information flow was excellent and satisfactory. 17 % rated the flow good and other 17 % as tolerable. 3 % rated information flow as poor. This was the only aspect that received poor rating in the questions. Even though we imagined that all of the information had been very clear, this is something that can be developed in the future. More specific information seems to be needed and the way to get the shared information to flow needs to be evaluated to make sure improvements can be done in the future.

The seminar materials were excellent according to 38 % of the respondents. 17 % rated them as good, and 38 % as satisfactory. The opinions seem to vary quite much. The factors behind this answer might be that the students might have answered this question related to the 24hour Challenge materials, not concentrating on the seminar materials in their answers. Still, the feedback indicates that we can develop the materials in the future by focusing more closely on the participants` position and trying to evaluate the materials from their perspective, leaving our personal perspective aside.

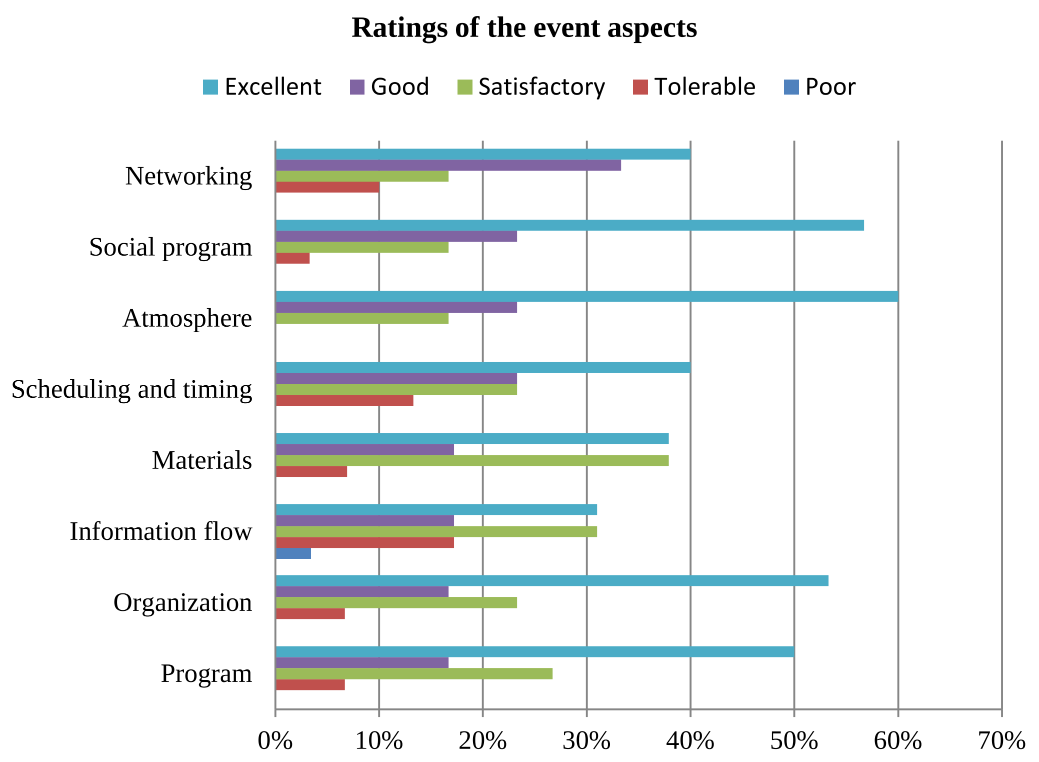
Scheduling and timing was rated excellent by 40 % of the respondents. 23 % rated the timing as good and other 17 % as satisfactory. This is interesting to interpret as the feedback based on the open questions showed areas for development. The major part of the respondents rated the scheduling and timing excellent, so in this case we can say that on the other hand punctuality can also be seen as a positive factor in these kinds of occasions.

The atmosphere was the most highly rated. The atmosphere was excellent in the opinion of 60 % of the respondents. 23 % rated the atmosphere good and 17 % satisfactory. We are really happy to gain these results from this part of the evaluation, as we were seeking to create a nice atmosphere for the guests, hoping that they would enjoy the seminar and feel welcome. The social programme was also highly rated. 57 % rated social programme as excellent. 23 % rated the social programme good, 17 % satisfactory. This indicates that we were in the right track when planning and executing the evening programme.

We asked the respondents to rate networking during the event. The results indicate that 40 % was completely happy with networking with the reply excellent in the question. 33 % experienced networking as good. As mentioned earlier in the results, some of the participants highlighted the need for more networking possibilities during the seminar. Therefore, the method to implement and reinforce networking could be examined before arranging an event, and find ways to ensure deepening the networking.

The question of rating the event gave us valuable feedback of the satisfaction of the seminar guests. We are able to identify the most successful parts and the ones that need further development in the future. The variety of answers describes how individually persons can experience different things. The rating of the extracted question can be seen more closely in the table 4.

TABLE 4. Ratings of the event aspects.



	Program	Organization	Information flow	Materials	Scheduling and timing	Atmosphere	Social program	Networking
Excellent	50%	53%	31%	38%	40%	60%	57%	40%
Good	17%	17%	17%	17%	23%	23%	23%	33%
Satisfactory	27%	23%	31%	38%	23%	17%	17%	17%
Tolerable	7%	7%	17%	7%	13%	0%	3%	10%
Poor	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

We asked the guests would they be willing to participate in the seminar again in case it was organized. Most of the participants were eager to participate in the seminar again, which indicates the satisfaction of the experience for most of the participants. The results show that 10 percent were not willing to participate in the event again in the future. 30 percent would possibly be willing to participate again, from which we can conclude that possibly 90 percent of the participants could possibly come back in case the seminar was arranged in the future.

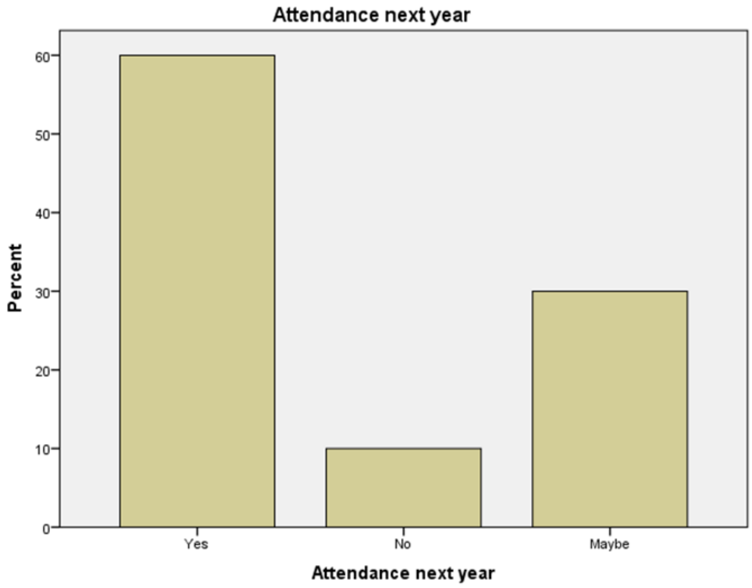


FIGURE 24. Attendance next year

Although we emphasized rating the seminar questionnaire focusing on the seminar as a whole as the papers were given to the respondents during the seminar and stressed out that the 24h hour Challenge should be excluded from the feedback, some of the respondents mentioned the Challenge in their feedback multiple times. In the future, the questionnaire should probably highlight this fact to direct the focus on the right issues.

6.1.2 Results of the Challenge questionnaires

The results of the Challenge base on the questionnaires that were executed before the Challenge, during the Challenge and after the Challenge. The students were also observed during the 24 hours and the observation was also used as a way to collect data of the process.

Before the Challenge

The first questionnaire was given to the students in the bus as we were on our way to the company premises in Haukivuori. At the time the students had just had the information that the Challenge was about to be executed in the premises of the company in Haukivuori. They knew the field of business the company operates in, but they were not aware of any details of their Challenge yet. In the questionnaire the students were asked about their expectations regarding the upcoming Challenge.

One of the participants replied: "I think it will be interesting to meet new people from other countries to work with them, to get new knowledge about innovation in business."

The results indicated that the students were eager to meet new people from other cultures and work with them in a multi-cultural environment. Some of the respondents seemed to be quite abashed as they were unaware of what would actually happen and what the destination was going to be like. The expectations of the respondents included the wish to learn from others. When working in multi-cultural teams, another wish that was learning from others seemed also possible. The students also hoped for nice teams to work in and making new friends. New ways of work and learning more about entrepreneurship were also in the wish list of the students. The students also wished to be able to enjoy the beautiful nature.

During the Challenge

The second questionnaire was given to students during the evening of the Challenge. The students were asked to rate the following (1 being the worst, 5 being the best) during the Challenge: the ability to learn, ability to network, and ability to express their views. The questionnaire was executed as the students had been grouped and had started to process the Challenge in the teams.

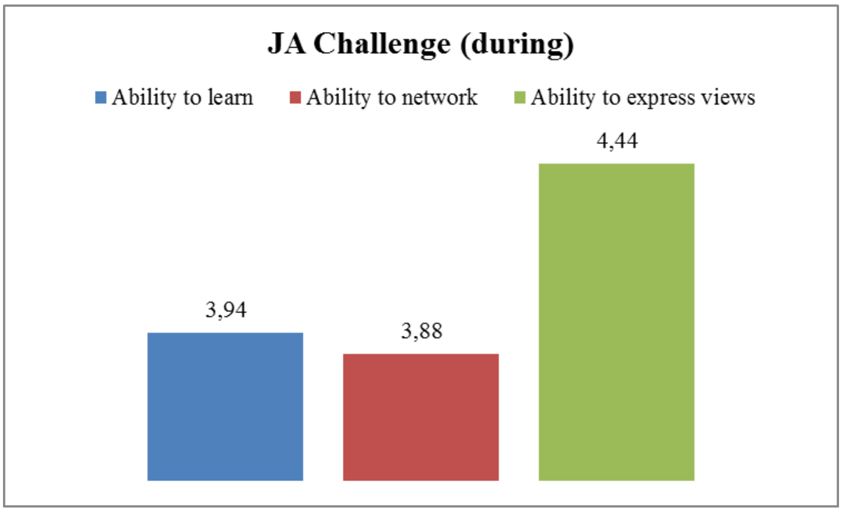


FIGURE 25. JA Challenge questionnaire (during)

All of the abilities were rated in a way that the results indicated the students were satisfied with the abilities during the Challenge. The ability to learn was rated average with 3.94. The ability to network was rated average with 3.88. The results indicate that the students were mostly pleased with the ability to express their views, with the average result of 4.44.

During the Challenge the students were asked to share their feelings of the Challenge so far. The answers of the respondents differed a lot. Some of the respondents saw the given Challenge demanding and were worried how they would be able to manage the work. Some saw the Challenge interesting and liked their team, ideas, and thought the work was not that demanding. Brainstorming at the beginning phase of the Challenge got positive feedback from one respondent. The results also indicated that understanding others was seen demanding and the working methods in individual level differed a lot and made the work challenging.

One of the respondents answered in the following way: “It's an interesting experience and I'm sure I will learn from it; however it's not ok, that half of the people don't speak English and they don't even want to do this project. The mentors save this project a little with their support and good positive attitude. If you are going to do such project in the future, you should choose people who participate in it more wisely. Nevertheless I'm glad I'm a part of it.” There was another answer indicating the same problem: “Due to language problems I think that the challenge is quite hard. It's not always easy to express yourself.“

The language issues came as a surprise for the students, but also for us as there were participants who were unable to work using the English language. This was noticed as the Challenge began and the results indicate that it became a weak spot for some teams as there were problems in communication as there was no common language. Preventing these types of situations needs further actions in the future.

After the Challenge

After the students had finished their 24 hour Challenge, they were given the final after Challenge questionnaire. The students were asked if the Challenge met their expectations. Most of the participants disagreed. 60 % answered that the Challenge did not meet their expectations as 33 % agreed that the Challenge met their expectations. 7% could not say whether they agreed or disagreed. The reason for the result might come from the fact that the students had no information regarding the 24 hours' work before the Challenge and their expectations must have differed at individual levels. The whole concept of the Challenge and the fact that the Challenge was executed in a real-life environment in the company premises came as a surprise for all of the participants. The students were also surprised by the fact that they would work for the whole 24 hours without sleeping that much.

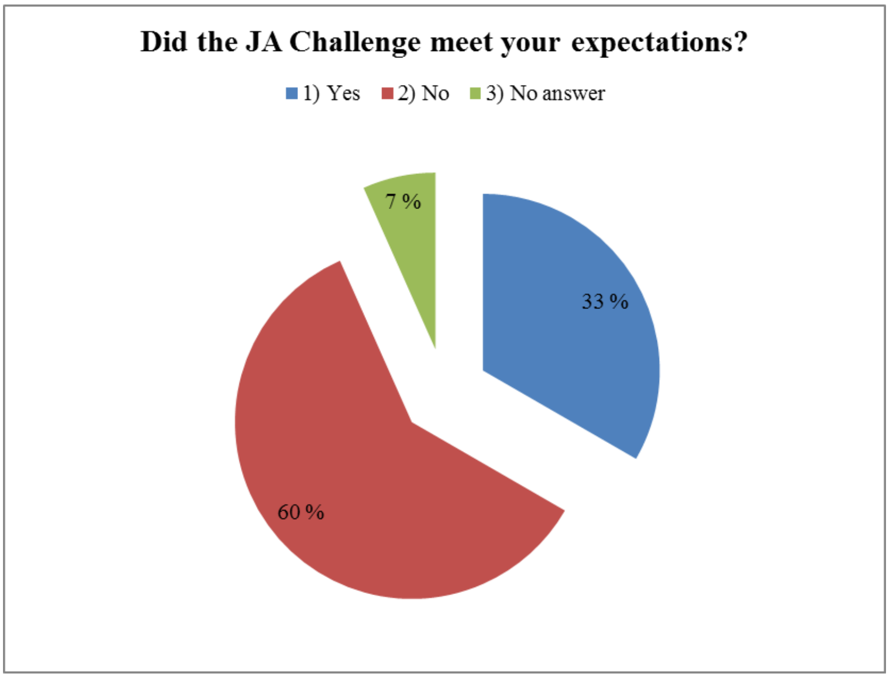


FIGURE 26. Did the JA Challenge meet your expectations?

After the Challenge the students were also asked to give feedback on the things they liked and disliked in the 24 hour Challenge. The feedback was differentiating as the students had experienced the Challenge in different ways. There are multiple factors that can affect the experience. Team-work is in the key role in the Challenge. In a team where communication flies freely and every member takes responsibility, the process can be much easier than in a team that does not function well together.

The students gave some very useful suggestions for developing the Challenge in the future. It was mentioned that there should be one room for working and another for sleeping and resting during the Challenge. Mostly, the negative feedback based on the fact that there were no facilities to sleep in as the students slept on the floor of the building they worked in.

The students also wished for more information beforehand. This is something that can be improved in the future when these kinds of Challenges are implemented. The students should be aware of what are the expectations for them. They should be aware of the fact that the Challenge is hard work and can be stressful. The right kind of attitude and the ability to interact with each other are matters that lie in a key role in the abilities of the students.

A student was disappointed in the team as the challenge seemed interesting but the group did not work hard and seem interested. This reflects the fact that some experienced a bad attitude in their groups as there were team members who had a bad attitude and did not participate in the teamwork properly. One of the respondents disclosed that the group where she/he was working was not friendly and it was hard to work within the group. This is very common in any kind of group work where people have different ways of communicating and personalities vary hugely. It is unfortunate and can be something that the person cannot affect oneself, but one point is that these types of situation act as learning experiences. Learning how to communicate with different kinds of people can develop communication skills and the understanding of different cultures and working methods. Working in a difficult team can give valuable knowledge for the future.

To prove the variety of opinions of the Challenge, one of the students replied the following way: “I think it was awesome fresh experience. It was hard for me to work on task because I am forestry engineer with specialization on forest roads construction. Students and teachers were awesome, food was tasty especially apples, campfire was big, sauna was excellent. Challenge was interesting and I hope it was successful.”

The teams also seemed to differ in communication and effort towards the Challenge as one of the students responded in the following way: “Great teamwork. Everybody had a chance to say her/his opinion and to share others. A little bit tired, but happy.” This indicates the differences of the experience in individual level.

We all experience matters from our individual perspective. Therefore, opinions vary based on our backgrounds and personalities. To ensure that the teamwork is enjoyable for all of the participants, the applicants have to be evaluated before they are accepted to these kinds of activities as participants. On the other hand, it is not easy to know the working methods of an individual before you see them in action, but to make sure the participants are eager and motivated to work, have the necessary capabilities such as proper education and language skills, these things have to be tested somehow before choosing the participants.

The students had difficulties in the field of business the Challenge based on. They saw it demanding as they were not acquainted with the Finnish business life and especially it was seen difficult as the Challenge was focusing on the field that they had no knowledge of. Therefore, we suggest giving more background information of the Challenge before the implementation. More information and details were asked before the execution.

Food, nature, teachers and staff received positive feedback from the students. We can thank the company for arranging such an amazing opportunity to experience the uniqueness of enabling the students to work in the actual company premises. The company offered the students and teachers a valuable experience. The teachers were giving the students all the needed tools and were available all the time in case they needed help.

After the Challenge the students were asked again to answer the question how they saw the ability to learn, ability to network and the ability to express their views in the Challenge. The ability to learn stayed at the same level with the result of 3.93, differing only 0.01 % from the result from the question asked during the Challenge. The ability to network had dropped to 3.5. The ability to express views had dropped from the previous results. The results indicate that the situation during the Challenge has been better. The group work has become more difficult as the teams have worked a longer period of time together in their groups.

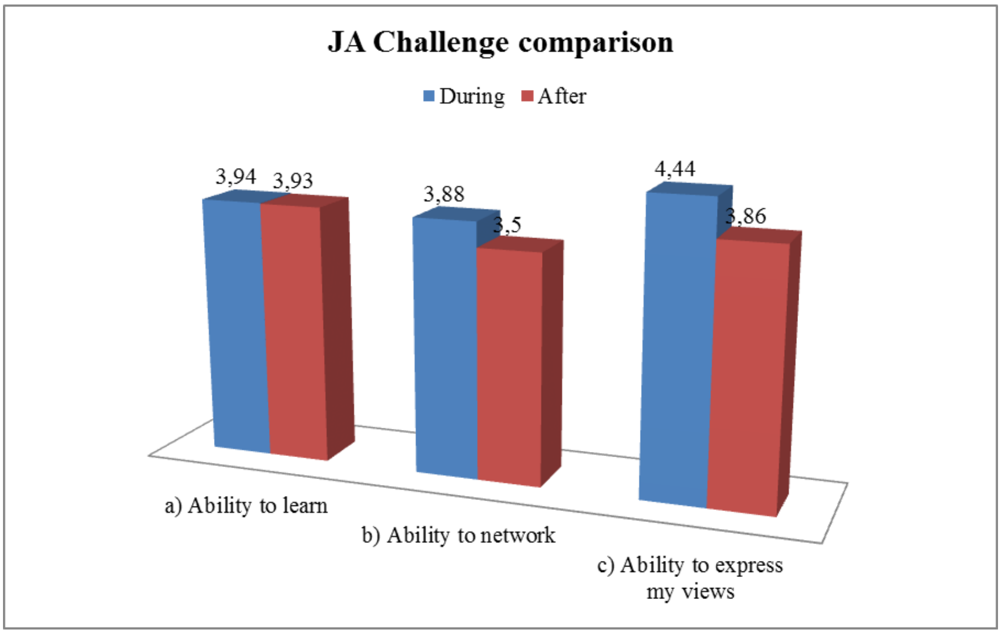


FIGURE 27. Comparison of the results (during and after)

As a pilot, the questionnaire feedback from the Challenge sums up meeting the expected goals: “This is extremely good starting point/piloting. Thank you for the teachers guiding in Haukivuori.” The results indicate clearly where the development actions should focus. As the results show these spots, the next arranged Challenge can easily be improved with the help of the research executed.

6.2 Observation

The observation in the seminar was done in a way that the participants were aware that we are arranging the seminar as our thesis work, but they were not aware that we were observing them during the seminar. The same applies to 24h Challenge, in which we participated as arrangers but were not participating in the activities, and the students were not aware of being observed during the Challenge.

We approached the observation with the uncontrolled and direct observation method (see pages 82-83). We were closely monitoring all the participants throughout the seminar and in addition the students during the Challenge. We aimed to collect data by carefully monitoring: listening and watching their behavior, and evaluating our findings. The observation was analyzed by following the qualitative research process.

6.2.1 Observing the seminar

We used observation as a method to assess the success of the event. Firstly we have to state out that the way that people behave might not describe the true feelings inside their hearts and minds. We might tend to act politely even in the case there would be matters that did not correspond to our expectations. Still, the observation gives added value to the research as it can show differences and similarities when compared to the feedback from the questionnaires.

As we observed the seminar participants, everything seemed to proceed nicely and the participants seemed content. The participants joined in the conversations during the sessions by asking questions and presenting their own points of view. This created a relaxed atmosphere even though the sessions were quite formal by nature. All in all the participants seemed interested by the presented topics. During any coffee or lunch breaks, the participants seemed to network and enjoy the company of each other.

Sometimes the cultural factors were emphasized; for example the punctuality of Finns can be strange to other nationalities. Most of the time participants were on time as the sessions began, but there were a couple of occasions when the guests came in late. This indicates the cultural differences, as the Finnish people tend to be always on time or even ahead of time whereas other cultures don’t see it perhaps that important. It might also indicate the fact that the schedule was a bit too tight as was mentioned in feedback too.

As there were participants from three different cultures present in the seminar, it was interesting to point out how people got along with each other. There were not any cultural conflicts, instead people worked well together and the variety of cultures present was certainly a positive aspect throughout the seminar.

It was delightful to point out that if the participants needed help with anything they seemed to approach us without any doubts. The atmosphere seemed open and relaxed, which was also shown in the feedback questionnaires as the atmosphere in the seminar was ranked excellent by most of the participants.

In the last day of the seminar, the atmosphere was even more relaxed and the participants seemed to be in good spirits and pleased with the seminar. The weather was warm and sunny, which also seemed to be reflected in people's moods. When it was time to close the seminar, many of the participants were thanking us for organizing the seminar.

6.2.2 Observing during the Challenge

The students were observed during the Challenge. The observation was based on monitoring the students during the day and evening of the Challenge. We were not present throughout the Challenge and thus cannot comment the Challenge as a whole.

As mentioned earlier, the students were aware that arranging the event was our thesis work; however they were not aware that we were specifically observing them during the Challenge work. Therefore, we were able to spot certain things via the observation as the students seemed to be quite open and honest about their feelings, and they expressed their feelings openly during the challenge.

As the results of the questionnaires also indicated, the feelings of the students changed as the Challenge proceeded. They were getting more tired as the time went by and the teamwork proceeded. Some of the groups seemed to communicate very fluently, but some seemed to have some difficulties. This observation bolsters the fact that the feedback from the students gave similar signs. There were groups where some of the students were excited and anxious to proceed in the challenge, but also individuals who were not so motivated to work.

We came to witness the significance of a working team in a project like this, as it is the base for gaining the wanted results and reaching the needed objectives. The teamwork acted as a major part of the Challenge, and the team in which the students worked in seemed to have varying effects on the feelings and motivation of the students at an individual level.

As we observed the teams throughout the Challenge, we were able to make interesting remarks. In the very beginning when the Challenge work began in teams, we were able to point out two teams in which the students were working very well together. In the end, it was exactly these two teams which were able to produce the best results and win the Challenge.

The differing cultural and educational backgrounds of the students became highlighted as the Challenge proceeded and we could easily indicate the cultural differences between the students. Some students were more independent and some more inexperienced in new uncertain situations. In some groups, the differences seemed to be richness and create synergy, whereas in others it generated difficulties and even minor conflicts.

Even though students were divided to work in teams, it didn’t seem to affect the overall atmosphere of the whole group. The femininity of all these three cultures showed as even though the Challenge was also a competition, the students didn’t seem to be affected by that. Instead of focusing on competing with others, students were socializing and getting to know each other.

Another thing we noticed during the Challenge was how the majority of the students wanted to have access to the Internet. This also came out in the Challenge questionnaires. We tried to emphasize the fact that the task was actually about innovation and not so much about the Internet. However, the lack of Internet seemed to flatten the motivation of some of the students.

6.3 Interview

We interviewed Päivi Valli, the Managing Director of Ikihyvä Ltd regarding the results that were gained in the 24h Challenge for the company. The interview was done via telephone. We chose to use the unstructured interview method (see page 83), because we wanted to get the entrepreneur’s point of view on how the Challenge succeeded from the company’s perspective. We also wanted the interview to be more conversational and informal by nature and produce insights we wouldn't necessarily be able to ask directly.

Interview with the entrepreneur

As advantages that the company gained from the experience Valli mentioned factors such as future development of the business, ideas for projects, and ideas for cooperation. The experience was seen useful as the company was able to closely experience the 24hour Challenge and gain insights of how young people see the world. What comes to the ideas of the students, some were seen as realistic, some utopian. Not all of the formed ideas fit in the environment the business operates in. Still, it was emphasized that all of the ideas were good and very much welcome.

As a working method, innovative ideas do not need Internet sources. Valli suggested, that in case these kinds of events will be executed in the future, the participants could be informed that Internet does not act as a source of information. Valli emphasized that Internet usage in this kind of innovative process may narrate the creativity. As development suggestions Valli also mentioned the students could get acquainted with the field of business instead of the actual company. She mentioned there are sector reports that can be useful in the pre-information given to the students. It was suggested that there should not be too much preparation before the event. Some aspects should be stressed out such as the ability to problem solving.

To get acquainted with the surroundings of the company was another matter that was discussed during the interview. Valli emphasized the importance of getting to know the area where the business operates in such as directions, services and other factors that the vicinity of the company keeps inside. In this case, a map of Finland would have been a useful tool and information discussed before such as the field of business and getting acquainted with the surrounding areas could have been accessed before the Challenge. These factors can enable the focus the time usage during the event in the real objectives, innovation and creativity, as time does not go to waste by collecting this information during the Challenge. Still, she emphasized that information of the actual company the challenge is implemented in should not be described that much before the challenge as it can affect the idea forming during the challenge.

Valli mentioned that it is the entrepreneur`s responsibility to find out how the ideas fit in to their business; not the students. Therefore an open mind of students is an important factor in these kinds of challenges, not concentrating on the fact how the ideas fit in the specific surroundings in practice.

Valli concluded that it was interesting to see their company through the eyes of others. The challenge enforced to believe in openness and innovation. It was realized that there should be more multiple kinds of operators working together and forming ideas as it is much more fruitful to see matters from different perspectives. When asking would the company cooperate in this kind of challenge again, Valli answered yes. She describes the experience as refreshing and nice.

At the end of the interview, we discussed cooperation as the enabler for development activities. There are students carrying out internships from the health sector in the business premises, and the idea behind our discussion was that more fields of businesses could be tied in the activities that combine the business to educational institutes, such as students from the tourism sector. The cooperation between companies and educational institutes should be increased, and a person to examine and execute these kinds of opportunities would be needed to enable the implementation and development of cooperation.

6.4 Media coverage of the seminar

Before the seminar, the event was marketed on the web-pages of Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. Still, the nature of the event did not aim at marketing the seminar on a large scale what comes to participants, as the seminar was targeted for a specific group that was identified in the early stages of the planning process. In addition to marketing the seminar to a certain target group, the seminar was also marketed for the staff in Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences.

The press-call (appendix 3) was sent to local media a couple of days before the seminar began. The aim was to attract local media and gain some attention towards the 24h Challenge. The seminar gained attention from the local media. The press call attracted the local magazine in Haukivuori. We were interviewed and photographed during the Challenge. The reporter also called after the Challenge to interview and to get an overall picture of what were the outcomes of the Challenge. The interview led to a newspaper article which can be seen in appendix 16.

The teachers of the 24h Challenge, Reijo Honkonen and Sami Heikkinen were interviewed for a local radio station Radio Mikkeli before the event. The interview was based on the workshop for the students and how the 24h Challenge would be implemented. The interview was aired before the challenge occurred.

As the seminar was a part of the project Innovative entrepreneurship in Nordic-Russian context a publication was produced based on the objectives of the project. The publication was presented more specifically in the realization part of the thesis (see page 57). The writers of the publication presented their work during the seminar.

6.5 Validity and reliability of the research

Eriksson and Kovalainen discuss (see page 85) that validity deals with the findings/conclusions of a research and whether those give an accurate explanation or description of what has happened. As the research is based on the process of planning and organizing the Bridging entrepreneurship education between Russia and Nordic countries -seminar we have described the actual process truthfully in detail. The findings and conclusions are drawn from the actual organized seminar and the results correspond to that.

To increase the reliability of a research, Yin suggests (see page 84) that it is useful to use multiple sources of evidence. We chose to combine several research methods as well as data collection methods to evaluate the arranged event in order to improve the accuracy of the results. Data collection methods of our choice were the feedback questionnaires for seminar participants, observation of the participants during the seminar, and interviewing the cooperative company. We designed the seminar questionnaires to include different types of questions instead of only using one type. This was done to increase the validity of the results from the questionnaires. As during the observation the participants didn’t know about the observation, it doesn’t harm the credibility of the research.

From the very beginning we had defined the objectives for the research. The purpose of the research was to find out whether or not the seminar was a success and how to arrange a successful seminar. We also wanted to gain feedback for future development. Wilson suggests (see page 85) that the validity of a research can be improved when the research questions and objectives are well defined, understood and workable. In our case both research and data collection methods were chosen according to the correspondence with the initial objectives of the research.

For the future research, we would suggest using multiple different methods to gain as valid and reliable data as possible. As the open-ended questions were fruitful in our research, we highlight the use of them in questionnaires. Another suggestion would be to include more interviews in the data collection process to get even deeper insight of the feelings and opinions of the participants. During the Challenge, participant observation would be a useful method to deepen the understanding of the observed group.

7 CONCLUSIONS & DISCUSSION

The overall purpose of the thesis was to identify the process of organizing a successful event and measure the success with questionnaires and research done during the seminar. Arranging the seminar was a useful learning experience for us. The ability to experience the whole process: planning/organization/management, coordination, and evaluation of an event gave us a valuable overview of the process as a whole. We were able to realize that anticipating is crucial in event planning and organizing.

Each organized event is unique but the process of event management keeps inside lots of similarities. Previous knowledge and theoretical background provide tools for planning and proceeding in the process. Event management and project management have similarities. According to PMBOK GUIDE (see page 20) many techniques developed and used for managing projects can also be applied in event management. As events, projects are also described as unique, time limited operations. Combining the earlier knowledge from project management and event management can act as a helpful method when planning events.

Event planning can be a long process which needs to be executed by professionals. Mehndiratta (see page 4) emphasizes the need of properly trained and experienced individuals behind the event planning. The author describes event management as demanding and as a project that encapsulates hard work and responsibility. As we executed the process of event planning, organization and implementation, we can agree with the author. The process of arranging events is hard work and the responsibility is big as there are so many changing elements in the activities. Therefore, the ability to react to changes is momentous in the planning and implementation of an event. The organizer has to realize that anything can happen, even the unexpected. Internalizing this and being capable to act on situations where change occurs are key elements in handling the changes that occur during events in a successful way.

The planning process has a lot to do with the outcomes of an event. Therefore, we were able to internalize the importance of even small details as they can cause harm in case not taken into consideration. Risk-management is vital in event management. Bowdin et al. (see page 18) suggested that in case risks have been identified and evaluated, systems to control them have to be executed. As there are factors that we cannot affect, such as weather, it is important to evaluate possible risks to find solutions in case risky situations occur. Careful planning can minimize the risks, but event planners should be able to control all of the elements and act quickly as anything can and will happen in events.

Event planners have a lot of responsibility and therefore it is vital to have the right kind of mind-set when starting a process of planning and executing events. The planners have to be motivated towards creating the best outcome of the event and eager to reach the set goals. The work does not stop after the event has been implemented. To gain the full benefits of an event, development is vital. Therefore, added value lies in the research done during the event and acting on the results as they are the key to future development.

7.1 Development suggestions

Based on the feedback from the participants of the seminar and our own observation during the seminar, we are able to make development suggestions regarding the seminar as a whole, and the piloted Challenge for the students. The seminar as a whole was a success. Still, there are improvements that can be done in the case this seminar or the 24 hour Challenge will be arranged again in the future.

Firstly, we suggest that the timing for the seminar would be different. As the holiday season was still on when the seminar was arranged, it was harder to get participants for the event. This meant that the students in Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences were also on holiday, so it was demanding to recruit Finnish participants for the Challenge. Therefore, an ideal timing to arrange the event would be during study semesters. The students of Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences could be participating in these kinds of events as arrangers via projects, and as participants gaining credits for their studies. It is important to continue these kinds of activities, as repetition is the best way to develop an activity.

The guests had a wish for more time to network and communicate with other guests. We think that it would be a good idea that at the beginning of the seminar all of the participants would introduce themselves briefly to others. This could inspire the guests to communicate with each other as they get interested, when they would know who the others are and what they do. There could also be more time for communicating and free conversations. The guests experienced the schedule quite tight, so there could be more free-time between the sessions to enable the free communication between the participants. The fact that the guests get to know each other better can be fruitful for the seminar because it can lead to more discussion during the sessions as the people could feel more relaxed and eager to share their ideas and thoughts.

The international aspect of the seminar puts the focus on cultural matters. During the seminar, we learned that for one of the countries we had guests from, Russia, the names of the students have to be written exactly the same way in the certificates as they are in their passports. Although the participants had sent a name list before-hand, there were still mistakes in the names, which led to rewriting some of the certificates for the students as it is very strict in Russia that the name is written correctly in official papers. As the certificates usually need to be signed by multiple persons and therefore have to be prepared beforehand, the fact that the names are correctly given has to be checked. It is also good to anticipate this kind of situation as anything can happen during events and problems have to be solved as they appear.

In a multi-cultural environment, the possibility of cross-cultural conflicts exists. Moran (see page 47) discusses that as a cross-cultural conflict occurs, it can be difficult to predict individuals' behavior towards it. The author divides cultural traits into more individualistic or more collectivistic by nature. As we had guests from Denmark and Russia, we could witness cultural differences. Each culture has its own uniqueness and ways of communications, and the working methods differ. Therefore the multi-cultural environment can act as a learning ground to learn and understand different ways of doing things, and the different aspects usually bring added-value as new ideas and styles of executing activities can come into existence.

There were external factors that were beyond our control. One of them was already mentioned, the weather. During the seminar, it was raining heavily. There is nothing we can do about the weather, but it is good to prepare in a way that the activities are not tied to factors like the weather. In our case we had a boat trip in the lake Saimaa, and when the students were in Haukivuori in their Challenge, it was raining heavily. Perhaps some indoor activities could be included in the programme in case external factors such as weather cause difficulties to ensure the comfort for the guests.

The seminar lasted for three days. We suggest that the seminar could be for example one day longer. This would enable more flexibility in the tight schedule and more time for the communication the guests wished for. This would also give more time for the sessions in the programme, as the participants wished for more time for conversations. To make the seminar a day longer would enable the guests the time to experience the city and have some free time as this time it was limited. As there were students participating, we suggest that there could be some free time in the schedule, a free night when there is no arranged programme. There could be an evening programme for those who are willing to participate, and at the same time enable free time for those in need of it.

7.2 The 24h Challenge

The 24h Challenge was a useful learning experience for all of the participants; the students, teachers, and entrepreneurs of the company. The execution was valuable as the process was completed for the first time. The process of planning, collecting information, implementing the workshop in practice, and evaluating the results give valuable recommendations on how to improve the workshop in case it will be implemented in the future.

As the piloting of the 24 hour Challenge was executed, the activity proved to have many focuses of development. The piloting showed the importance of the recruiting process. The applying process of the students should be conducted in a way that the language skills, motivation, communication skills and teamwork skills would be proven in the applications. The students applying could be asked to write a motivation letter and an ideal situation would be that the students give evidence of their willingness to participate with a positive, hard-working attitude. We witnessed that this time some of the students who had registered did not arrive, so the solution could be that the students would be asked to sign a registration form where they confirm the fact that they will be participating in the activity.

As mentioned earlier, the timing of the seminar made it difficult to recruit Finnish students to participate in the 24h Challenge, and as a result there was only one Finnish student in the Challenge. As we were observing the Challenge and from the feedback we could see that the other students were astonished by the fact that the Challenge took place in Finland and there was only one Finnish student. They also seemed to wish there were more Finnish students in the group. This is something that needs to be taken into consideration if the 24h Challenge will be organized again. Probably the changing of the timing would help recruiting more Finnish students, but there could also be more internal marketing efforts to attract Finnish students to take part in the Challenge.

As we witnessed some issues with the language skills of the students, we would suggest a language check that could be implemented e.g. via Skype. That would assure that the exact person is the one speaking and would enable evaluating the language skills in reality. The language skills act as a vital part in the 24h Challenge; it is the way of communication. Without a common language, the teamwork cannot proceed effectively.

The students had also wishes regarding the Challenge. They wished for more information before the Challenge. There was a reason for not giving too much information beforehand as the Challenge was a surprise, but after observing the whole piloting through we can see that more instructions are needed before the Challenge. They should be ready for surprises and somehow know what to expect. In turn, the students should also be aware of what are the expectations from them regarding the Challenge. This is a fact that has to be clear for each participant before the Challenge begins.

The interview with Päivi Valli (see page 105-106) gave valuable future recommendations. The information given to the students before the Challenge should be based on the field of the business and the surroundings of the business to facilitate the beginning of the process for the students. The company itself should not be described that deeply as it can harm the process of innovation. We were able to witness that multiple details can affect an innovative process. This stresses out the importance of making sure the students focus on the given assignment instead of getting side-tracked.

As we live in a time of information overload, we were able to point out the ratio between the task given to students as their Challenge assignment and the fact that Internet is seen as the object of all necessary information. The question is if the era of time affects our innovativeness and harms it. By observing during the Challenge and via the results we noticed that it was hard for the students to understand the purpose of the Challenge: innovation and ideas. The students should be able to think more “outside the box”. This time the task for them was to be creative and it seemed they were very focused on facts, statistics and data as they should have been more inspired by the real-life environment and form ideas based on what they see. The students were constantly asking for Wi-Fi connection and some of them were panicking over the fact that they were unable to use the Internet. This is something that should be thought of if or when arranging the Challenge again – how to make the students really understand the purpose of the Challenge.

This time we used a material from the JA Challenge to carry out the Challenge. Some of the students had difficulties in seeing the big picture of the Challenge and were confused on what to do and how to do it. We suggest that the material would always be produced depending on the case. There could be a frame for the material which the teachers could use and build up the Challenge based on the purpose and goal of it. In case these kinds of Challenges will continue in Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences, it would be helpful to create a frame of all the materials that would be needed in this kind of activity. The frame would include the guidebooks for students, programme, name tag models and other necessary materials. This would ease the process for the teachers and it would enable them to concentrate on the real issue - creating the Challenge. The availability of the ready materials could also inspire teachers to arrange and be part of these activities.

We witnessed some difficulties in the team-work in some of the teams. Some of the students gave information how there were students who were unable to communicate, listen to others, and participate in the group work. The solution could be to observe the group work closely throughout the Challenge and in some point of the Challenge, ask the students one by one to have a conversation with the teachers to clarify if there are problems. It is likely the students would individually tell and open up in case there were problems to be solved. This would enable solving the problems during the Challenge and can have an impact on the outcome of the group work.

As there were many issues that were identified in the implementation process, the results and feedback are useful for the future events. There were many areas of difficulties that can now be evaluated and acted on to develop the activities in the future. The 24h Challenge was a learning process for us, the teachers, the entrepreneurs and the students. We believe that each participant left the Challenge with new knowledge that can be exploited in the future.

7.3 Personal evaluation

Bodwin et al. (see page 10) suggested that often events are seen as better if they are bigger in size. The authors state that an event does not have to grow in size to become better. Other methods, such as quality control, careful positioning and improved planning are suggested as equally efficient methods. We can agree with the author. As we organized a small scale event, it was easier to put effort in the quality and careful planning. The ability to focus on the planning more closely enabled looking into details more closely.

Labor-intensiveness of an event can be dependent on how well the event has been planned. We were able to plan the event in a way that extra hands were not needed during the seminar. In case the planning process had not been done in detail, there could have been situations that might have needed extra hands. We learned that the labor-intensiveness and planning are tied to each other. With careful planning, the labor-intensiveness can be reduced.

Event planners have to be flexible and able to solve unexpected problems effectively. The atmosphere and the satisfaction of the quests are closely attached to each other. Even though something did not happen in a planned way, a good atmosphere could save everything. Moran, Harris and Moran (see page 46) state that the atmosphere is opportune to sharing cross-cultural knowledge and learning from each other. We were able to identify that the event was successful in the aspects of the atmosphere. As creating a guest friendly atmosphere has such a vital part in events, the fact that we were able to create a good atmosphere indicates the success of the seminar.

The multi-cultural environment is a valuable resource in a learning environment. Moran, Harris and Moran (see page 46) suggest that shared perceptions and experiences, insights and knowledge can at their best lead to increased effectiveness. Arranging international events can act as an enabler in the creation of cultural synergy. The authors also stated that the variety and differences of the people and societies in the world can lead to a mutual growth and accomplishment. The event was a part of the project which aimed to strengthen networking between the partner universities. Strengthening co-operation via events can be proved as a utilitarian way, as events enable communication and the exchange of experiences, knowledge, and can lead to increasing the effectiveness of the co-operation, creating new ideas and innovations which all of the participants can gain benefit.

7.4 Conclusions

To conclude, the possibility to arrange an international event and see the whole process was educating for us. The experience gave a deep insight into event management and planning in a real life context. Although the process as a whole was demanding and time-consuming, the benefits are greater than the work-load. We gained more capabilities and can now see the event planning process as a whole much more clearly than in case the experience hadn’t occurred at a practical level.

The most valuable part of organizing the seminar was the results that were gained during the event. We could identify many parts of future development and see this as the main advantage of the thesis work as our commissioner is able to use the results in future event planning processes. Shone & Parry (see page 33) divide the evaluation in two issues which are presented as whether or not the event has met its objectives and what could be improved for the next time. We can analyze the arranged seminar in a way that we think the objectives were met, and there were a lot of development ideas for the future, meaning the evaluation has been purpose-built and properly conducted.

Piloting the 24h Challenge was exciting as it was new for most of the operators taking part in it. Creating something new is always exciting and problems can easily occur, but we have to remember that the piloting is only the beginning. The practical execution of the challenge leads into pointing out the areas of development. This in turn leads into arranging the activities in an improved way and developing them in the future. Development is a continuous process which should never come to an end.

This thesis can serve as a foundation for further research. The lessons that were learned and the results that were gained gave a deep insight into improving the process of the 24h Challenge and international seminars. In case the seminar will be rearranged in the future, the results and suggestions that the thesis work presents can act as valuable source of information for the arranging team of the next seminar. The advantages of the realization of the seminar have a value. The process as a whole: planning/ organization/ management, coordination and evaluation enable a learning experience for the arranging team and give valuable development proposals for the commissioner. This makes the situation favorable for every party.

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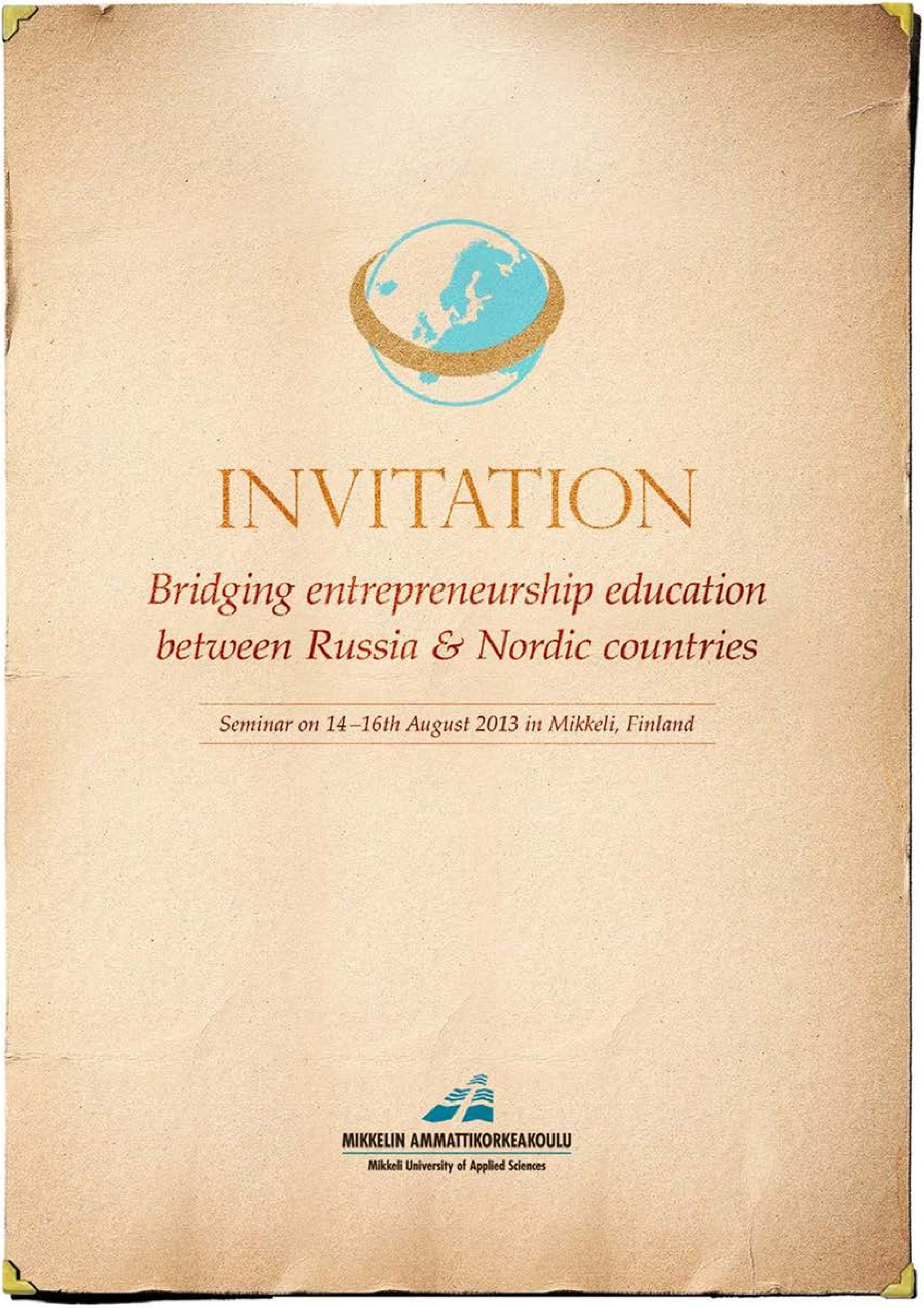
APPENDIX 1.

Seminar logo

APPENDIX 2(1).

Invitation letter



APPENDIX 2(2).

Invitation letter

Mikkeli, 18 March 2013

Dear Colleague,

Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences is delighted to invite you to join the seminar **"Bridging entrepreneurship education between Russia & Nordic countries"**. The seminar will take place from 14th to 16th of August 2013 at Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences.

PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME:

Wednesday August 14th:
24h workshop for students
Students are invited to a 24 hour workshop for experiencing something new and building new international relations. The students will work intensively for a business-related project.

Thursday August 15th:
Workshop on creativity and entrepreneurship for alumni and professors
We invite you to share experiences and best practices on creativity and entrepreneurship. We are also inviting persons to run the workshops. In the afternoon there will be a Living Labs training session on how to use Living Labs as a development method. Further information will be presented soon.

Friday August 16th:
Seminar for all participants
We welcome paper presentations focusing on different areas of innovation, entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurial education as well as papers and presentations focusing on intercultural aspects in business. The best papers will be selected and published in a book after the seminar. We would also like to welcome students to take part in the seminar.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Registration from 18th of March until 31st of May
Abstract: 15th of April
Full paper submission: 31th May
Paper presentations: 16th of August

PARTICIPATION FEES:

Early registrations before May 31: 80 € for professors and free of charge for students
Registration after 31st of May: 150 € for professors and 50 € for alumni and students
Notice: Limited amount of places for students!

Registration: ***Webropol***

For further information, please don't hesitate to contact us: ***bridge.entre@mamk.fi***

We are looking forward to seeing you in Mikkeli in August,
Yours sincerely

Marja-Liisa Kakkonen
Head of the Business Management Department

SEMINAR HOSTS

Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences (Mikkeli UAS) lies at the heart of the beautiful Finnish Lake District in the South-Savo region. We are a modern higher education institution, offering high quality education and more fields of study than any other University of Applied Sciences in Finland. We have Degree programmes available at both Bachelor´s and Master´s levels.

Over 760 new students start every year their studies leading to a degree, and the total amount of students is about 4500. We have 20 degree programmes, three of which are in English.

There are approximately 400 staff members employed at Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences, of which 200 are full-time lecturers. About 40 of our staff hold a doctoral or licentiate degree.

Read more: http://www.mamk.fi/front_page

USEFUL LINKS:

Hostels/hotels

Hotel Uusikuu
Gasthaus Mikkeli
Marjan matkakoti
Hotel Vaakuna
Hotel Cumulus
City of Mikkeli
Mikkeli
Tourist Information

Opiskelijat pohtivat yrittäjyyskasvatusta 24 tunnin työpajassa Haukivuorella

Tiedote.
Julkaistu: 12.08.2013 klo 16:07
Julkaisija: Mikkelin ammattikorkeakoulu (MAMK)

Mikkelin ammattikorkeakoulu järjestää kansainvälisen Bridging entrepreneurship education between Russia and Nordic countries –seminaarin Mikkelissä 14.–16.8.2013. Seminaarissa pureudutaan yrittäjyyskasvatukseen ja yrittäjyyden koulutukseen Pohjoismaissa ja Venäjällä.

Seminaarin yksi osa on nuorten 24 tunnin työpaja"24h Challenge". Työpajan tarkoituksena on luoda uusia oppimismenetelmiä kehittämällä mm. innovatiivisuutta ja ongelmanratkaisukykyjä. Työpajaan osallistuu parisenkymmentä nuorta Venäjältä, Suomesta ja Tanskasta.

Opiskelijat työskentelevät 24 tuntia haasteen parissa Haukivuorella, Ikihyvä Oy:n tiloissa ja toimeksiannosta Haukirannassa. Liiketalouden opettajat Sami Heikkinen ja Reijo Honkonen toimivat 24h haasteen vastuuopettajina. Tapahtumaa on järjestämässä kaksi liiketalouden laitoksen Business Management -koulutusohjelman opiskelijaa, jotka toteuttavat tapahtumaa opinnäytetyönään.

Haukivuorella Ikihyvä Oy:hyn opiskelijat lähtevät 14.8. aamulla ja työskentelevät paikanpäällä vuorokauden.

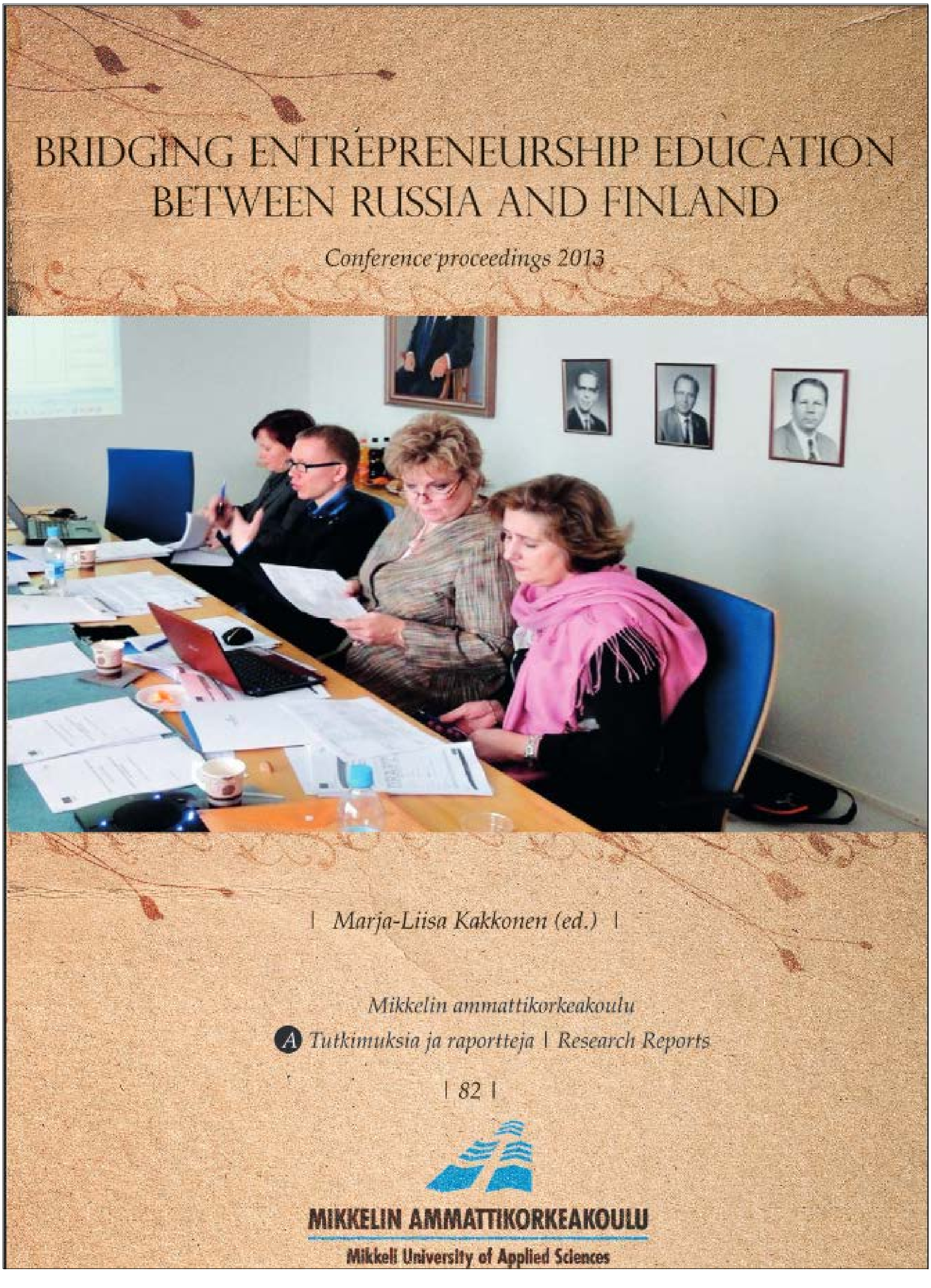
Seminaari ja työpaja ovat osa Innovative entrepreneurship in Nordic-Russian context - hanketta. Hankkeen päätavoite on vahvistaa verkostoitumista ja yhteistyötä partnerikorkeakoulujen kesken. Hanketta toteuttavat Mamkin lisäksi partnerioppilaitokset Tanskasta ja Venäjältä.

Kutsu

Media on tervetullut tutustumaan seminaariin sekä työpajaan. Seminaari järjestetään Mikkelin ammattikorkeakoulun Kasarmin kampuksella, Mikpoli-salissa (Patteristonkatu 2). Työpaja järjestetään Haukivuorella, osoitteessa Haukirannantie 10.

APPENDIX 4.

Publication



APPENDIX 5.

Official certificate of participation

BRIDGING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION BETWEEN RUSSIA & NORDIC COUNTRIES

____

Has participated in "Bridging entrepreneurship education between Russia & Nordic countries" seminar, arranged by

Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences
St Petersburg State Forest Technical University
St Petersburg State Technological University of Plant Polymers
Tietgen Business College

14.8.-16.8.2013

Mikkeli 16th of August 2013

Marja-Liisa Kakkonen Head of Department of Business Management Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences	**Alexander Korablev** Dean of Economics and Management Faculty Saint-Petersburg State Forest Technical University	**Tatiana Tereshkina** Dean of Economics and Management Faculty Saint-Petersburg State Technological University of Plant Polymers	**Regitze Sparre Kristensen** Director of Erhvervsakademiet Lillebælt, Tietgen Business College DK-Academy of Higher Professional Education Lillebælt

APPENDIX 6.

JA Challenge certificate of participation

JA CHALLENGE

Certificate of Participation

____

Has participated in the JA Challenge event,
held at Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences 14-16.8.2013

During the programme participants created new innovative solutions to the Challenge presented by Suomen Ikihyvä Oy.

Päivi Valli CEO Suomen Ikihyvä Oy	**Marja-Liisa Kakkonen** Head of Department of Business Management Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences

MIKKELIN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences

Junior Achievement – Young Enterprise Finland (Nuori Yrittäjyys) is a Finnish branch of JA Worldwide. JA-YE Finland is dedicated to educating students about workforce readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy through experiential, hands-on programs.
JA Challenge -programme is created by JA-YE Finland.

Junior Achievement Young Enterprise Finland

YES

APPENDIX 7.

JA Challenge winner certificate

JA CHALLENGE

WINNER

Has participated in the JA Challenge event,
held at Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences 14.-16.8.2013

During the programme participants created new innovative solutions to a challenge presented by Suomen Ikihyvä Ltd

Winning team has presented the best and most innovative solution to Ikihyvä –challenge.

Reijo Honkonen
Senior Lecturer
Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences

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Head of Department of Business Management
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MIKKELIN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences

Junior Achievement – Young Enterprise Finland (Nuori Yrittäjyys) is a Finnish branch of JA Worldwide. JA-YE Finland is dedicated to educating students about workforce readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy through experiential, hands-on programs.
JA Challenge -programme is created by JA-YE Finland.

Junior Achievement Young Enterprise Finland

YES

APPENDIX 8.

Seminar programme for students

Bridging entrepreneurship education between Russia & Nordic countries

MIKKELIN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences

Seminar on 14–16th August 2013 in Mikkeli, Finland

WED 14. AUGUST

8:00–8:45	Morning coffee / registration	D-building
09:00	Welcome words	Mikpoli auditorium
10:00	JA Challenge	

THU 15. AUGUST

12:30	JA Challenge ends	
	FREE TIME	
20:00–24:00	Dinner *All participants*	Sali & Keittiö

FRI 16. AUGUST

8:00–8:45	Morning coffee	Dexi
09:00	Opening of the day	Mikpoli auditorium
9:15–10:00	Ideas, topics and questions linked to the conference	Mikpoli auditorium
10:00–11:45	JA Challenge presentations *Students*	Mikpoli auditorium
11:45–12:45	Lunch	Dexi
12:45–13:30	JA Challenge awards / certificates	Mikpoli auditorium
13:30–14:45	***Paper presentations; Session 1*** Understanding cultural differences between Finland and Russia *Marja-Liisa Kakkonen & Ilona A. Kosheleva* Perspectives of Russian-Finnish co-operation in higher education *Marja-Liisa Kakkonen, Kirsi Itkonen, Tatiana Tereshkina & Svetlana Tereschenko* The course of user-driven innovation process as a pilot for joint instruction *Sami Heikkinen*	Mikpoli auditorium
14:45–15:15	Coffee	Dexi
15:15–17:00	***Paper presentations; Session 2*** Experiences of intensive weeks as a way of internationalization *Kirsi Itkonen, Svetlana Tereschenko & Tatiana Tereshkina* Wope-developing entrepreneurship in wood procurement *Kirsi Itkonen & Yury Zementzky* Implementing entrepreneurial marketing in SMEs *Heli Aaltonen* Lessons learned through joint project planning *Marja-Liisa Kakkonen, Kirsi Itkonen, Svetlana Tereschenko & Tatiana Tereshkina*	Mikpoli auditorium
17:00	Closing the seminar	Mikpoli auditorium

APPENDIX 9(1).

Seminar programme

Bridging entrepreneurship education between Russia & Nordic countries

Seminar on 14–16th August 2013 in Mikkeli, Finland

WED 14. AUGUST

8:00–8:45	Morning coffee / registration	D-building / Dexi
9:00	Welcome words	Mikpoli auditorium
9:45–11:45	Introduction to cross-cultural communication *Hilde Hoefnagels* *Meg Sonderlund* Cultural aspects in setting up a business in Hong Kong *Ville Majanen*	Mikpoli auditorium
11:45–12:00	Break	
12:00–13:00	Panel discussion *Hilde Hoefnagels* *Ville Majanen* *Meg Sonderlund*	Mikpoli auditorium
13:00–14:00	Lunch	Dexi
16:00–	Finnish evening	Jaarli

THU 15. AUGUST

8:00–8:45	Morning coffee	Dexi
9:00	Opening of the day	Mikpoli auditorium
9:15–10:30	Teaching entrepreneurship in higher education *Matti Koiranen*	Mikpoli auditorium
10:30–10:45	Break	
10:45–11:30	Learning entrepreneurship in higher education *Ville Majanen*	Mikpoli auditorium
11:30–12:00	Workshop / panel discussion *Matti Koiranen* *Ville Majanen*	Mikpoli auditorium
12:00–13:00	Lunch	Dexi
13:00–14:30	Living Labs training *Kimmo Rönkä*	Mikpoli auditorium
14:30	Coffee	Dexi
15:00	Living Labs training *Kimmo Rönkä*	Mikpoli auditorium
17:00	Closing the day	
20:00–24:00	Dinner	Sali & Keittiö

APPENDIX 9(2).

Seminar programme

FRI 16. AUGUST

8:00–8:45	Morning coffee	Dexi
9:00	Opening of the day	Mikpoli auditorium
9:15–10:00	Ideas, topics and questions linked to the conference	Mikpoli auditorium
10:00–11:45	Student presentations	Mikpoli auditorium
11:45–12:45	Lunch	Dexi
12:45–13:30	Awards / certificates	Mikpoli auditorium
13:30–14:45	***Paper presentations; Session 1*** The course of user-driven innovation process as a pilot for joint instruction *Sami Heikkinen* Understanding cultural differences between Finland and Russia *Marja-Liisa Kakkonen & Ilona A. Kosheleva* Perspectives of Russian-Finnish co-operation in higher education *Marja-Liisa Kakkonen, Kirsi Itkonen, Tatiana Tereshkina & Svetlana Tereschenko*	Mikpoli auditorium
14:45–15:15	Coffee	Dexi
15:15–17:00	***Paper presentations; Session 2*** Experiences of intensive weeks as a way of internationalization *Kirsi Itkonen, Svetlana Tereschenko & Tatiana Tereshkina* Wope-developing entrepreneurship in wood procurement *Kirsi Itkonen & Yury Zementzky* Implementing entrepreneurial marketing in SMEs *Heli Aaltonen* Lessons learned through joint project planning *Marja-Liisa Kakkonen, Kirsi Itkonen, Svetlana Tereschenko & Tatiana Tereshkina*	Mikpoli auditorium
17:00	Closing the seminar	
19:00	Russian dinner	Pruuvi

MIKKELIN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences

APPENDIX 10.

Seminar questionnaire

BRIDGING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION BETWEEN RUSSIA & NORDIC COUNTRIES
14.-16.8.2013

□ Professor □Student □Other

1) On which day(s) did you attend the seminar?

a. Wednesday b. Thursday c. Friday

2) On a scale 1-5 (1 being the worst, 5 being the best) please rate the following:

a. Program	①	②	③	④	⑤
b. Organization of the seminar..........	①	②	③	④	⑤
c. Information flow..............................	①	②	③	④	⑤
d. Materials	①	②	③	④	⑤
e. Scheduling & timing	①	②	③	④	⑤
f. Atmosphere	①	②	③	④	⑤
g. Social program................................	①	②	③	④	⑤
h. Networking	①	②	③	④	⑤

3) What did you like the most about the seminar?

____
____
____

4) Do you have any recommendations for the future?

____
____
____

5) Would you attend again next year?

□Yes □No □Maybe

6) Is there anything else you'd like to share about the seminar?

____
____
____

APPENDIX 11.

Challenge questionnaire (before)

JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT CHALLENGE 14.8.2013

BEFORE

1) What are your expectations for the Junior Achievement Challenge?

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

APPENDIX 12.

Challenge questionnaire (during)

JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT CHALLENGE 14.8.2013

DURING

2) So far your feelings for the JA Challenge?

____

____

____

____

____

____

3) On a scale 1-5 (1 being the worst, 5 being the best) please rate the following:

a. Ability to learn	1	2	3	4	5
b. Ability to network	1	2	3	4	5
c. Ability to express my views	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX 13.

Challenge questionnaire (after)

JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT CHALLENGE 14.8.2013

AFTER

4) Did the JA Challenge meet your expectations?

    ▫Yes   ▫No

5) On a scale 1-5 (1 being the worst, 5 being the best) please rate the following:

d. Ability to learn	1	2	3	4	5
e. Ability to network	1	2	3	4	5
f. Ability to express my views	1	2	3	4	5

6) What did you like/dislike?

____

____

____

____

____

JA Challenge @ Mikkeli

14th-15th of August 2013

DAY ONE

8:00-8:45 Registration at A-building (Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences)
10:00 Departure to Haukivuori
10:30 Tour at the business premises and surroundings of the company IKIHYVÄ OY
12:00 Welcome words (Reijo, Sami, Flemming)
12:15-13:00 Opening the case
13:00-13:15 Teaming up for the Challenge
13:15-14:00 CHALLENGE WORK BEGINS
14:00-16:00 BRAINSTORM / IDEA GENERATION
16:00 Lunch
17:00-19:00 EXTEND and MINDMAP THE IDEA FURTHER
19:00-20:00 WORKING IN TEAMS
20:00-21:00 Presentation training Part I (Reijo, Sami, Flemming)
21:00 Night snack
21:30 → Working in teams for the Challenge + food + fun!

DAY TWO

8:00-9:00	BREAKFAST AND CLEAN UP
9:00-10:00	Presentation training, Part II (Elina)
10:00-10:15	Returning of the Challenge work
10:15-11:15	Sauna and swimming for female students
11:15-12:15	Sauna and swimming for male students
12:15 →	Back to Mikkeli

Welcome letter for students

JA Challenge @ Mikkeli

Dear Students,

Our seminar is getting closer and we are really excited to finally have you here with us next week. In the following you will find information related to our Challenge for next week. We will start our journey on Wednesday morning; then you will learn more. We warmly welcome you to join us!

Course: Innovation Competencies, 3 ETCS

What shall we do?

One local company will give us challenges and we shall solve them in teams within 24 hours. The course consists of team work, presentations and final report. You will get further instructions and schedules in Mikkeli.

What are the questions that we are looking answers for?

- What are the basic elements, challenges and requirements of development work?
- How are users, networks and companionships utilized in development work?
- What do innovations and innovativeness mean and how are they related to the development of an organization and business?
- What is the product and service development process like and how is it started?
- What are the main methods of development work?
- How are internal and external data combined and utilized for the basis of development work?

What are we assessing?

- Usage of professional terminology
- Gathering of information in the essential sources of information in the field
- Usage of the main models, methods and techniques of their professional field
- Ways of working in team

Remember to be on time Wednesday morning!

SEE YOU NEXT WEEK!

Best regards,

The organizer team of the 24h Challenge and Seminar

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51600 HAUKIVUORI

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Bioenergiaa Haukivuorelta sivu 3

Hatsinalaiset viihtyivät sivu 4

Henkasta karaoke-kunkku sivu 5

Vuorokauden rutistus

Mikkelin ammattikorkeakoulu järjesti kaksipäiväisen kansainvälisen seminaarin Mikkelissä. Seminaarin yksi osa oli 24 tunnin työpaja, joka pidettiin palvelukoti Ikihyvä Oy:ssä Haukivuorella.

Linja-autosta purkaantui pihalle niin sanotusti pihalla olevaa nuorisoa. Opiskelijat oli pidetty melkein pimennossa siitä, mitä tulee tapahtumaan. Positiivisen kohahduksen aiheutti se, että työpajatyöskentelyn päätteeksi luvattiin ainakin uimista ja saunomista.

Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen työpajaan osallistui yhteensä parikymmentä nuorta Suomesta, Venäjältä ja Tanskasta. Työpajan tarkoituksena oli luoda uusia oppimismenetelmiä ja kehittää innovatiivisuutta ja ongelmanratkaisukykyä. Opiskelijat työskentelivät siis nukkumatta 24 tunnin ajan haasteen parissa.

Vastuuopettajat lehtori **Reijo Honkonen** ja liiketalouden opettaja **Sami Heikkinen** riensivät Ikihyvään ennen kuin oppilaat saapuivat bussilla. Kumpikin miehistä oli paikalla ensimmäistä kertaa. Kohteen oli lopulta valinnut koulutusjohtaja **Marja-Liisa Kakkonen**, joka ihastui Haukirantaan siellä käydessään.

– Ikihyvä valikoitui monista vaihtoehdoista. Luonnonkaunis paikka inspiroi ja palvelun konsepti istuu luontomiljööseen. Nyt tänne tulee ulkomaalaisia opiskelijoita suurkaupungeista ja lähtökohtana on luova leiri. Tämä on täysin uuden tyyppistä yrityskoulutusta Pohjoismaissa ja Venäjällä, kertoilee Honkonen.

Nuorille ei kerrottu aamulla Mikkelissä mihin heitä ollaan viemässä. Pieniä vihjeitä annettiin linja-autossa, mutta pimeässä pitäminen oli osa suunniteltua täräyttävää shokkihoitoa.

– Opiskelijat eivät tiedä mihin ja miksi he ovat tulossa. Oikeasti he tulevat olemaan hereillä kauemmin kuin nuo 24 tuntia. Väsymystila laittaa endorfiinit liikkeelle. Tämä saattaa tuottaa uusia, avoimin mielin tuotettuja tuoreita ideoita, odottaa Honkonen.

Toinen todellisuus

Idea oli erikoinen, raikas ja jopa outo. Opiskelijoille ei annettu mitään rajauksia, eikä tarkennettuja lähtökohtia. Ammattikorkeakoulun tehtävä on kehittää, tuottaa ja testata uusia opetusmenetelmiä ja siirtää osaamistaan myös yritysmaailmaan.

– Mielenkiintoisinta on nähdä juuri se, mitä syntyy spontaanissa tilassa. Diaesityksiä ei sitten tule. Jos joku sellaisia ehdottaa, niin pannaan taksilla kotiin. Nyt ei puhuta perinteisistä menetelmistä. Toki opiskelijoilla on tietokoneet mukana, selvittää Heikkinen.

Lähtökohtana oli myös se, että Ikihyvällä voisi olla mahdollisuus saada vinkkejä. Ympäristö on autenttinen, sillä Ikihyvä toimii tosi elämässä 24 tuntia vuorokaudessa ja on oikea liikeyritys. Opiskelijat olivat hereillä myös yöhoitajien kanssa. Opettajat sentään päästettiin yöunille.

– Opiskelijat tulevat näkemään tässä toisen todellisuuden eli vanhukset. Se, että leiri liittyy hoivapalveluihin, on hyvä ja ajankohtainen asia. Vanhusten palvelujen tarve kasvaa Euroopan laajuisesti koko ajan, muistuttaa Honkonen.

Tapahtumaa oli järjestämässä kaksi liiketalouden laitoksen Business Management -koulutusohjelman opiskelijaa. Anna-Maija Torniainen ja Petra Paasonen toteuttivat tapahtumaa opinnäytetyönään. Nuorilta naisilta vaadittiin melkoinen ponnistus järjestelyissä. Tapahtuma sujui kaikkien suunnitelmien mukaan.

– Kaikki meni tosi hyvin. Saatiin erittäin hyviä ideoita, joista tehdään tulevaisuudessa loppuraportti. Tällainen työpaja oli itsellenikin uutta, rankka mutta antoisa kokemus. Opiskelija oppivat myös paljon kulttuurillisesti, hehkuttaa Anna-Maija Torniainen.

Päivi Karppi

Liiketalouden koulutusohjelman opiskelija Anna-Maija Torniainen ja Petra Paasonen olivat järjestämässä ja toteuttamassa tapahtumaa opinnäytetyönään.

AVOIN TILAISUUS

Tervetuloa kuulemaan Euroopan komission varapuheenjohtaja **Olli Rehniä** ja keskustan puheenjohtaja **Juha Sipilää**.

Aiheena vihreyden teollistaminen ja sen tulevaisuus.

Jutta Julkunen kertoo 150 vuoden ajalta Etelä-Savon elinkeinoista ja niiden merkityksestä.

Musiikkia Mäntyharjun huuliharpistit

Tilaisuuden juontaa kansanedustaja **Jari Leppä**.

Perjantaina 23.8.2013 klo 15
Lakkakakkukahvit klo 14–15
Heikin ladolla, Haukilammentie 9, Haukivuori

Tervetuloa!

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______

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TUNNUS 5019134
00003 VASTAUSLÄHETYS