Erasmus program of the european union education essay

In 1995, Hanze University of Groningen was stimulated by the Erasmus program of the European Union to start their internationalization by getting exchange partners within Europe. They had only four partner universities from Germany, Spain, Sweden and England in 1996. Now, only the School of Communication and Media (SICM) has 83 partner universities around the world.[1]

In this section, the clear and complete description of the assignment and objective from the client's perspectives will be defined. The client is Ryan Schepers, the International coordinator of SICM.

Ryan has indicated the following issues: the overall requirements of the current partner universities do not correlate with those of SICM; in some of the partner universities, the curriculum language is not English; the academic curriculums do not correlate with the ones at SICM; both BA and Master programs are not always available to the students, a great number of partner universities are not ' universities of applied sciences'. Besides that, SICM only had one or two incoming and outgoing teachers last years. These issues impact student's motives, aspirations and choices of a particular university for their exchange period. SICM aims to exchange teachers with partner universities.

Although SICM has a large number of partner universities (which is necessary because all international communication students are obliged to go abroad), the client is not satisfied with the quality of some partner universities. Therefore, Mrs Schepers emphasized the necessity for a more structured and

effective network. Due to unbalanced partner universities, Mrs Schepers made clear her wishes that it is necessary;

To exchange teachers and work on common projects with partner universities.

To have and update the existing website contains only Partner universities' names in order to provide more information about each partner university exchange programmes, accommodation, life style, etc.

To have more employees who can work between partner universities and SICM in order to communicate efficiently.

To select a number of partner Universities according to their academic curriculums that match with SICM criteria.

To establish an effective communication between SICM and its partner universities.

To find an effective communication in order to influence students motives to opt a particular host university(NEEDS TO BE A SENTENCE OR PARAGRAPH)

The primary aim of SICM is to select the number of partner Universities according to their academic curriculums that match with SICM, thereby acquiring a more international aspect. As Mrs Schepers indicated in the meeting, the main goal is to create a balanced university network fulfilling ICM standards through the analysis of partner universities study programs, SICM students' and teachers' interests and the current network features.

3. Organizational Background

This chapter will give you a detailed overview about the School of communication and Media.

The SICM is one of the 20 schools of the Hanze University. The SICM has over 400 international students from more than 40 countries and has 143 employees which primarily consist of teachers that are supported by staff. (Hanze University, 2012).

The SICM consists of four degree programmes; IC (International Communication), CO (Communication, Dutch version), CS (Communication System) and IDM (Information, Management and Service). Although SICM has four different degree programmes, more than 90% of the exchange students come from IC programme which is the international programme. This explains why SICM has a great number of partner universities.

Next to that, SICM offers 6 different majors to it's around 2000 students within three fields of study: CO, CS and IDM. The communication programme offers two majors: IC, CO and CS offered three majors in Dutch; Multimedia Design& Branding, Game Design& Development and Web& Mobile Services. IDM offers only one major IN Dutch; Media& Information Management. (Loves& Spakman, 2010, p. 7)

SICM offers 9 Exchange/Certificate Programmes as minor and specialization for its own and international incoming exchange students;

Creating Communication campaign, Journalism, Game on, Information& Innovation, International Aid& Development and Public Affairs which runs

from the beginning of September until the end of January as the first

semester. In the second semester, between the beginning of February and

till the end of June, it is offered; Creating an International Event, International

Aid & Development and International Business Communication. (Hanze

University, 2012)

Mission and vision of SICM

The mission of SICM gives focus to its activities:

" The Institute for Communication and Media trains entrepreneurial, socially-

responsible and internationally oriented professionals for careers in the field

of Communications, Information Management and Media, and contributes to

knowledge circulation and innovation on an international level."

(Oudshoorn&Kempen, 2012, p. 4)

" This means that our programmes provide students with opportunities to

develop into " socially responsible and internationally oriented" professions

in the future, and that also give opportunities to all students in order to make

individual study choices to profile individually themselves as a distinctive

professional. The school of communication and Media absolutely facilities

this by providing an effective study programmes for students to explore and

develop their own competencies which are certainly important step for their

future chosen career path." (Oudshoorn&Kempen, 2012, p. 4)

The vision of SICM;

" Share your talent. Move the world." This means that through communication you can build awareness and help people improve their quality of life. (Hanze University, 2012)

The four degree programmes are on the way of improving their own quality and being international oriented with their minors and majors. The IC already shows the importance of international vision of SICM by having a high number of partner universities from different countries and a high number of international students compare to other degrees (CO, CS and IDM) . Mrs Schepers would like SICM to expand the focus on internationalization not only for IC but also for other degrees of SICM which has Dutch students and teaching language is Dutch. Therefore; as Dutch people should understand the meaning of Internationalization and be part of it , it is of importance to place them within other European Countries or outside the Europe.

Key stakeholders;(MORE DETAILS, DESCRIBE THEIR ROLE AND TASKS CLEARLY)

As this research is focused on the SICM department of Hanze University of Groningen, the following organizational both internal and external analysis will be focused on the SICM department. The Internal stakeholders are Ryan Schepers, country coordinators, SICM second and third year students and teachers. And the external stakeholders are partner universities. Mrs Schepers is the international coordinator of SICM and working effectively with country coordinators for incoming and outgoing exchange students. ACC COUNSELLORS INFORM SECOND YEAR STUDENTS ABOUT THE PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY ABROAD KIND OF PREPARATION FOR THE STUDY ABROAD)

Internal key stakeholders

External key stakeholders

Country coordinators

ISO

Client

Partner universities

Second year students

Third year students

ISID

3. 2. 3 Current situation of the organization (stick to the key stakeholders and analyze everything only about the key stakeholders)

As can be viewed in the SICM organizational chart[2], the SICM

organizational structure is horizontal meaning that for internationalization

purposes the country coordinators who are at the same level and the

International Coordinator of SICM share their ideas and suggest solutions in

order to bring the internationalization of SICM to a better level and the

International Coordinator of SICM in turn reports to the dean of SICM.

There are 8 country coordinators who are providing information to second

year students and monitoring 3rd year outgoing exchange students. They

also communicate with partner universities minimum once or maximum two

times in a year. These country coordinators are the lecturers of SICM who are very busy with lecturers, assignments, students and other issues related to study. That's why; they hardly spend time in order to communicate with partner universities. Also, it is very difficult to deal with outgoing exchange students individually. The last few years, ISID (International student Info Desk) was providing information for the second year students of IC, CO, CS and IDM for the exchange semester. There were only interns working as employees for a semester. And every semester they had different semester who are always new for the position. The name of the office has been changed to " Global Links (ICM External Affairs Office) but again, Interns are working as employees and every semester different interns take this responsibility.

Next to that, Country coordinators are not able to visit partner universities because of lack of facilities they got from SICM. But in near future, SICM hopefully will provide facility for country coordinators to be able to visit the partner universities. Therefore, country coordinators should make a plan to visit the partner universities per year. (SHALL I REMEVORE THIS PARAGRAPH OR NOT????

Apart from country coordinators, International student office (ISO) has been working as a link between SICM (country coordinators and students) and Partner Universities. ISO has been taking care of all international outgoing and incoming exchange students of the Hanze University regarding enrollment, visas, and insurances, housing and finances issues.

Structure;(COMBINE STRUCTURE, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND CULTURE IN ONE PARAGRAPH AND RELATED TO ONLY RELEVANT ENVIRONMENT AND RELEVENAT STAKEHOLDERS)

Next to that, SICM organizational structure is not strictly hierarchical, just like other schools of the Hanze employ upwards and downwards communication simultaneously, meaning that employees at the top of the hierarchy communicate with the ones at lower levels and vice versa. This actually makes it easy for every staff member to communicate with the upper level members since they are communicating indirectly with team leaders and coordinators.

Management style

The communication of the management team is a two-way flow of both communication and information in order to maintain the quality of cooperation. As communication tools, word of mouth and meetings take an important place. Next to that, an electronic learning environment is one of the most important ways of communicating faster. The management team invests in the education and training of teachers, in order to facilitate personal and professional growth of the team members.

Culture

According to Cornelissen, the culture of SICM is a combination of a person oriented culture, which reflects the importance of individual development, and a task oriented culture which is focused on team work for the projects (Cornelissen, 2008). The person culture is focused on individuals who are

staffs and it is very hard to manage as they work on their own. For instance; country coordinators who are working on their own and dealing with not only partner universities, but also students, lectures, and working also as academic counselors. Next to that, SICM has a strong task culture as can be seen in all degree programmes of SICM, focused on team works staff, teacher and students in projects.

3. 3 Communication analysis

When students wish to acquire information about a particular partner university, Student are directed to go to study abroad links via internal SICM website, where students receive direct links to the official websites of the universities. It is unclear, however, whether and how the courses of the partner university match the ones at the SICM; there is no information available on this subject that would help facilitate the student's decision making process.

According to interviews with students from SICM (see appendix, interview transcripts), the current partner network features are very important, for them to choose where to go and which program they would like to study. Furthermore, the financial issue takes an important place to make students' choices. . Some of the students only make their choices according to their financial situation. After returning from the exchange university, the students are required to complete an ACC8 assignment, where students can share their experiences from the study abroad. But the questions are limited and are not included important questions, which would result in a more comprehensive evaluation system for the SICM partner university network.

The outgoing students are very important as well as the incoming students.

Since the incoming students are monitored by SICM, there are enough data regarding accommodation, the study program they chose, etc. In the meantime, there is a link call " student experience" to reach the students evaluations after they come back from their study abroad semester. It is a new facility for the second year students. Moreover; there is a website which only contains partner universities but it is not functioning very well. The website should contains not only partner universities names and official website links but also, their offered courses, university information, accommodation, study programmes, living in a country etc. this will help country coordinators not to be overlapped with a bunch of questions from students and also useful for student motivation and help to opt a partner university.

4. 3. 1 Internal Communication

Internal communication, which refers to " the exchange of information between the management and the internal public groups of an organization", is the backbone of every functional organization. The objective of internal communication is " reaching organizational and/or individual goals." Unprofessional and neglectful internal communication can lead to misunderstandings, loss of employee motivation, false rumors, criticism and even minor crisis. (Herle & Rustema, 2005).

Cornelissen points out that traditionally, internal communication is defined as " communication with employees internally within the organization" (Cornelissen, 2008). SICM employs both formal and informal channels of communication. The formal ones include email, internal memos and

briefings, etc. The informal channels include talks during lunch breaks or at the coffee machine, rumors etc.

The main communication aids are the meetings to give structure to decision making and further development of the issue. Since the country coordinators are busy with their own busy schedule like lectures, students, etc. , it is important to make an appointment in advance to discuss the third year students curiosity about their host country and university. As Ryan indicated, each country coordinator can only spend 8 hours per year for responding to student questions, contacting partner universities and having meeting with Ryan Schepers. This is absolutely not enough time for the development and expanding the partner universities to be internationalized. This also causes inefficient communication internally.

External communication

The main external stakeholders that are paramount to the fulfillment of SICM's internationalization policy are the current partner universities. It is therefore important that SICM should " provide each stakeholder group with specific information and build a strong reputation across exchanges with all of these stakeholders" (Cornelissen, 2008).

The current communication is not enough with partners; several partners are inactive in the SICM partner university network. It is known that communication is insufficient and ineffective with current partner universities. Next to that, the SICM currently has insufficient data to assess whether the linguistic and curricular criteria of the partner universities are compatible with the ones at SICM.

Not having clear partner network and their respective curriculum selection criteria creates unclearness and hinders successful future partner network selection.

Cornelissen (2008) defines stakeholders as " any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's purpose and objectives".

The key external players regarding the SICM internationalization policy are the current partner universities and the representatives of those universities (i. e. the ones who also deal with partnerships and exchange). A comprehensive stakeholder analysis can be seen in the Power-Interest matrix[3].

Situation analysis

According to a Desk research, the academic curriculums and linguistic requirements at partner universities don't correlate with the ones at SICM;

There are only 10 current partner networks which are " university of applied sciences" out of 83 partner networks;

Currently 63 partner universities which teach in English;

Not all partner universities have both BA and Master academic programs.

As indicated, there has been an ongoing increase in the number of exchange students in the last five years (see appendix 9. 4).

The result of incoming exchange students last five years[4]

In year 2007/2008, there were 46 incoming exchange students from 34 partner universities. In year 2008/2009, there were 44 incoming exchange students from 40 partner universities. In year 2009/2010, there were 56 incoming exchange students from 52 partner universities. In year 2010/2011, there were 67 incoming exchange students from 64 partner universities. In year 2011/2012, there were 82 incoming exchange students from 83 partner universities.

The result of outgoing students last five years[5]

In year 2007/2008, there were 63 outgoing exchange students to 34 partner universities. In year 2008/2009, there were 47 outgoing exchange students to 40 partner universities. In year 2009/2010, there were 59 outgoing exchange students to 52 partner universities. In year 2010/2011, there were 100 outgoing exchange students to 64 partner universities. In year 2011/2012, there were 63 outgoing exchange students to 83 partner universities.

Discernibly there is a misbalance between incoming/outgoing exchange students and the number of partner universities. It is a result from a lack of communication within SICM and with current partner universities. SICM only provides 8 country coordinators to be responsible for 83 partner universities which cause ineffective communication with current partner universities. This result in a lack of information about the motivations behind the decisions that second year ICV students and SICM staff make about their study abroad. Hence, it affects the external communication with current partner universities. As the communication is ineffective in communicating

with partners; SICM is not aware of the current relationship with partners since several current partners are inactive.

Theoretical framework

This section will explain the theoretical framework which will be used for this research. The research will be based on qualitative research and theoretical background with the definitions of some concepts.

The primary research questions are formulated according to three main sub problems. The sub questions will help reveal the overall issues surrounding the main research area. Moreover, the relevant communication theories will support the research for a theoretical approach to the solution of the problem. In Order to limit the research, each primary research question has a subsection has been selected. (see table 1.) Based on this analysis, I will advise Mrs Scehepers to create a balanced university network enhancing ICM standards. This brings up the main question;

How to create a balanced university network enhancing ICM standards through the analysis of SICM student and teacher interest, study programs features, current partner universities features?

Sub-

sections

Main research question: How to create a balanced university network enhancing ICM standards through the analysis of SICM student and teacher interest, study programs features, current partner universities features?

Motivations

Sub problem for RQ 1

Unknown 2. nd year students and teachers motivations/reasons for choosing a particular partner university

Primary RQ1

What are the current CO, CS, IC and IDM students and teachers profiles alike for the exchange period in year 3?

Curriculum

Sub problem for RQ 2

Large number of partner universities due to unclearness in past SICM selection Criteria

Primary RQ 2

What are the correlative academic curriculums (and official study languages) of each partner university of SICM?

Network

Sub problem for RQ 3

Insufficient communication with current partner universities due to the high number of partner universities.

Primary RQ 3

How can SICM restructure their partner network and create more effective communication approach?

The following sections will describe the most essential theories and concepts based on the primary research questions/ sub sections for the actual outcome of this research.

Motivations and Reasons

This research dimension is the interest of student and teacher related to their motives and choices to create a balanced university network enhancing ICM standards through the analysis of SICM student and teacher interest?

Student and teacher motivation is the primary focus in the first primary research area. The meaning of motivation is a complex amalgam of all factors at work at a given point in time that influence an organism's " movement" toward a goal. Like all animals, humans respond to drive states that are governed most basically by hormonal and neural processes (Leise, 2006). Hence, in order to understand student and staff motives, the motivation theory will be applied.

The following theories related to this section will answer the primary research question 1(see table 1.) Moreover, the related theories helped to prepare the semi structured interview questions for both second and third year students.

Cognitive Decision Making Theory and Pull-Push theory

The purpose of the first sub problem is to analyze the factors which influence the motives of students and teacher in choosing a particular partner university. Since it involves qualitative research, there will be a combination of two theories: cognitive decision making theory and push-pull theory for the decision making process. Cognitive decision-making (CDM) is human-like decision-making, it is more like a mental process. This process can be a continues process while interacting with an environment. It can include the most important information about them and the possibility of their application. The theory approaches the understanding of students and teacher interest, their choices and analyzes how they make their decision. Gadomski, A. M. (2006).

The pull-push theory has a big role on decision making process and selection of particular university. The research also identifies the pull strategy of partner universities that students and teachers make their choices according to the certain criteria which match ones at SICM. Apparently, both " cognitive decision making" and " pull-push factors" have a big role on the students' choices. (Mazzarol &Soutar, 2001)

6. 1. 2 Sociology theory

Moreover, this is also supported by sociology theory. As a theoretical point of view, Sociology is actually defined as a science that studies the behavior of large populations like any kind of groups and their own point of views. For many years, students are sent or received in every country for a higher education. The exchange student and staff of SICM are influenced by demographic, economic, geographic, political and social differentials

between sending and receiving countries that " push" student to leave their home countries and that " pull" them to countries that students and staff perceive better opportunities. (Gitzer & Ryan, 2011). I combined this theory with push and pull theory to give better understanding of students' choices and factors that are influenced by. (see table 4)

Dervin (sense making approach)

The concept of sense-making approach has been used during the interviews with second year students of SICM. The theory was developed by Dervin(1989) and this helped answering the primary research question 1; " What is the current CO, CS, IC and IDM students and teacher profiles alike for the exchange period in year 3?" and finding an approach to solve the sub problem." Unknown 2. nd year student and teacher motivations/reasons for choosing a particular partner university".

The sense making is a focus of the approach, how people make sense of their worlds. The sense making attempts to provide a systematic approach to listen to the audience as how they see their situations, past, present, future and how they move to construct sense and make meaning of these situations.(Dervin, 1989, p. 77)

Person treat information as means to ends and not ends in themselves: Their seeking and use of information is best predicted based on how their situations, the constraints they face, the gaps they need to bridge and the kind of bridges they would like to build across their gaps. (Dervin, 1989, p. 77). Dervin(1989) points out that the essential part of the sense making approach is the gap and how people analyze and bridge the gap in their life.

The gap means is the problem that students don't know to which university they want to go for an exchange semester. So applying this to the research area, students define their problems of the situation and constructing a bridge means that they solve this problem. At the stage of bridging the gap, students gather information and absorb it to understand. Then they create ideas which help them to bridge the gap in their life.

Elaboration Likelihood Model(ELM)

In 1993, Elaboration Likelihood Model was presented by Petty and Cacioppo. This theory is a model of persuasion, about the way attitudes are formed and changed and this theory also helped answering the primary research question 1; " What is the current CO, CS, IC and IDM students and teacher profiles alike for the exchange period in year 3?" and finding an approach to solve the sub problem." Unknown 2. nd year student and teacher motivations/reasons for choosing a particular partner university".

The main point of this theory is the overall Elaboration from inactive thinking to active thinking which causes changes in attitudes. There are two different ways which students make their decisions and thus get persuaded by those decisions. According to the extent of the elaboration, Petty states that there are two ways; the central route and the peripheral route to make decision which facilitate persuasion (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986, p. 217)

" The central route involves " message elaboration" in which one thinks carefully about an issue contained persuasive communication. People using the central route are scrutinizing the ideas, and trying to figure out whether they have true merit, and mull over their implications." (Petty and Cacioppo,

1986, p. 217) Most of the students are changing their attitude according to the information they received from a speech or an advertisement which contains a message. Then students are become motivated to think actively and consciously to make decision. And hence they get persuaded which cause changes in their attitude permanently.

The peripheral route do not involves any message elaboration. It only offers a shorthand way to accept or reject a message " without any active thinking about the attributes of the issue or the object of the consideration". (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986, p. 217). Students think of a situation of where to go, what to study or whether should go for study abroad or not without paying attention to any arguments. This leads to make quick decision by relying on a variety of cues that allow them to make quick decision. These cues are; Social proof" everybody thinks the same", Authority" it is as he says", Scarcity" get it before it is too late".

Students who are motivated can take a further and right decision by thinking consciously and make their decision. This can happen with the way of Central route. However; students who stay away from an argument and think surface features of the message that they support the speech or not. It is also related to the emotions. If a student in a good mood and have the idea of where to go strongly, he will make a quick but temporary decision by taking the peripheral route. On the other hand, student will take the central route by doing cognitive work if he is not sure where to go or what to study and this lead permanent change in attitudes. In this case, student take the peripheral route for the decision making process.

Curriculum

This research is aiming at creating a balanced university network enhancing ICM standards through the analysis of study program features. Besides the motivation of students' and teachers', Curriculum is one of the most important areas needs to be analyzed whether SICM should keep all the current partner universities or not according to their study programmes. This bring up the primary research question 2 " What are the correlative academic curriculums (and official study languages) of each partner university of SICM?".

The term " Curriculum" literal translation is " a course" in Greek. The meaning of curriculum was " a racing chariot; currere" means to run. A clear and concise definition of the concept of Curriculum is provided by Kerr " All the learning which is planned and guided by the school, whether it is carried on in groups or individually, inside or outside the school."(quoted in Kelly1983: 10; see also, Kelly 1999).

In regards, Philosophy is part of the curriculum decision as argued by Ornstein(1991); with a framework of organizing schools and classrooms. It provides answers to the questions: what are the school's purposes? How do students learn and what methods and materials to use for this purpose? Etc. Philosophy also enables the students to determine the goals of education, its organization, subject content, and learning and teaching process; generally Philosophy fosters and facilitates experiences and activities to uptake in schools and classrooms. (Ornstein, 1991, p. 102)

As Schepers stated that SICM is an international oriented applied sciences university; mix of international and national students in a class, teaching language is in English, teaching intercultural competencies, they have international dimensions in international education with their educational Philosophy. This links to the" Intercultural dimension", stands for teaching, learning and research in the context of