



University of Algarve

Faculty of Economics

ERASMUS STUDENTS' HOLISTIC LEARNING EXPERIENCES. THE CASE OF
HIGH EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AT THE IBERIAN PENINSULA.

Anna Biernacik

Dissertation

Master in Tourism Organization Management

Research made under supervision of:

Professor Julio Mendes

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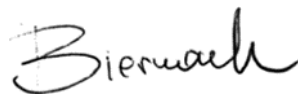
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Work Authorship Declaration

I declare to the author of this work, which is a unique and unprecedented. Authors and works consulted are properly cited in the text and are in the listing of references included.

Anna Biernacik

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Biernacik', with a stylized, cursive script.

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Finally, I would like to thank to all of my friends from all over the world who helped me with the survey and also to create beautiful memories from my time in Portugal and in Italy.

Abstract

Nowadays studying abroad is a popular act among the students and universities all over the world. To promote this kind of education programmes, the EU created the *Erasmus+*. The students travel to other places to gain international education and to experience different opportunities. In the highly competitive market of the higher education, the Universities' image and brand play their role, but the most crucial element is the students' experience which will result in their satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Previous studies, have already addressed this topic of experience and exchange learning programmes, however no attempt thoroughly investigated its influence in the case of students studying in Peninsula Iberia.

Therefore, this study's aim is to assess the Erasmus students' holistic learning experiences at the high institutions of the Iberian Peninsula. Relying on Pine & Gilmore's (1998) conceptualization of the experience and Oh *et al.* (2007) operational scale, students' experiences were measured about the most relevant realms of the experience. The study also sought to verify the impact of the Erasmus experience on the students' academic career and personal development.

This research was conducted with a considerable number of participants (219 students) that have studied under the Erasmus+ programme at a foreign country, i.e. Portugal and Spain. The responders (a convenience sample) were required to respond to an online structured survey. Data analysis was conducted using SPSSv22 software. Frequencies, descriptive statistics and T-tests were used to analyse the data. The main findings indicate that Erasmus students had more entertaining and educational experiences and that the experience was more relevant to personal development than to academic curriculum. The students rated positively the Erasmus experience and were willing to repeat it or recommend it.

Keywords: Erasmus+ exchange programme, tourism experience, experience scale, satisfaction

RESUMO

Hoje em dia, estudar fora do país de residência é um ato popular entre os estudantes e universidades em todo o mundo. Na União Europeia, programas como o Erasmus+ dão a oportunidade aos estudantes europeus de estudar no estrangeiro através de ajuda financeira. Consequentemente, os alunos que viajam para outro país e local para obter outra experiência de educação (estudantes internacionais) têm oportunidade de conhecer e viver experiências diferentes do seu local de residência. Estas vivências constituem uma fonte de informação importante para as instituições do ensino superior, na sua procura de informações que permitam compreender e melhorar a satisfação dos alunos. Num mercado competitivo como o universitário, a imagem da Universidade é essencial para construir uma marca forte, e assim, atrair estudantes internacionais.

Neste sentido, o objetivo deste estudo é avaliar as experiências de aprendizagem holísticas dos alunos internacionais Erasmus nas instituições do ensino superior da Península Ibérica. Tendo como base o conceito das experiências de Pine e Gilmore (1998) e a escala operacional de Oh *et al.* (2007), as experiências dos estudantes foram avaliadas relativamente aos reinos mais relevantes da experiência. O estudo procurou também verificar o impacto da experiência Erasmus na carreira académica e desenvolvimento pessoal.

Esta investigação foi conduzida com um número considerável de participantes (219 estudantes) que estudaram numa instituição do ensino superior na península ibérica ao abrigo do Erasmus+. Foi aplicado um questionário estruturado on-line para resposta de uma amostra de conveniência. A análise dos dados foi realizada no programa SPSS. Frequências, estatística descritiva e testes T foram utilizados para analisar os dados. Os principais resultados indicam que os estudantes Erasmus tiveram mais experiências de Entretenimento e Educação, e que as experiências vividas foram mais relevantes para o desenvolvimento pessoal do que académico. Os estudantes consideraram que a experiência foi positiva e que estariam dispostos a repeti-la e recomendá-la.

Palavras-chave: Erasmus+ programa de intercâmbio, turismo de experiências, escala de experiências, satisfação.

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Abbreviations

EU	European Union
EC	European Commission
WOM	Word of Mouth
B&B	Bed and Breakfast

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Nowadays, the new challenges students face, oblige them to seek new experiences and new learning opportunities (Petersdotter *et al.*, 2017), in order to be better prepared for a multi-cultural competitive labor environment (Banks, 2017). Choosing the right University is an important step for all of students, in fact, it is one of the biggest and crucial decisions of students' life (Green & Celkan 2013). More and more students cross their home country and challenge themselves by studying in a foreign Institution (Petersdotter *et al.*, 2017). In fact, Vossensteyn *et al.* (2010) reveals that the main reasons for participation in the programme is the connection with students' socio-economic background which is primarily influenced by individual preferences.

The Erasmus programme provides a chance for students not only find new experiences, but as well to learn foreign languages and immerse in new cultures (Brown *et al.* 2016; Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005). In some cases, this learning experience (e.g., Erasmus Programme) can even change student's entire life, transforming them internally and externally (e.g. making them more independent or improving their social skills) (Asoodar *et al.*, 2017). As stressed by Van Hoof and Verbeeten (2005), students' shape new expectations beyond a University degree.

The European Commission (EC) exemplifies that students that go to study on exchange programmes can "develop greater intercultural awareness; but they also develop soft skills, such as being able to quickly adapt to changes and new situations, solve problems, work in teams, think critically, be tolerant of different views and communicate effectively" (EC, 2014: 4). Other authors, claim that studying abroad impacts students' life, career paths and future development (Paige *et al.*, 2009).

Although the existence of above mentioned impacts has been proved, it is difficult to generalize those impacts on every individual (Altbach, 1991). The reason appertaining to it, lies in experiences being differently perceived by every individual (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013; Oh *et al.*, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1998). The experiences can depend on various factors for instance: on the university, the student, the environment or many other countless factors. But what indeed is the experience itself? Much in the literature appears to differ around the experiences construct (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Prahalad &

Ramaswamy, 2004; Marshall, 2017) and how and why they were measured (Oh *et al.*, 2007; Novak *et al.*, 1999), while the important is to understand the experiences itself (Marshall, 2017). In this way, the right questions for every study can be applied. Nowadays, participating in an international students' exchange programme is a popular act, one that has led the Erasmus programme to develop quickly. The growth of the number of universities taking part in the programme, as well as students participating in an exchange confirms how European Union (EU) programme is important and how many individuals are involved in it (EC, 2014a; Ryan & Carroll, 2005). The universities competition is intense, which means that is vital for universities deliver unique and engaging experiences for all the students (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013; Tan, 2015). Consequently, the students' satisfaction and word-of-mouth, will increase universities reputation and demand.

Nevertheless, despite previous research (Hosany & Witham, 2009; Oh *et al.*, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1998) investigating the experience concept, little is still known about students' experiences (Teichler, 2002), particularly regarding those that studied in the Peninsula Iberia, a place composed of two different countries and cultures, thus producing two different experiences, or not?

1.1 Problem Statement and Research Objective

The highly competitive market of higher education and the growing number of students willing to study abroad, make it a hard choice for people to choose, where they would like to have their Erasmus academic programme and where their needs as international students can be best met (Hellstén & Prescott, 2004; Tan, 2015). The higher institutions should attract students by offering them engaging (Petersdotter *et al.*, 2017) experiences in all of the four realms (entertainment, education, escapism, (a)esthetics), so that students may have unique civic or social experiences (Mitchell, 2012) that may enable them to have long lasting memories (Zhong *et al.*, 2017). Thus, the study's main objective is to assess the Erasmus students' holistic learning experiences at the high institutions of the Iberian Peninsula. From this main purpose, the following specific goals were set:

- To assess and measure the holistic learning experience in the higher education context;

- To identify positive and negative experiences outcomes;
- To verify the Erasmus experience influence on students' academic curriculum and personal development;
- To assess expectations, satisfaction and return intention.

Since studying abroad is much more than attending classes, is to interact with other people, discover, explore new places and cultures, this study thereby, from a holistic perspective, focuses on the students' learning experiences in relation to all activities, encounters, places they experience during the Erasmus+ programme.

1.2 Research Questions

The Erasmus studying experience allows people to live and to socialize in new environments (Prahalad & Ramasvamy, 2004). Students interact with new people with different cultural background (students, teachers and the local community) and they will live in this new setting full of different experiences, leading utterly to several outcomes. In order to understand the nature of those experiences and to reach the goals mentioned previously (in point 1.1) the following research questions were formulated:

- What kind of holistic experiences the students had during their Erasmus programme studying abroad?
- Is there any difference between the value of the experience when comparing Portugal and Spain?
- Was the Erasmus experience one that contributed most for their academic curriculum or personal development?
- Were they satisfied? Would they do it again? Would they recommend?

1.3 Research Relevance

The students that are thinking of taking part in an academic exchange programme face multiple choices and difficulties, for instance how to be successful in a new learning environment (Ryan & Carroll, 2005). A semester or a year away from their home, family or friends may seem like a lot of time alone in a new culture and new language. Moreover, it can have an extreme impact on students' academic performances as well as to their personal development (Dwyer, 2004; Klapper & Rees, 2012). In this new reality,

students' shape and live experiences that can't be bought (Andersson, 2007). In this study, the concept of experience is explored as an essential ingredient of every student's learning exchange success. It seeks to identify the key elements of the students' experience during their study abroad during the Erasmus programme.

Furthermore, the research will search to clarify the expectations that students have before going abroad. Additionally, this study will explore the level of students' satisfaction with the Erasmus+ after returning home. Consequently, students' Erasmus learning experience (among the different higher institutions) will be analysed and discussed. The research will also show the great influence of Erasmus academic programme on students' personal and career live. Although, there have been already some researchers that conducted some studies on the subject (e.g., Jahr & Teichler, 2002; Mitchell, 2012; Ryan & Carroll, 2005) there is still much to be examined, particularly among two different countries, Portugal and Spain, located in the Western-most part of Europe, which have unique traits, habits and customs.

1.4 Structure of Dissertation

This dissertation contains six chapters. The chapter one, introduction, discusses the problem statement, research objectives, followed by the research questions and relevance. The dissertation's structure is also offered. Chapter two is dedicated to the literature review on the Experience, in the experience economy perspective. In this chapter, the experience economy, the four realms of experience and its dimensions are characterized. The literature review also addressed the expectations and satisfaction. In chapter three, a brief description of the Erasmus+ learning programme, regarding its origin and evolution are explored. In chapter four, the methodology, the research design and methodological procedures for the empirical study are described.

In chapter five, results and discussion, the results of the empirical study are analyzed and explored regarding the survey's structure: a) sample's profile, b) the decision-making process, c) the Experience during the Erasmus programme at the foreign university, d) Expectations and Satisfaction. The last part of this study, chapter six, focused on the main conclusions drawn from the results obtained and presents some implications for high education managers to provide better experiences to their Erasmus students.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Experience Economy

The experience economy and its growing importance have been a topic of interest to many studies (Åstrøm, 2017; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Morgan *et al.*, 2009; Oh *et al.*, 2007; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2013). According to the experience economy authors (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), customers are willing to pay more to enjoy unique experiences, which are a source of competitive advantage. The authors claim, that the success of any organization depends on delivering engaging and memorable customers' experiences. The arrival of the experience economy transformed the industry leading to the industry's concern with evaluating how their customers enjoy the experiences offered (Chang, 2017). In a similar way, universities must also be prepared to provide immersive and engaging experiences to students.

There have been many authors (Andersson, 2007; Jurowski, 2009; Oh *et al.*, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) investigating the experience topic. For instance, Andersson (2007) described the personal image of an experience as something that can't be bought, that is only shaped in the mind of an individual and only the individual has control over it. Oh *et al.* (2007: 120) suggested from a touristic point of view that "everything tourists go through at a destination can be experienced, be it behavioral or perceptual, cognitive or emotional, or expressed or implied". Experiences play this way a crucial role in creating memories and satisfaction (Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2013).

In the higher education context, Castro *et al.* (2016: 424) addressed students mobility and internationalization in higher education and noted that "Our students do need the international experience both personally as well as professionally. Only in this way can they develop intercultural competence, which includes a change of perspective, empathy, etc". Mitchell (2012) argues in the same direction that extensive contact during the Erasmus+ programme by international students with local students makes the intercultural and transnational experience more valuable.

Fligstein (2008) also claims, the experience to help to reinforce the European identity among students.

This search for experiences can also be seen in the labor industry with Niehoff *et al.* (2017: 58) finding that “more and more employers appreciating or even requesting international experiences in applicants”. The authors also found, that studying abroad is a life-changing event that can even provoke a personality change. Moreover, these events will also arouse feelings when students leave their country of origin, since everything that is known to them is left behind when they start to settle in the *new world* (Sawir *et al.* 2008).

In his study about international students in Australia, Sawir *et al.* (2008: 161) found that students can also experience negative feelings like loneliness and isolation, “...we are in a very strange place”, and that the negative feelings occur mostly upon arrival during the first days, when the students realize and miss the lack of family and friends. They concluded, that the creation of stronger bonds between international and local students is the mechanism of overcoming the loneliness.

Dalglish and Chan (2005: 9) support the previous statements and emphasized in their research the importance of the student’s experience “It is vital that institutions are clear about the nature of the learning experience that they are offering students. Not just the content, but the learning processes, the social activities, and the links to potential employers. The marketing activities cannot be divorced from the educational experience. Students share their experiences with potential students”.

Students experiences are crucial for academic and personal development, Universities (at the destination) must find which experiences can be used to positively influence the students. The influence and importance of the experience economy in understanding the customer, i.e., students, leaves no doubt (Morgan *et al.*, 2009).

2.1.1 Defining the Concept

There have been many definitions of the experience concept, to the extent that it has been considered an amorphous construct (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). In this regard, in Table 2.1, a list of several definitions are presented. These authors, highlight, the need to engage individuals in a personal way, enabling them to build their own experience, which is as real as any service (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Prahalad & Ramasvamy, 2004).

TABLE 2.1 DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPT

Author/Year	Definition
Schmitt (1999: 60)	“Experiences involve the entire living being . They often result from direct observation and/or participating in the event – whether they are real, dreamlike or virtual”.
Carbone & Haeckel (1994: 8)	“the take-away impression formed by people’s encounters with products, services, and businesses a perception produced when humans consolidate sensory information”
Pine & Gilmore (1999: 12)	“Experiences are events that engage individuals in a personal way”.
Lemon & Verhoef (2016: 71)	“...customer experience is a multidimensional construct focusing on a customer’s cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensorial, and social responses to a firm’s offerings during the customer’s entire purchase journey”.

According to the authors, the nature of an experience can be understood as a unique, real offering, engaging individuals in such an individual way that it cannot be purchased. Connecting the extremely personal nature of the experience with memory leads to different perceptions of what is the most memorable and extraordinary event, for every student. This underlines the holistic nature of the experience that is felt during the Erasmus programme (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013). Therefore, it is vital to understand what constitutes a holistic experience that is so much pursued and valued by people, i.e., students.

2.1.2 Holistic Experiences

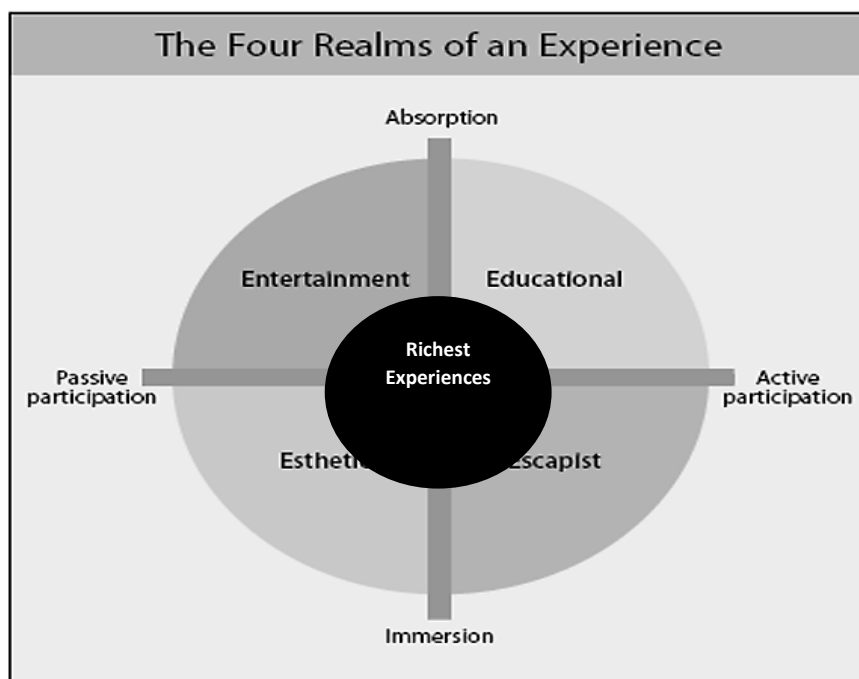
The student’s experiences are relatively a neglected topic of research. On the contrary Pine and Gilmore’s study of 1998 introducing to the academia the experience economy achieve some success. For example, Morgan *et al.* (2009) stated after researching the practices of three tourist destinations, that management and marketing strategies for

tourism destinations should focus on the experience economy. Oh *et al.* (2007: 122) addressing bed and breakfast experiences posit similar position that “The four realms also offer practicality for destination management as they may be easily used for destination evaluations”. These realms can be described with different levels of customer’s connection and customer participation.

As shown in figure 2.1, Pine and Gilmore’s four realms of the experience:

- Customers can be engaged in passive or active participation, i.e., they may affect or not directly the event (horizontal axis). For instance, going to a theater to see the play can represent the passive participation, in contrast to the second experience (active participation) which can be exemplified by surfing (Pine & Gilmore, 1998, 1999; Thanh & Kirova, 2018).
- Customers can also establish a connection with the experience by absorbing (mentally engaged) or immersed (physically or virtually immerse/feeling part of the event) (vertical axis) (Pine & Gilmore, 1998, 1999; Thanh & Kirova, 2018).
As an example, watching TV represents the first kind of connection, while playing computer games is an example of the latter.

Figure 2.1 The four realms of experience



Source: Pine and Gilmore (1998: 102)

All the four realms (Education, Entertainment, Esthetic, Escapist) and dimensions (participation, connection) contribute to form the richest experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2013). These richest experiences contribute to the holistic experience, which represents the total experience (Tsai, 2005). As noted by Schmitt (1999: 53) “the ultimate goal of experiential marketing is to create holistic experiences that integrate individual experiences into a holistic Gestalt” The holistic nature of the customer experience has been conceptualized and applied by several authors in the past (Åstrøm, 2017; Tsai, 2005).

Other authors, also claim the richest experiences to motivate the search for unique and memorable experiences, e.g., tourism (Eusébio *et al.*, 2017). Pine and Gilmore’s (1998) proposition relies on memory as the key outcome of every experience conceptualization. Designers of experiences need for this end, to identify how they can offer more ‘self-beneficial’ experiences to people (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013). Besides the holistic nature of experiences, other factors influence a student’s decision-making, expectations and outcomes of their Erasmus+ learning experience abroad.

2.1.3 Decision-making process

Although there is much information available online about the Erasmus exchange programme, and despite some researchers have studied the topic (Hellstén & Prescott, 2004) there are still some questions to be answered, for example: What are the motivations and most influencing factors when making a decision? In European Commission (EC) research (2017a) top motivations for going on Erasmus+ are to live abroad and meet new people, improve foreign language, and develop transversal skills. Tan (2015) stated that student’s main motivations for choosing the university are families’ and friends’ recommendations.

However, despite the latent or manifested students’ motivation, the decision-making is nevertheless a complex process in which several aspects of the travel are taken into account by the students (Lee *et al.*, 2017). Sirakaya & Woodside (2005) considered it a complicated and risky process, that occurs in stages and choice-sets (e.g., Boavida-Portugal *et al.*, 2017; Decrop, 1999). In this process and stages, many factors related with

internal (personal and psychographic characteristics, e.g., perception, attitudes) and external factors (social and cultural) influence students' decisions (Mill & Morrison, 2009). In this regard, Özdemir *et al.* (2016: 34) found for instance that "... word of mouth is an important and significant factor in students' university decision-making processes".

Korneliussen and Greenacre (2017) also claim, information sources are among the most influential factors (personal experience, recommendations of friends, guidebooks, magazines, catalogs, brochures, internet, agencies and media) during the decision-making. They also posit, this influence to reach to the degree, that there is a relation between geographical location and information source used. Thus, the international student's decision-making process (Cubillio *et al.*, 2006) is not an easy process. The dilemma the students have to go through to choose a University from hundreds available, requires a better understanding from the Universities' managers about the students' decision-making process to be able to attract more students (Tan, 2015).

2.1.4 Influential Factors of Experiences

Nowadays information about higher institutions is present in all kinds of media; like radio, internet, newspapers or magazines. As a result, Universities use advertisement and promotion efforts within the integrated marketing communication plan of their organization to reach consumers and enhance their brand (Duarte *et al.*, 2010; Tsai, 2005). The extremely competitive market of Higher Education requires higher institutions to build a correct and distinctive unique image, to have more and better reputation (Duarte *et al.*, 2010). Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka (2015) agree with this assumption and defend that building a successful image is a key factor to universities success.

The brand image concept was already studied by various researchers. Dichter (1985), theorizes that an image provides the impression that an individual makes of something, which in this case is the University. Keller (1993) on the other hand, describes images associated with the brand, i.e., brand image, as an association of perceptions of a brand in the consumer's memory. Furthermore, Newman (1957: 101) defines the image as "everything that people associate with the brand".

Higher institutions to expand their market awareness to acquire more customers are establishing international partnerships, developing transnational education programs,

which reflects a strategy of are not only focusing in acquiring national students, but also entering in the world market of higher education competition (Padlee *et al.*, 2010). Thus, it is highly important to the analyzed perceived image, as students can possess a different image from the one University's marketing team want to create (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013; Gartner, 1993; Martin & Bosque, 2008). Cooperating with international students can also help the institutions to spread their existence on a global basis (Hamsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2015).

A spoken opinion, suggestion or recommendation on a subject, sharing of students experience with other students can be called word of mouth (Dalglish & Chan, 2005). The suggestion and recommendation (satisfaction or dissatisfaction) passes from one student to another and is one of the most important sources of information for students during decision-making about which university to elect (Özdemir *et al.*, 2016). Potential students often get to know about universities' offerings through word-of-mouth (WOM) (Greenacre *et al.*, 2014). Building trust can influence a student's recommendations and foster positive word of mouth (Filieri *et al.*, 2015).

In this manner, the people students trust the most are able to give them the most influential WOM. Özdemir *et al.* (2016) remind the task that higher institutions should address which is focusing on promoting their positive experiences through this channel (WOM) in order to maintain further success. Another important element while choosing the University is the economic requirements, because students consider these economic barriers during their decisions (Rodriguez *et al.*, 2010; Vossensteyn *et al.*, 2010). Kumwenda *et al.* (2014) also found in a similar context that the destination-choice for studying abroad was influenced by the expenses and the possibility of obtaining scholarships.

The exchange programmes like Erasmus+ that provide grants have a positive influence on students decisions (Crosno & Brown, 2015; Rodriguez *et al.*, 2010). Crosno & Brown, (2015) found also other factors that impact on students' decision to choose the University or destination place: travel aspects (desire to travel abroad), availability of information about the programme (including the timing the information is made available), foreign language skills and willingness to meet other culture. As Vossensteyn *et al.* (2010: 10) reiterate "Students' reasons for participation in the programme are primarily for personal

development: for the opportunity to live abroad, meet new people, acquire “soft skills”, but also to improve foreign language skills”.

2.2 Experience Antecedents and Outcomes

2.2.1 Expectations

Students while going abroad expect to experience extraordinary new things and feelings. These expectations can be centered around: a) the high quality of the teaching, b) to fulfill their education needs and expectations, c) improve the language skills, i.e., mainly English, d) interaction with local students (East, 2001). Peterson (1999) discovered that most students not only expect to find a good job after the student’s exchange experience, but also expect learning support and quality teaching.

Hellstén (2002) suggested that the dominant expectation among the international students is the feeling of “being taken care of”. Similarly, Sherry *et al.* (2004) while researching international students in New Zealand came to the same conclusion, that is, students want to feel secure in the host community. In Dalglish and Chan’s (2005: 7) expectations’ study, they found students to have expectations prior to arrival; and those were mainly based on the fact that “that the curriculum and teaching and learning practices would assist them to get employment”, and that the experiences lived would enable them to have a rich “campus experience”.

Another study by Van Hoof and Verbeeten (2005) suggest that students also tend to pick their foreign institution by the location, consequently their expectations, in this case, depending on the travel aspects of their exchange, in fact their core interest in the programme was chosen by the location of the foreign University which gives the students the opportunity to have a journey. In general, it can be said that expectations are considered as an important factor that affects education experiences (Ferrante, 2017), which means “A university as a service provider needs to uncover students’ expectations, then if necessary educate students to have appropriate expectations and then actually deliver even better service than promised” (East, 2001: 10).

2.2.3 Satisfaction

Focusing on satisfaction not only allows the institutions' managers to focus on experiences, but as well to see how efficient are the existing systems to meet students' expectations (O'Neil, 2003). Universities are becoming more aware of how important is to satisfy students (Usman, 2010). For the WTO (1985), satisfaction is a psychological concept that involves a feeling of well-being and pleasure, resulting from the acquisition of product or service. Tse and Wilton (1988: 204) defined customer satisfaction as "the consumer response to the evaluation of the perceived difference between expectations and the final result after consumption". Students satisfaction is a short-term perception, resulted from the assessment of the received education services (Elliot & Healy, 2001). Oliver and DeSarbo (1989) claim that student's satisfaction is associated with the student's subjective evaluation of the education and the student's subjective assessment.

However, it has been also found that customer satisfaction is the result of the students' evaluation of the academic services, which is based on a comparison of the expectations and service delivery by the institution (Petruzzellis *et al.*, 2006). In this context, Kotler and Fox (1995) theorize that the major part of students are indeed satisfied with their academic programme, but are significantly less satisfied with academic services (e.g. international office).

Previous research showed that students' satisfaction is directly related with the relationship between student's needs and the University environment (Borden, 1995). Elliott *et al.*, (2002), consider that there are five main attributes that significantly influence the students' satisfaction and those are: "valuable course content, registration process, getting the desired classes, availability of the advisor and access to information". However, the authors also found that what caused the dissatisfaction was the long and confusing registration process.

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that nowadays every higher institution is marketing oriented, with teams responsible for the identification of clients' needs and wants, in order to maintain their position in the market. Thus, the experiences and satisfaction levels of each student are highly important, University should have a clearer understanding of

specific experience desired by students, to contribute more effectively to the best strategies of the Higher Institution (Otto & Ritchie, 1996).

2.3 Literature Review Conclusion

Erasmus+ programme is highly popular study abroad programme, the cause of the popularity of the programme can be explained by the fact that international studying experience in the Erasmus context has been known to carry a lot of benefits, such as the linguistic benefits (Klapper & Rees, 2012). The number of students that each year acquire grants to study at foreign Universities according to the European Commission (EC, 2015) continues to rise. Students undertake the chance, an opportunity not only to gain wider knowledge, but also to travel, to meet new people and learn new languages (Brown *et al.*, 2016; Teichler, 2004; Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005).

The mentioned learning programme and the traveling abroad, constitutes an experience, which may impact on students' life, shaping it (Asoodar *et al.*, 2017). However, the experiences are ill-defined, lacking a common ground, despite many researchers studying the subject (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Oh *et al.*, 2007). Among these researchers, some even engaged particularly in assessing students' experiences (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). The experience economy perspective was nevertheless studied to some extent (e.g., Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Oh *et al.*, 2007; Dalglish & Chan, 2005; Knight, 2004, Niehoff *et al.*, 2017).

Pine and Gilmore (1998) defined experiences as events that engage students in a personal way, each of Erasmus students possesses their own, different experience during the exchange. The authors also stated that the richest experiences or holistic experiences are created when individuals can be engaged in all four (educational, entertainment, aesthetic and escapism) realms of experience. Petersdotter *et al.* (2017) studied the experience and the personal development changes after the students' international experience and verified that such experience is sought by the industry (in job vacancies).

Experiences are personal, and every student chooses to create their own specific experience (Prahalad & Ramasvamy, 2004). Knight (2004) talked about the need for international experience to develop intercultural competencies among students.

Furthermore, studying abroad offers the students full access to all four realms of experience (mentioned above) which enables them to create and be engaged in rich and holistic moments (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). But, as mention before, it is each student that decides what dimension of experience he or she wants to be engaged and immersed. The students before going to the exchange have expectations and Universities must be aware of them to be able to fulfill them (East 2001).

On the other hand, the negative outcomes were also found by Sawir *et al.* (2008), such as isolation and solitude. The Erasmus programme can bring satisfaction to students and post-experience belonging (Oliver & Sarbo, 1989), but only if the final result of experience consumption and expectations are positive (Tse & Wilton, 1988).

CHAPTER 3: ERASMUS+, A LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS

“Students mobility – international students who traveled to a country different from their own for the purpose of tertiary study” (OECD, 2009: 308)

Figure 3.1 Logo of Erasmus+ The study abroad Programme



Source: Erasmus+.org

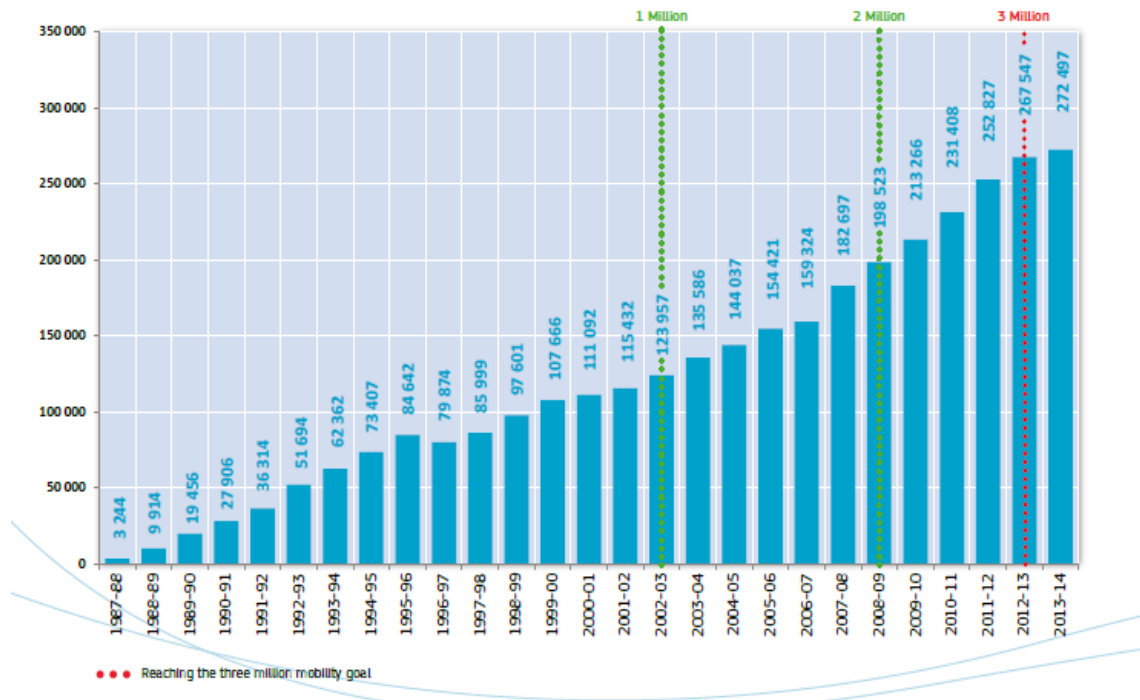
According to Kuptsch (2003) there are two categories of international students. The first category is called “educational inlander” and they are those students who enjoy a secondary education in the host country, and their travel to the country is explained more on the political actions movements rather than educational ones (e.g., immigrants). The second category of students is the “educational foreigner” and their arrival in the new country is strictly based on learning in a higher education programme. Erasmus is a mobility programme for Higher Education which has a huge flow of students, reaching over two million (Gonzalez *et al.*, 2010). In 2017, the programme celebrates its thirtieth birthday, helping students taking on a traveling experience to another country to study.

3.1 The origin and development of the Erasmus+

The programme was initiated in June 1987 as Erasmus and in 2014 its name was changed to Erasmus+ (EC, 2017a). This European Union programme operates in the areas of education, training, youth and sport. The EC (2015) numbers show the popularity of the programme with over 3 million students been involved. Since its launch, Erasmus has had a constant number of approximately 10’000 new students (Figure 3.2) every year. The 2013-14 academic year was historical since Erasmus reached the figure of 3.3 million international students. A few decades ago, being more exact 27 years ago, there were only 3 244 students (Figure 3.2) willing to go abroad to study in a foreign higher institution.

In the same figure, is shown in the academic year 2013/2014 that the number of students that took part in Erasmus+ were 272 000. The number has increased over 83 times in the past 27 years.

Figure 3.2 Growth in student Mobility



Source: EC (2015)

The Erasmus Programme is a European success story (Cairns, 2017; Feyen, 2013). Overall this exchange consists of students staying up to 12 months in a new foreign university, involved in new courses and topics similar to their home University. To this end, two Universities exchanging students, have to sign a deal (learning agreement) which states the duration, courses, credits and administrative rules and rights he or she is subjected at the host university during the programme.

In order to achieve the EU transparency and recognition of the skills and qualifications for each subject undertaken in the forging University, the programme grants ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) points which upon returning to home University are an important evidence for course progression and completion of the semester abroad (EC, 2017a). The very core of the Erasmus exchange is multilingualism and as it is stated this EU project is “a powerful symbol of the EU’s aspiration to be united in diversity” (EC, 2017a: 8). Overall, the main idea of the programme is to provide to

students the idea of intercultural skills, combatting youth unemployment, solidarity, social inclusion, promotion of democratic life in Europe and skills growth for employability and active citizenship (EC, 2017a). In 2014, Brandenburg *et al.* (2014) concluded that students that went on Erasmus exchanged have 50 % lower risk of unemployment than those that stayed at their home country studying. In this regard, the EU Commission (2014a: 5) has set a target that “by 2020 at least 20 % of all graduates should have spent a period of time studying or training abroad. The annual number of Erasmus students accounts for almost 5 % of all graduates...”. This position reinforces the European commission ambition for the programme. Moreover, it also highlights, the importance of assessing the students’ experiences.

3.2 The demand for Erasmus learning experience

The past decades the growth of universities involved in the Erasmus programme increased (EC, 2015), as seen in figure 3.3. At the beginning of 2005, there were 1570 Universities involved with the Erasmus Programme, but by 2014 there were already 3595 Universities. The number of the Universities which offer the exchange programme as part of the academic curricula more than doubled since its beginning.

Figure 3.3 Growth of Higher Institutions Active in Erasmus

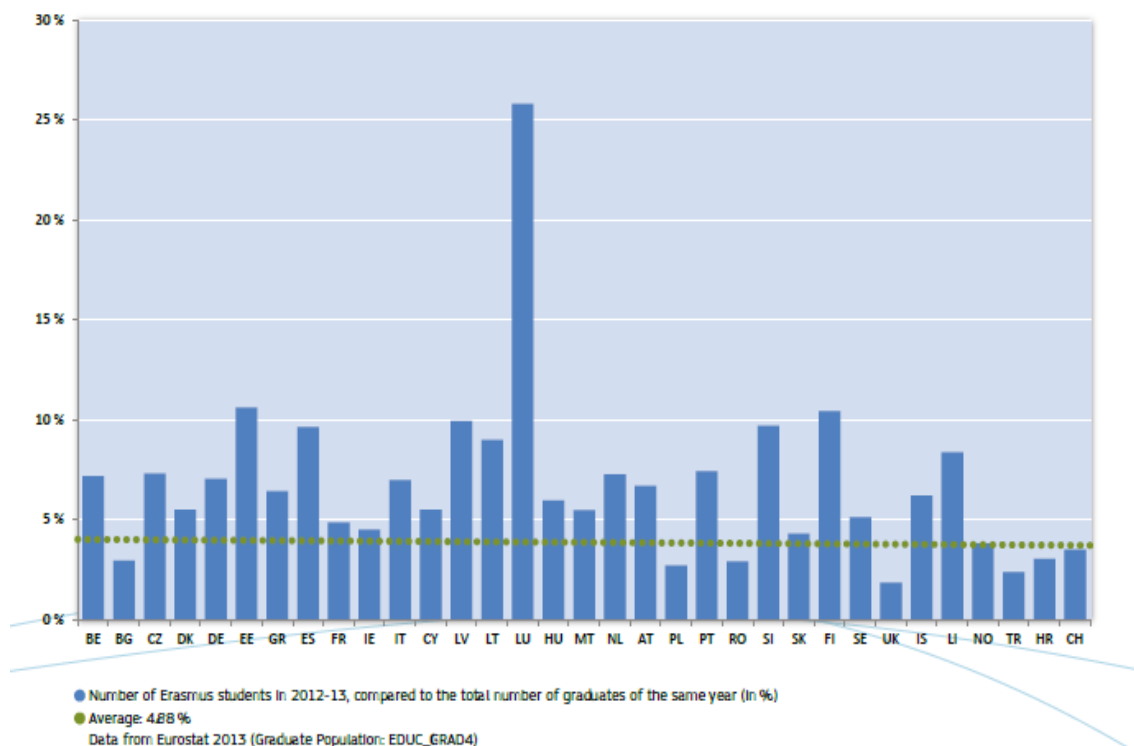


Source: EC (2014a)

Spain in the academic year 2013-2014 was the most popular destination among European students, receiving in total 39 277 students (EU, 2014b). Portugal (the second country selected for this research) in the same years received 10 430 students (EU, 2014a). These two countries combined, received approximately 50 000 students in that academic year. The Figure 4 shows, the relation between the number of graduate and Erasmus students per 2012-2013.

An interesting fact can be noticed that these two countries (Spain and Portugal) have together 10% of Erasmus students, in comparison with the total number of graduates of that year. As mentioned previously, Spain is the most popular country among the international students. Portugal is the country where international students can easily study in English without the necessity to obtain the knowledge of the destination national language. According to (Cairns, 2017) its popularity is also related to low costs of expenses, friendliness of people and the excellence of education.

Figure 3.4 Erasmus students' proportions of graduates (in %)



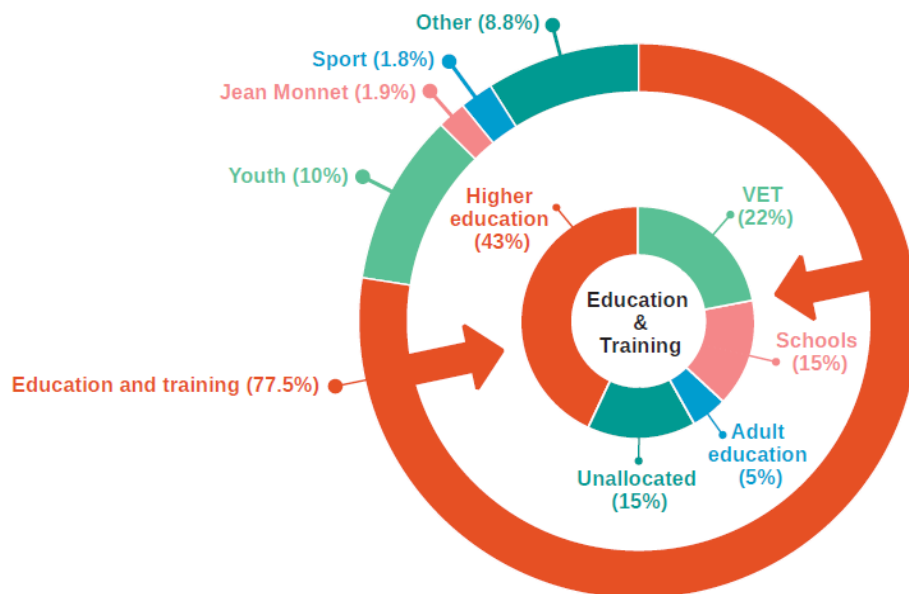
Source: EC (2014a)

3.3 The funding resources

Managing the Erasmus Programme, means managing its budget as well. Founding the mobility of Students in the next six years (2014-2020) will reach 14.774 billion Euros (EC, 2017a). The increase in demand, leads likewise to an increase of financial support for students in the form of grants. The financial support of the EU is crucial for Erasmus Students flows.

Rodriguez *et al.* (2010) have found that Erasmus students' flow is dependent on the financial support of the programme, the difference is in the costs of living and distance. According to the authors, it is also evident that if more financial support is given, the bigger is a number of outgoing students. Cairns (2017) also confirmed this finding, and argued that participation in Erasmus has a connection with the amount of the scholarship given.

Figure 3.5 Division of Funds



Source: EC (2017b)

Among the grants provided (figure 3.5), education and training were with 77% the most requested, along with youth programmes (high school exchanges grants) with 10%. Besides these, other grants were also available, some were not specified (8.8%), but others

such as the Jean Monnet with 1.9% (grants for spreading the knowledge of the European Union) and Sports (grants for extraordinary sports abilities) with 1.8% were. Overall, in 2014-2020 academic year, the Erasmus programme will use two-thirds of the budget to provide scholarships for more than four million people (EC, 2014a).

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

Following the literature review conducted on the subject of Experience Economy, a decision was made to employ Oh, *et al.* (2007) operational scale, using the four realms of the experience, to measure via a survey (see appendix 1) students' learning experiences. The reason for choosing such scale, relied on its robustness and validity with many authors having employed it in several studies in the past (Ali *et al.*, 2016; Hosany & Witham, 2009; Kim, *et al.*, 2010). Equally important is the robustness of the Oh, *et al.*'s (2007: 129) scale which is "likely to be stable across subjects and settings". Another decision made was to use the following operational definition, regarding what is an experience with the study's scope:

Experience(s) is any event or occurrence lived by the students during the Erasmus Programme which creates a unique and personal impression and a long-lasting memory.

As table 4.1 shows, all the important questions were gathered together and afterward, they were divided into four parts (I to IV) in the survey, to make the understanding and completion of the survey easier for the respondents.

TABLE 4.1 DESIGN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Part /Question	Objective	Scale used	Authors
Students Profile			
1.1 - 1.5	To identify the profile of the respondent.	Open-ended questions and single choice questions	Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005; Elliott & Shin (2002).
1.6 - 1.8	To confirm the respondent's fitness to answer the questionnaire.	Open-ended questions	Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005; Elliott & Shin (2002).

Decision Making			
2.1.	To identify the sources of information sought.	Multiple choice	Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005; Elliott & Shin (2002).
2.2	To identify the greatest benefit of studying abroad.	Multiple choice	Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005; Elliott & Shin (2002).
2.3	To identify the reason for selecting the University.	Multiple choice	Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005; Elliott & Shin (2002).
Experience identification			
3.1	To identify the involvement in each of the experience realms.	5 point Likert scale	Oh et al. (2007)
3.2	Students' experience self-identification.	Single choice	
3.3	To assess the level of quality of the experience.	5 point Likert scale	Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005; Elliott & Shin (2002).
Satisfaction			
4.1-4.3	To assess students' satisfaction after the exchange programme, its relevance to their personal and academic development. Also, to identify the likelihood of repeating the experience as well as recommending it.	5 point Likert scale	Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005; Elliott & Shin (2002).

In this regard, the sections created were:

- 1) **Student's Profile** (demographical data questions), the respondents were asked about their age, gender, level of education, place of residence, in which country did they study abroad, the name of the foreign institution, how old were they in the time of their exchange and how long did they study abroad.
- 2) **Decision making** (how the University was chosen): respondents had to state where they searched for the information regarding Erasmus and why did they choose that particular University. Students were also asked what were the greatest benefits of studying abroad.
- 3) **Erasmus experience** at the destination University (the 4 realms of experience), the questions were drawn from the Oh *et al.* (2007) who measured these realms in the B&B (Bed and Breakfast) industry. Initially the authors' scale to measure the experiences consisted of six questions which included each of the four realms. However, "Two measurement items from each dimension were dropped for reasons such as significant cross-loadings, collinearity... " (Oh *et al.*, 2007: 124) for this reason, they were also dropped from this survey and the rest was considered as sufficient to capture the experience involvement.

Remaining four questions for each realm of experience, gave sixteen questions in total. However, during the final revision and pre-test made there was one more question dropped from the questionnaire, which involved the entertainment dimension - I really enjoyed watching what others were doing, since it was very similar to the other three questions in the same dimension. The final number of questions measuring the experience reached fifteen. A five-point Likert scale to answer the questions was used, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Initially Oh *et al.* (2007) used the 7 points Likert scale, but given the purpose of this study and the amount of the questions, the Likert scale was reduced to 5 points (e.g., Ali, Hussain, & Omar, 2016).

- 4) **Satisfaction** – the questions included in this section addressed students 'satisfaction. Respondents were asked to state how satisfied they were with their exchange programme to study abroad, and how would they rate the relevance of their

experience to their academic curriculum and personal development. They were also asked if they would repeat their experience, and/or would they be willing to recommend it (Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005).

The questionnaire consisted of three pages and it was estimated that it would take three to four minutes for the respondents to complete it. Most of the questions were closed-ended. Another question was also added (4.1) which sought through an open-ended question “Why?” (were you satisfied after your Erasmus exchange).

4.2 Data collection

The second step was to launch the questionnaire (online survey). This method has been chosen for two essential reasons. The first reason was to reach the greater participation in the survey in a shorter period of time, the second reason was to obtain better engagement and more interaction in it. After the final correction, the questionnaire (in English language) was launched on the 18th of August 2017 via Google surveys. A pre-test among 7 people was conducted in order to eliminate any difficulties or problems with comprehension of the questions. Moreover, a snowball technique was implemented and the survey was then sent to 40 people (via private message) with the idea of them passing the survey along.

Afterward, in order to get a bigger awareness among the students, the survey via link was posted on the same day in the social network called “Facebook” in the researchers’ personal page. Facebook, the biggest social network, with billions of users around the world, a reliable choice to distribute the questionnaire to a wide population. The questionnaire was also posted on the different Erasmus Facebook groups (Erasmus Madrid, Erasmus Algarve, Erasmus Spain, Erasmus Lisboa, Erasmus Malaga), where exchange students had a chance to express their feelings about the programme. Students had the possibility to participate in the survey until 25th of September 2017.

This was when the survey was taken off the social network and the convenience sample of 219 participants was collected. None of the respondents was excluded. The only limitation of this study was the fact that only students who studied on peninsula Iberia could take part in the study. That is, students whom have spent their Erasmus in Portugal

or in Spain. Those two countries were chosen as a setting of this study because of their popularity among Erasmus students (EU, 2014b). Only in the Academic year 2013-2014 there were:

- Portugal: 6 957 Outgoing students; 10 430 Incoming students
- Spain: 37 235 Outgoing students; 39 277 Incoming students

4.3 Data Analysis

The data retrieved from the questionnaires, was afterward computed into an excel sheet. This data in the excel file, was later analyzed with the programme IBM SPSS Statistics 22.

An initial characterization of the sample was made by performing the descriptive statistics. The result of socio-demographic data was analyzed using frequencies and has been put into tables, graphs and charts. The decision-making process was analyzed using frequencies as well. The results are shown in tables.

In order to measure correctly the core of this research; that is the experience abroad and check if the data is reliable, the Cronbach reliability test was made. Moreover, the level of agreement of each realm of experience was calculated and put into charts and tables. The mean of each statement in the realm of experience was calculated as well and had been put into a figure where the results are clearly presented.

Students' satisfaction values were calculated using frequencies which were visualized in Tables. Furthermore, the T-tests have been performed on the data, in order to compare the satisfaction level between students studying in Portugal and Students studying in Spain. The results were presented in Tables. As for the open-ended question, the results were analyzed using an online word-cloud converter, wordit.net, where each word enables the creation of word clouds, and these clouds represent the words with greater prominence of words (i.e., those which are more frequent, repeated in the answer text) (Schill, 2016).

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter the results of the analysis of the data are presented. As the survey was divided into 4 parts as subchapters of this chapter will discuss subsequently the results of each section (part) of the questionnaire.

5.1. The Erasmus student's profile

This subchapter is going to describe the results of analysis of the first part of the questionnaire that is the socio-demographic data of the sample. The socio-demographic characteristics of the survey respondents are presented below (see Table 5.1). The sample of this study consist of 219 responses. The descriptive statistics of participants of this survey are listed below (Table 5.1):

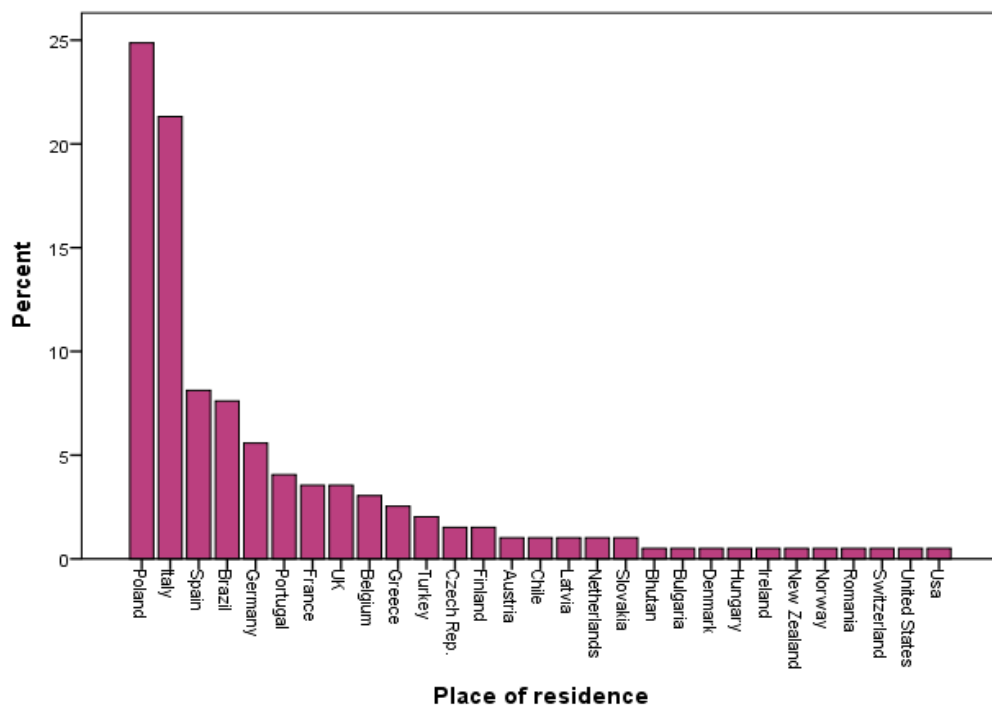
Table 5.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

Variables	Distribution of answers
Gender	Female: 112 (51,1%); Male 107 (48,9%)
Age	20-28: 92 %; 29-36: 8 %; mean: 24.4; mode: 25; std. 2,349
Place of Origin	Poland 24,87%; Italy 21,31%; Spain 8,12%; Brazil 7,61%; Germany 5,58%; Portugal 4,06%; Other nationalities 28,45% (each one lower than 4%)
Place of an exchange	Spain: 35,16%; Portugal 64,84%
Education level	Undergraduate: 66 (30,1%); Finishing Undergraduation course: 35 (16%); Postgraduate: 34 (15,5%); Masters' degree: 78 (35,6 %); PhD: 6 (2,7%)
Duration of the programme	1 semester: 57,80%; 1 year: 34,86%; More than 1 year: 7,34%

A total of 107 males and 112 females, accordingly 48,9 % (males) and 51,1% (females) took part in the survey, which represents a balanced sample. The results show that most of the students were in their mid-20s: 25% of the students had an age lower than 23 years

old; 50% of the students had lower than 24 years old; and 75% lower than 26 years old. The oldest participant was 36 years old and youngest one 20 years old. The mean of the students' age was 24. The standard deviation of the sample is 2,349. The next question, sought to identify the place of origin. As visualized in figure 5.1, the most popular nationality among the survey participants was Polish (49 respondents) with almost (25%), the second place belong to Italian nationality with 42 responses (22 %).

Figure 5.1: Place of residence



Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

According to the findings most of the participants went on an exchange programme on their Masters' degree (78 participants: 35,6 %) , the second most common level of education was Undergraduate with 66 participants (30,1%), the next level was those that were finishing an Undergraduate course (16%) and Postgraduation (15,5%), and the last was a PhD with only 2,7% of the participants.

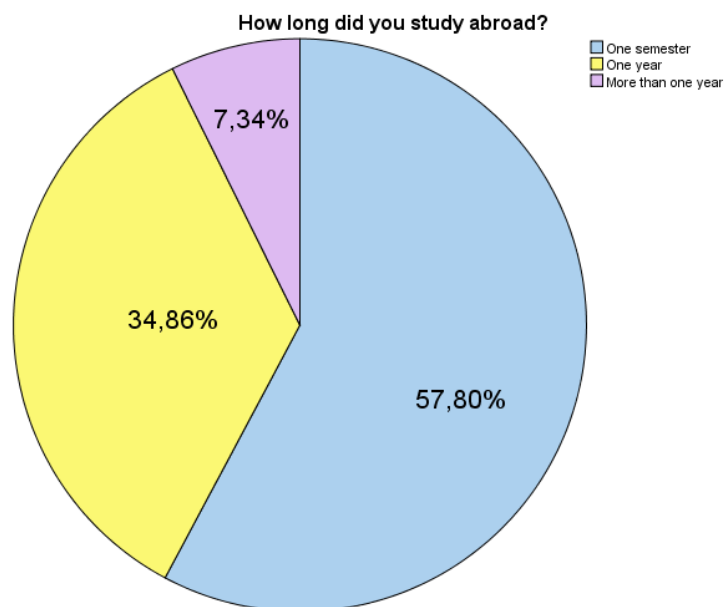
Table 5.2: Level of Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Finishing Undergraduation course	35	16,0	16,0	16,0
	Undergraduate	66	30,1	30,1	46,1
	Postgraduate	34	15,5	15,5	61,6
	Masters	78	35,6	35,6	97,3
	PhD	6	2,7	2,7	100,0
	Total	219	100,0	100,0	

Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

As shown in figure 5.2, students have mostly undertaken the studies for one semester (126 participants, 57,5%), One-year studies were in the second place (with 76 students, 34,7%) and only 17 students (7,3%) spend more than one year studying abroad.

Figure 5.2: Duration of the study abroad



Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

The next question in the survey referred to the choice of the country to study. As can be seen in table 5.3, 64,84% of the participants studied in Portugal and only 35,16% went to Spain.

Table 5.3 Country of study abroad

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Portugal	142	64,8	64,8	64,8
	Spain	77	35,2	35,2	100,0
	Total	219	100,0	100,0	

Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

Participants were also asked about the University (within the destination country) they selected to study (see Table 5.4). The most popular University among the students' responses was the University of Algarve (39%), followed by the University of Malaga (19%) and by the University of Evora (6%).

Table 5.4: Foreign higher institution selected for Erasmus+ by the samples' respondents

		Count	Column N %
Name of the foreign institution :	University of Algarve	79	39,1 %
	University of Malaga	38	18,8 %
	University of Evora	12	5,9 %
	University of Porto	5	2,5 %
	University of Lisbon	5	2,5 %
	University of Granada	5	2,5 %
	University of Barcelona	5	2,5 %
	University of Cadiz	4	2,0 %
	Polytechnic Institute of Viseu	4	2,0 %
	University of Valencia	3	1,5 %
	University of Coimbra	3	1,5 %
	University of Almeria	3	1,5 %
	Universidade Nova de Lisboa	3	1,5 %
	Technical University of Lisbon	3	1,5 %
	Complutense University of Madrid	3	1,5 %
	Instituto Piaget	2	1,0 %

Source: Own elaboration using Spss software

To summarise, the majority of students taking part in the survey were in their mid-20s. Among them there was a rather equal amount of females and males. The biggest nationality among the sample was Polish, following one was Italy and the third place belonged to Spain. Moreover, it was found that students spent mostly 1 semester abroad. These findings correlate to Van Hoof and Verbeeten (2005).

5.2 Decision-making process

This subchapter is going to describe the results of an analysis of the data-involving student's decision-making process. First of the three questions that contain this subchapter, addressed where did the students search for information (table 5.5). The majority of the respondents stated that they got the information about Erasmus+ at the faculty services (75,3%), among friends and relatives (26,9%), in the Internet using websites and social media 34,4% and directly with the destination universities (16,1%). There were four students (2,2%) who stated that they searched for the information about Erasmus in other sources.

Table 5.5: Sources of information for decision-making~

		Count	Column N %
Where did you searched for information regarding your erasmus options?	At the faculty services	140	75,3%
	Among Friends and Relatives	50	26,9%
	In the Internet using websites and social media	64	34,4%
	Directly with the destination universities	30	16,1%
	Others	4	2,2%

Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

In the following question, the participants were asked to state what the greatest benefit of studying abroad was. The results shown in Table 5.6 demonstrate that “Meeting new people, party and traveling” has been considered by the sample as the greatest benefit (140 respondents). As the second most popular benefit, 126 students have chosen “Learning new language, new culture” answer.

Table 5.6: Main benefit of studying abroad

		Count	Column N %
What do/did you consider to be the greatest benefit of studying abroad?	Meeting new people , party , travelling	140	63,9%
	Learning new language , new culture	126	57,5%
	Staying away in a new country , living the adventure	105	47,9%
	Studying at this foreign University , living campus life	79	36,1%
	Cohabiting with international students	69	31,5%
	Total	219	100,0%

Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

In the last question of this subpart; which referred to reasons why students have chosen the particular foreign institution, 122 students stated that the reason for selecting the University was *people I know also go/went there*. Other 83 students stated that it was available *as a partner of the home institution*, 63 students, *heard of its reputation*, for 23 students it was a *cheap alternative*, while for 12 students they *could not go anywhere else*.

There were also 8 students who pointed out other reasons for selecting foreign University, where students stated that: a) *I have already been there and wanted to go back*; b) *I could study in English there*; c) *It offers 1 year contract from the begging (without need of stressing out while trying to prolong stay after 1st semester)*; d) *I like how the subject I studied is represented in that country*; e) *I had local friends in this city*; f) *Spanish language*.

Table 5.7: Reasons for selecting the institution

		Count	Column N %
Why did you select the particular Institution you studied at as an exchange student?	People I know also go/went there	122	58,7%
	It was available as a partner of my home institution	83	39,9%
	I had heard of its reputation	63	30,3%
	It was a cheap alternative	23	11,1%
	I could not go anywhere else	12	5,8%
	Others	8	3,8%

Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

Findings showed that the most common source to find information about the exchange programme Erasmus is the information provided by the home faculty. Regarding the Institutions' choice, students considered the greatest benefit of studying abroad to be related with: a) Meeting new people, partying, traveling, b) Learning a new language and new culture, c) Staying away in a new country, living an adventure. Previous researchers such as Brown *et al.* (2016), found that students tend to choose their Universities based on travel aspects, information available about the exchange programmes, foreign language skills and willingness to meet other culture.

Students tend to position travel, language and new culture as the most important factors. The same was found by Van Hoof and Verbeeten (2005), which claim that students also tend to pick their foreign institution based on the location of their host institution and also the opportunity to see the world besides the academic location. Teichler (2004) also claims students want to travel in order to meet people, enjoy life and having "culturally rich and linguistically valuable experiences". Moreover, for some respondents, the importance of learning a foreign language for students was expressed by "I could have my classes in English "or "Finally I could learn Spanish".

They also mentioned the main reasons for selecting the University at the destination (Portugal or Spain): a) references from friends and family, b) availability of the higher institution as a partner of the home institution, c) reputation of the destination's institution. A prominent factor that affects the selection of a foreign institution is the social factor (reference). Student's select institutions according to references from people they know with past experience of the locations or from other students which are going there with them, i.e. word of mouth (WOM).

Greenacre *et al.* (2014) also found WOM as an important element for potential students to know about Universities offerings. Another common response among respondents was that the foreign institution was elected because it was available, as a partner institution to their home institution. The school's reputation influenced also the students' decisions. Similar findings were found by Dalglish and Chan 2005, which claim that students tend to choose their "new" University based on the reputation of the institution or particular subject offering. At last, for the main reasons for selecting a higher institution at the destination, was the financial aspect. However, it should not be forgotten that the financial support is given to all of the Erasmus students. In this regard, Rodriguez *et al.* (2010) found Erasmus students flow (movement) to be dependent on the financial support of the exchange programme.

5.3 Erasmus Experience at the Destination University

This subchapter will reveal the analysis of the Erasmus experience, respondents were invited to rate their experience in the higher institution abroad, within Pine and Gilmore's (1998) four realms, regarding their agreement or disagreement with the statements presented.

The Alpha Cronbach's test was also performed in order to check the reliability of the data, especially to verify if the analysis of data has accurately measured the variables of this study interest. The results of Alpha; $\alpha = .893$, can be considered as "Good", i.e., this high reliability means that in fact it measures the Experience and the target constructs of the model were measured reliably.

Table 5.8 – Cronbach Test

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,893	,902	15

Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

The first realm inquired was the Educational (The experience made more knowledgeable, I learned a lot, It stimulated my curiosity to learn new things and It was a real learning experience). The results (table 5.9), demonstrate respondents to have felt that their experience abroad made them more knowledgeable. Altogether, the statements, regarding becoming “more knowledgeable”, learning “a lot” and learning “new things” collected almost half of the respondents’ agreement with 48,40%, 42,92% and 44,29%, respectively. Another positive note, was the level of disagreement (strongly disagree, and disagree), with both representing less than 10%, in all statements. This finding is congruent with Pine and Gilmore’s (1998) view that experiences should enable customers to learn new things.

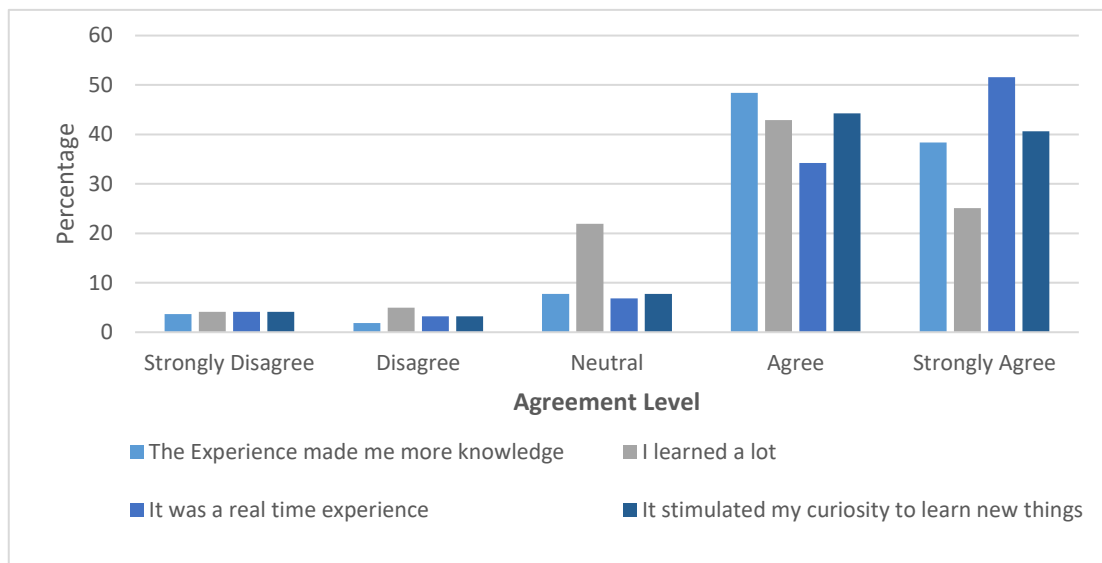
Table 5.9 - Agreement level in percentage - Education

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Experience made me more knowledge	3,65	1,83	7,76	48,40	38,36
I learned a lot	4,11	4,94	21,92	42,92	25,11
It was a real time experience	4,11	3,20	6,85	34,25	51,60
It stimulated my curiosity to learn new things	4,11	3,20	7,76	44,29	40,64

Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

Nevertheless, despite the overall positive agreement as the figure 5.3 shows, its percentage among the sample never attain high levels, i.e., values higher than 50%. The exception, was the “real time experience” with 51,60%. In this context, authors Oh *et al.* (2007) findings on the other hand, had a higher level of agreement, probably due to the different context of their study.

Figure 5.3 - Agreement level in percentage – Education



Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

The second realm explored was the Entertainment, where three statements were available to explore for students (Activities of others were fun to watch, watching others perform was captivating, Activities of others were amusing to watch). “Agree” with these statements had the highest variable on this chart, and each one of those statement collected more than 40% of all responses (see Table 5.10), what is more is that the level of Agreement (Agree, and Strongly agree) in each one of those three options reached over 50% and the level of Disagreement never reached more than 11 % which suggest that students in fact were involved in the Entertainment realm. This finding is also congruent with Pine and Gilmore’s (1998) view that entertainment experiences amuse people and are passively enjoyable factors.

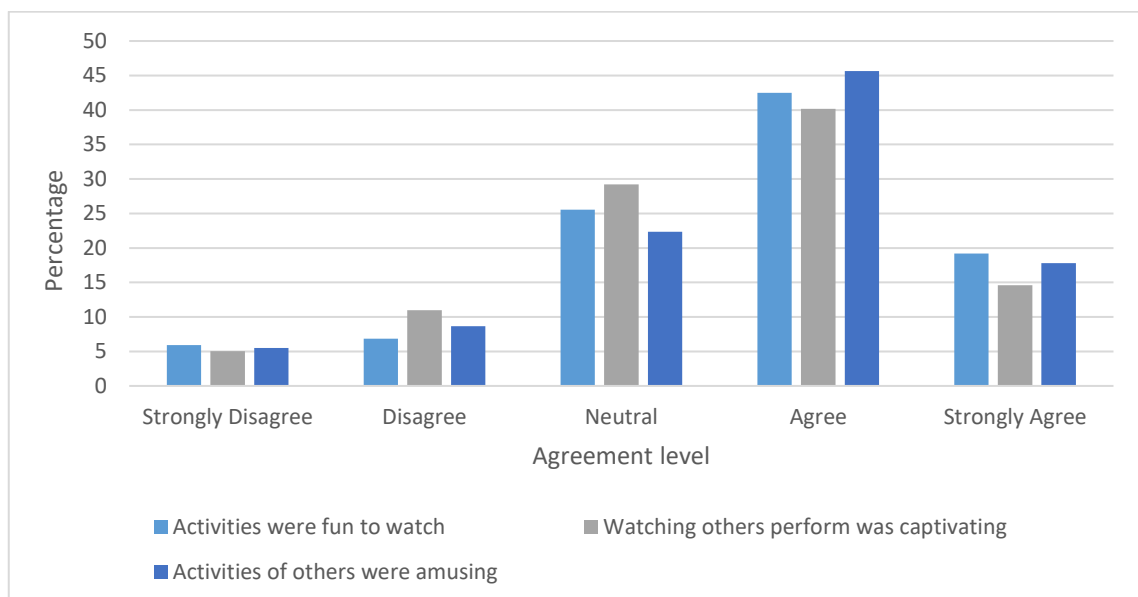
Table 5.10 - Agreement level in percentage - Entertainment

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Activities were fun to watch	5,94	6,85	25,57	42,47	19,18
Watching others perform was captivating	5,02	10,96	29,22	40,18	14,61
Activities of others were amusing	5,48	8,68	22,37	45,66	17,81

Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

Nevertheless, as well in this realm high values over 50% were not obtained (see Figure 5.4). Although the Neutral responses level is high, the Agreement value on the chart is the highest one, whereas the “Activities of others were amusing” had 45% agreement. However, although findings of Oh *et al.* (2007) were not statistically relevant they stated that Entertainment dimension may be related to the special event or programme at the destination, as in this case.

Figure 5.4 - Agreement level in percentage - Entertainment



Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

The third analyzed dimension was the Aesthetic (I felt a real sense of harmony; Just being there was very pleasant; The setting was pretty bland; The setting was very attractive). This realm consisted of four statements where one of them: “The setting was pretty bland” was considered as the negative (see Table 5.11). This item gathers stronger “Disagreement level” (36, 98%) than “Agreement level” (32,42%), which suggest that the respondents do not consider the setting being dull but rather attractive, “Agreement level of The setting being very attractive” reached 75,35%.

Further analysis also revealed students agreeing on feeling a sense of harmony (45,66%) and feeling pleasant (42,01%). In addition, the agreement level of the statement “I felt a real sense of harmony” reached over 69% and likewise “Just being there was very pleasant” reached more than 79%. As Pine and Gilmore (1998) argued in the past, the Students in this study also indulged themselves in the new environment.

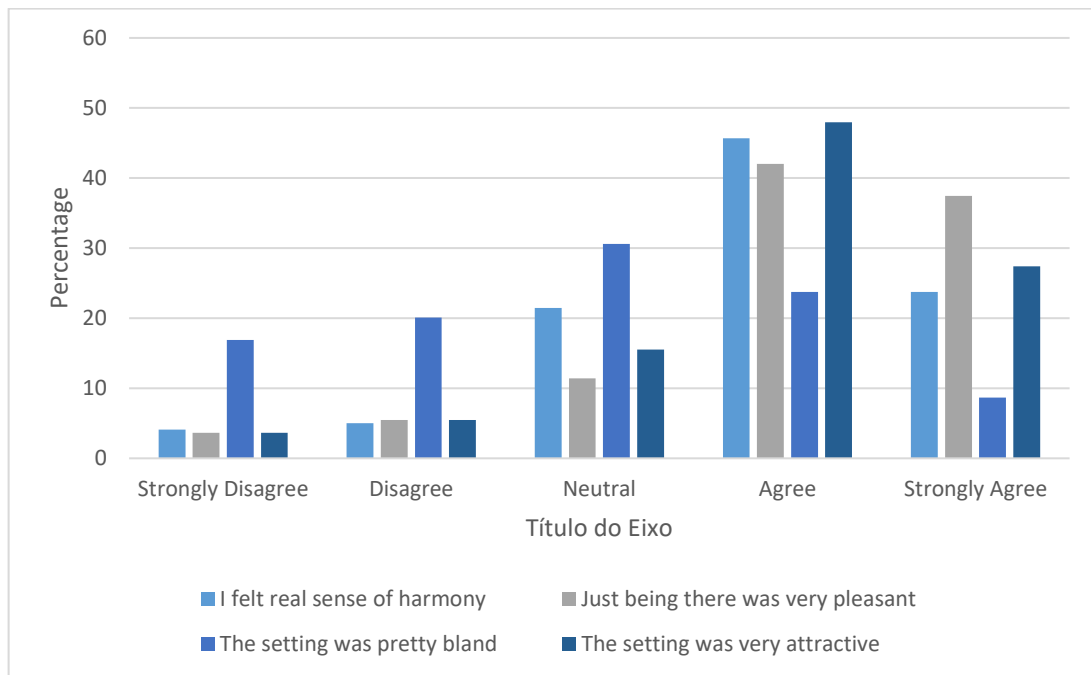
Table 5.11 - Agreement level in percentage - Aesthetic

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I felt real sense of harmony	4,11	5,02	21,46	45,66	23,74
Just being there was very pleasant	3,65	5,48	11,42	42,01	37,44
The setting was pretty bland	16,89	20,09	30,59	23,74	8,68
The setting was very attractive	3,65	5,48	15,53	47,95	27,40

Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

In Figure 5.5, where the Agreement level can be visualized, “Agree” option can be noticed, however none of them reached 50 %. The exception of that group is the bar of “The setting was pretty bland” item which’s bar is significantly low. As in the study of Jurowski (2009), this items can be classified as passive immersion, students enjoy and appreciate being in this new environment.

Figure 5.5 - Agreement level in percentage - Aesthetic



Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

The last inquired realm is Escape (I felt I played a different character there, I felt like I was living a different time or place, The experience here let me imagined being someone else, I completely escaped from reality). This realm of the experience was met with a big disagreement when comparing to the other realms, however the overall value of the Agreement level was higher in all the statements.

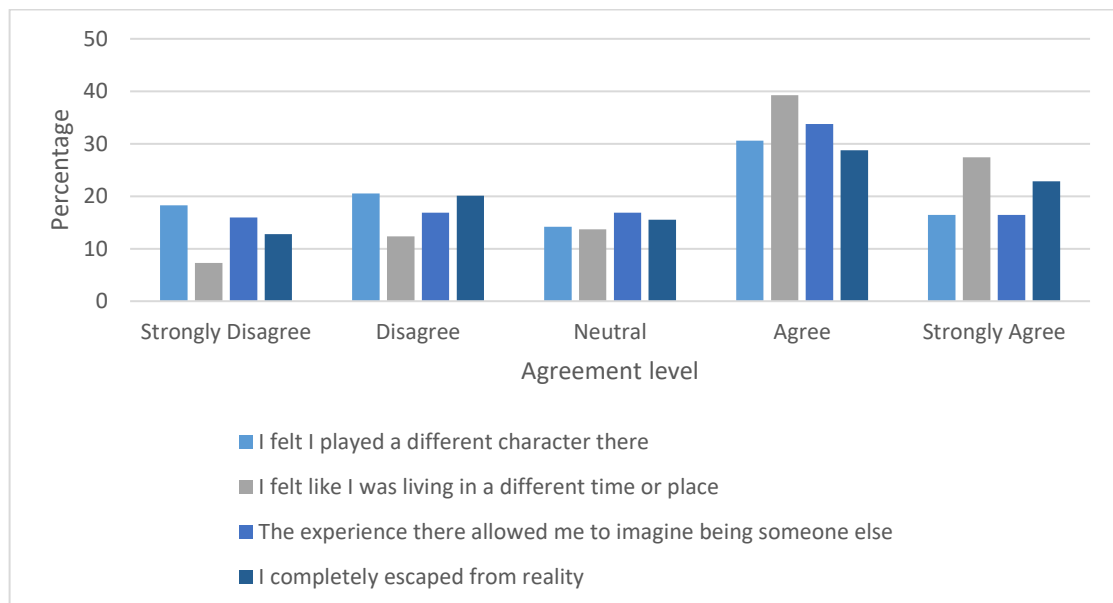
Pine and Gilmore's (1998) Escapism realm enabled students to diverge to their new self, and here the student's participation is visible. These elements found can be related to Oh *et al.* (2007) that have argued that the Escapist realm has been the key motivator for traveling. For visualizing the level of Agreement in the Escapism realm another chart has been concluded (Table 5.12). The first two groups which represent the level of Disagreement are relatively low, with the highest values not higher than 21%.

Table 5.12 - Agreement level in percentage - Escapism

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I felt I played a different character there	18,26	20,55	14,16	30,59	16,44
I felt like I was living in a different time or place	7,31	12,33	13,70	39,27	27,40
The experience there allowed me to imagine being someone else	15,98	16,89	16,89	33,79	16,44
I completely escaped from the reality	12,79	20,09	15,53	28,77	22,83

Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

The third group represents the students whose answers have been neutral. The fourth and fifth group represent the level of Agreement where the highest values were noticed, however the highest level “ I felt like I was living different time or space” doesn’t reach 40% of the overall number of answers. It becomes evident that students were engaged in this realm.

Figure 5.6 - Agreement level in percentage - Escapism

Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

When looking at the overall results it becomes obvious that students' involvement in all four of the realms existed which could lead to the creation of the unique experiences. Figure 5.7 consists of the means of the data, in the SPSS programme the value of "5" was described as Strongly Agree and "1" Strongly Disagree. Therefore, the higher mean indicates a stronger value, subsequently those highly significant means were found in the "Educational" realm. With the statements such as:

- *It was a real-time experience;*
- *The experience made me more knowledgeable;*
- *It stimulated my curiosity to learn new things;*

These findings show that students were mostly involved in the Educational realm of experience. However, referring to the other dimensions, the means are significantly low in other statements as well. Which means that the majority "Agrees" with the statements and was engaged in other realms as well. However, not as much as in the Educational dimension.

Furthermore, the comparison between the Students who went to Spain and students who went to Portugal for an Erasmus, have been made. However, there was not a significant difference between the Portuguese exchange students and the Spanish. Accordingly to this sample, students from these two countries have had relatively similar experiences and not many differences were mentioned.

Figure 5.7 – Means of students’ level of agreement in Peninsula, Portugal and Spain



Source: Own elaboration using Excel software

The next question regarded the self-measurement of the holistic experience, it was asked of participants to state overall; what kind of experience was the most impacting for them. This multiple-choice question had four possible answers (Educational experience, Entertainment experience, Aesthetic experience or Escapist experience). The majority of the respondents (see Table 5.13) chose the Entertainment dimension (with 168 answers, 78%) as the most important one, followed by the Educational experience with (118 responses, 54%). The main reason for going studying abroad is the educational dimension, however, students consider the entertainment is the most relevant of all, during the Erasmus+.

Another question could be asked, if students are looking for learning experiences or entertainment? Or even what led to their educational experiences not be so relevant, when assessed globally. What is interesting is that student's self-evaluation of the realms consider the Escapism dimension in the last place, differently from the view of Oh *et al.* (2007), that argue that people usually involved in escapist experience draw this involvement from travel motivation. However, students in this research when self-examining did not feel engaged in the Escapism dimension that much.

Table 5.13 - Global Experience self-identifying the most relevant dimension

		Count	Column N %
The experience of studying abroad was globally mostly composed of:	Educational (learning)	118	54,1%
	Entertainment (fun)	168	77,1%
	Aesthetics (beautiful setting)	72	33,0%
	Escapism (evasion)	41	18,8%

Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

The last question of this subchapter, referred to the overall experience abroad. In the table 5.14 below, the vast majority of the respondents stated the quality of the experience to be "Strongly Relevant"; 57, 53% of the sample.

Table 5.14 - Overall Quality of the Experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Relevant	126	57,5	57,5	57,5
	Relevant	85	38,8	38,8	96,3
	Undecided	6	2,7	2,7	99,1
	Irrelevant	1	,5	,5	99,5
	Strongly Irrelevant	1	,5	,5	100,0
	Total	219	100,0	100,0	

Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

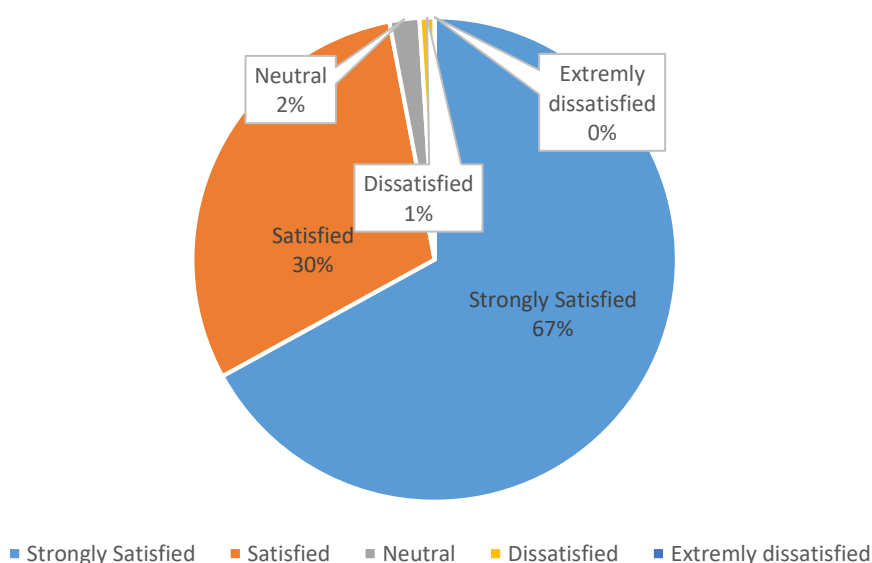
Results indicate that the initial scale of Oh *et al.* (2007) for B&B industry when applied to measure the experience during students' study abroad is reliable and in fact indicated students' involvement in realms. Students answered that they were engaged in rich experiences and that the time spent abroad was "the best time of their lives". However, students were mostly involved in the Educational (learning) and Entertainment (fun) types of experiences. Student's also rated the relevance of the exchange programme to be very important to their personal development, and rated the overall quality of the experience abroad, "Strongly relevant".

The main differences between the two countries Portugal and Spain Erasmus Experience, were also assessed, with the answers found not showing significant differences between Portuguese and Spanish student's experiences. Although, the number of respondents was not equally divided - Portugal (65%), Spain (35%), the findings of this study show, nevertheless, that there are no differences, e.g., compared means between students studying in Portugal and Students studying in Spain. It shows in this case, that the Erasmus experiences do not change regarding the place.

5.4 Outcomes of the Experience

In this subchapter the topic of students' satisfaction is analyzed. For the question "How satisfied are you with your Erasmus experience?" Students responded in general, that they were "Strongly satisfied" (67%) or "Satisfied" (30%). Which is overall, more than 97% of the Satisfaction level. Overall, neutral opinion (2%) and dissatisfaction (1%) was almost non-existent.

Figure 5.8 – Satisfaction percentage of How satisfied are you with your Erasmus Experience?



Source: Own elaboration using Excel software

The following question, sought to measure the relevance of the experience by asking “How would you assess the relevance of your experience abroad?”. The level of relevance of the exchange was measured for two factors: personal development and academic curriculum. In order to check if the means of these two groups differed from each other a T-test was conducted (Table 5.15) and the following hypotheses were tested:

H₀– Relevance of the experience to personal development = Relevance of the experience to the academic curriculum.

H₁– Relevance of the experience to the personal development \neq Relevance of the experience to the academic curriculum.

Table 5.15 – T-Test for Personal Development versus academic curriculum

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
To your personal development	3,46	219	,773	,052
To your academic curriculum	2,96	219	,997	,067

Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

Therefore, according to table 5.15, there was a significant difference in the scores for relevance of personal development ($M = 3,46$, $SD = 0,77$) and relevance of academic curriculum ($M = 2,96$, $SD = 0,99$). The relationship between these two variables was made regarding their significance, with the result indicating to significant ($p < .05$).

Hypothesis H_0 has been rejected and Hypothesis H_1 has been accepted, which means that the relevance of those two factors is not the same and one is more important than the other. Mean of “personal development “has been found higher which in this case mean that the sample considered it to be of greater importance. This is congruent with authors Hoof and Verbeeten (2005) findings, since in their perspective, experiences are intrinsically personal (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Prahalad & Ramasvamy, 2004).

Moreover, the other two T-test had been conducted in order to check if there is any difference of means of the data between students in Spain and Portugal. A T-Test was once again performed as shown in Table 5.16, and findings revealed there is not any significant difference between students in Portugal (to personal development Mean=3,47; to academic curriculum Mean = 2,87) and students in Spain (to personal development Mean =3,44, to academic curriculum Mean = 3,12). In both cases, the T-test was made, and findings showed the relevance of the personal development to be higher than the academic curriculum.

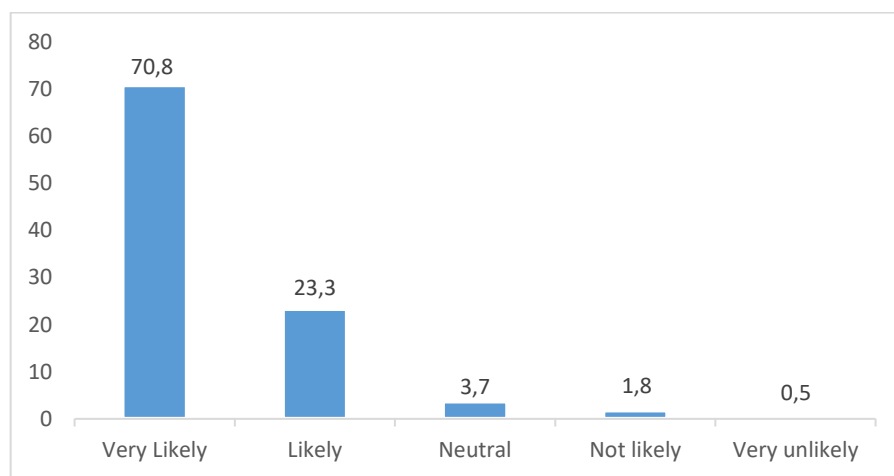
Table 5.16 – T-Test for Portugal and Spain

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Portugal	To your personal development	3,47	142	,760	,064
	To you academic curriculum	2,87	142	1,003	,084
Spain	To your personal development	3,44	77	,803	,091
	To your academic curriculum	3,12	77	,973	,111

Source: Own elaboration using Spss software.

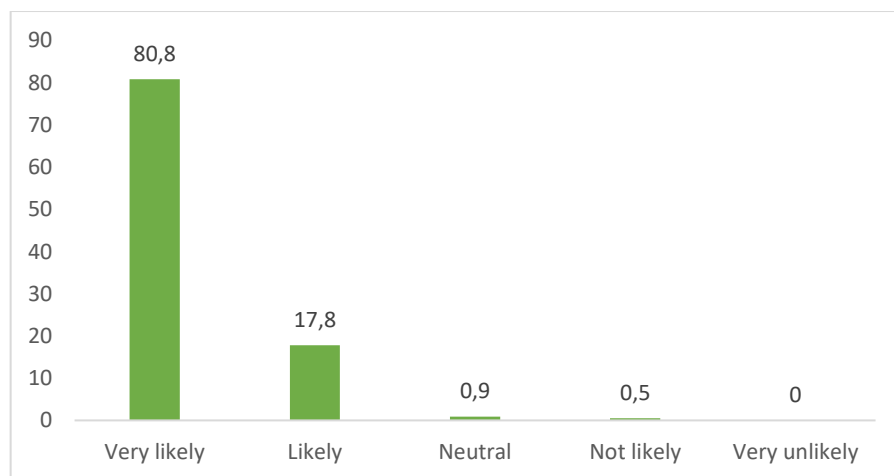
The next questions, addressed the intention of the respondents in: a) repeating the experience, b) recommending it, and c) Rating it positively on social media. Figures 5.9 – 5.11 contain the retrieved answers in percentage. Regarding the students' intention after the experience, 70,8% mentioned they would repeat it. Similar conclusions were found in Hoof and Verbeeten's (2005) study. They would also "very likely" recommend it to friends and family (81%). Lastly, the participants were asked if they would rate it positively on social media and the results were that they would do it very likely with 72%.

Figure 5.9 – Level of likelihood in the percentage of: Repeat your experience



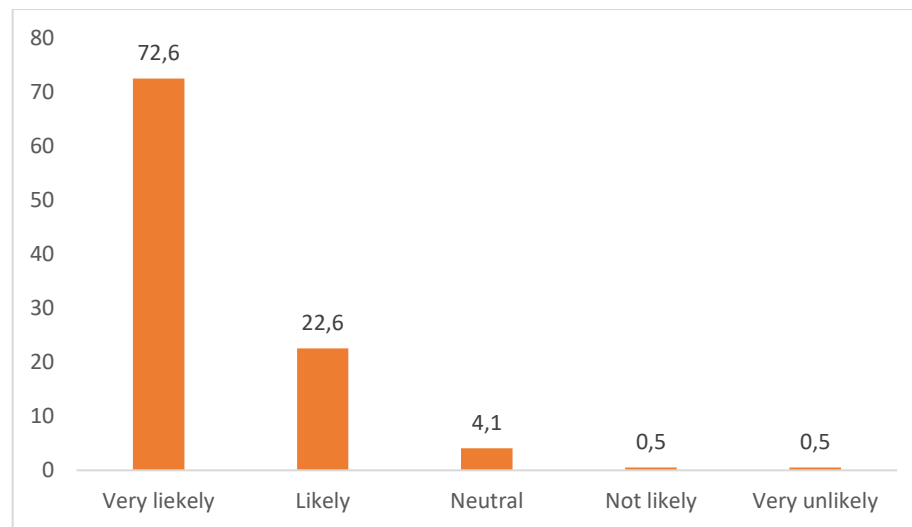
Source: Own elaboration using Excel software

Figure 5.10 – Level of likelihood in the percentage of: Recommend to friends and family



Source: Own elaboration using Excel software

5.11 – Level of likelihood in the percentage of: Rate it positively on the Internet and social media



Source: Own elaboration using Excel software

Means were also counted for this response. All of the means are significantly high, considering that “5” corresponded to “Very likely”. This finding shows that the majority of students would very likely promote a positive word-of-mouth.

Table 5.17 – Intention to Repeat, recommend or rate the Erasmus Experience

	Mean
Repeat your experience	3,62
Recommend to friends and relatives	3,79
Rate it positively on the internet and social media	3,66

Source: Own elaboration using Spss software

As can be seen in figure 5.17, words with the biggest dimensions (representing the most repeated, used) are: People, life, new, learnt, met, experiences, friends, time, different, world and culture. Starting with the first word, people, it can be noticed that what students value most are relations with others “people”, whom they met on their journey through the experience and subsequently they became part of that experience. While student goes away from what is known to them, it is expected they make new friends, new connections, with the people of the host community where the higher institution are located, otherwise that person is totally alone in the new habitat. One of the sample’s respondents when asked about the reason for satisfaction, the answer was:

- *You feel as part of a big community abroad... I found my place on Earth (where I live until now).*

For the respondent, satisfaction came from the feeling of belonging, leading to the student finding himself and changing his life. Pine and Gilmore (1998), Oh, Fiori and Jeoung (2007), had already claimed escapism to be one of the dimensions of the experience. This study, shows and reinforces its importance in the context of learning experiences. The second and the third most popular words were: life and new. These words are an understandable choice when talking about going on an exchange. “New” everything is new for the students, they are living their “life” in a new country. They stated that Erasmus is:

- New and very intense experience of life. Now can’t imagine life without travel and experiencing new things in life.*

These findings correlate to other authors’ results (e.g. Quan & Wang 2004; Ali *et al.*, 2016) about the peak immersive and memorable experiences lived in the new environment. The fourth most used word was “learnt”. This stated how important the exchange for students’ academic career is, furthermore it underlined that their experience was in fact educational.

- I learnt a lot about architecture (my faculty) but also about myself. It thought me independent life away from safe zone which are family, friends and a place I know. It made more curious of traveling and knowing other perspectives, attitudes. I was truly happy there.*

Another answer stated that the Erasmus journey didn't just consist of entertainment, but it also helped to define a future path:

-I had chance to meet people from all over the world and I made great friends with many of them. During this time I learnt a lot and I improved my language skills. That helped me to find a good job.

Pine and Gilmore (1998), Andersson (2007), and Chandralal and Valenzuela (2013), highlighted this facet of the experience, the will and interest to learn more and find answers to human curiosity. Yet a distinct answer appeared, stating that:

-It changed completely my horizons, increasing my life and job ambitions.

While, some of the answers pointed strictly to the escapism experience:

- I lived in a different world and it made me a different person in all aspects.

In sum, students when inquired about the recommendation intention, the majority referred they would recommend the experience to friends, family and other people in general. The same opinion was express about the use of social media, since students stated that they would rate it positively on social media. The findings show that students were satisfied and they are willing to spread positive word-of-mouth.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals the more and more popular programme Erasmus, offers students engaging Experiences (Xamaní, 2015). This study highlights the importance of the Erasmus learning experiences as the right opportunity for students' personal and academic development. The main aim of this research was to identify the holistic experiences students have had during the exchange programme. According to the findings, students were globally mostly engaged in Entertainment experiences, leaving the question: are students are looking for educational experiences or entertainment? On the other hand, are the destination universities or the setting, providing these entertainment opportunities?

Nevertheless, the Educational realm of the experience was still rated globally the second most relevant, since students stated the experience was *real*, made them more *knowledgeable and they felt stimulated to learn new things*. This result was expected, since the context and goal of studying abroad provided the opportunity for this kind of experiences. Not surprisingly, when the students were asked about the holistic experiences they were most engaged in, Entertainment and Education was their answer.

Besides these two dimensions, the remaining two dimensions (aesthetic and Escapism) also showed high levels of involvement. In other words, it means that overall their experiences led them to be engaged in all of the four realms. According to Pine and Gilmore (1998), this represents that the richest type of experiences one can have were attained. Despite the rich experience, there were not many differences between the overall value of the experience for students studying in Portugal and for those studying in Spain. Students valued all for types of experience, but even so, there are some of the experiences in which they were more involved (entertainment and education).

Another goal sought to find if the Erasmus experience contributed most for students' academic curriculum or their personal development. The responses obtained, led to an important discovery, which is, students found the exchange programme more relevant to their personal development, than to their academic curriculum. This finding is congruent with Van Hoof and Verbeeten (2005) findings. As Pine and Gilmore (1999) suggested,

experiences are personal and each one of us has a different perception about them. Just like in this case, the student's personal experience during the programme was unique and memorable.

Another aim of the study was to find out if the students were satisfied and would repeat, recommend and review positively (on social media) the experience after the exchange programme. The findings of this research demonstrated students' satisfaction regarding their time spent abroad was highly positive. In general, students were *Strongly satisfied* from the experience. The research also sought to understand the reasons and motives that contribute to satisfaction. The answers in most cases were related to learning a lot, meeting wonderful people and having the best year of their lives.

On the other hand, a minority percentage of the respondents were not satisfied, and reported the experience to be unorganized, contributing for Erasmus students to be more engaged with other students of the programme and not with their Iberian colleagues. Nevertheless, students were asked if they would repeat once more their Erasmus experience, and the vast majority of the students stated that they would do so. This result confirms the findings of Van Hoof and Verbeeten (2005) regarding the intention to repeat.

In sum, this study indicated that the students' experiences involve more than the sum of its parts, i.e., more than learning. The experiences were perceived holistically, with all the four realms of experiences being important for the students' subjective evaluation of Erasmus learning experience.

Limitations and Directions for further research

Despite the previous conclusions, some limitations can be found. Firstly, the data collected only addressed one time period (i.e. after the experience). Corroborating previous authors suggestions, before, during the experience periods need to be assessed. Secondly, the convenient sample of 219 students is by itself a limitation. Thirdly, only students which studied in the Iberian Peninsula were considered. In the Erasmus+

University staff also plays a relevant role, future research may want to find the influence and impact of these influencers on Students decision-making process and expectations. As Students tend to engage in various experiences, more questions regarding their engagement in each of the realms of an experience, could help to expand and enhance our understanding why the personal experience was so valued by Students. Future research might benefit also from taking the educational tourism perspective as an important element for Students search for Erasmus+ experience. In addition, improved data analysis could be performed (e.g. Principal Component Analysis) to verify if the number of variables consider initially could be reduce to a smaller set.

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Appendix 1: The questionnaire

ERASMUS STUDENTS' HOLISTIC LEARNING EXPERIENCES.

THE CASE OF HIGH EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AT THE IBERIAN PENINSULA.

This survey seeks to find the erasmus student's holistics learning experiences. This research is part of a Master's dissertation being made at the University of the Algarve. It will take you only a few minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your responses are completely confidential and are only for research purposes. Thank you for your participation.

1. Student's Profile

1. 1.1 Age

2. 1.2 Gender

☐ Female

☐ Male

3. 1.3 Level of Education

☐ finishing undergraduation course

☐ Undergraduate

☐ Postgraduate

☐ Masters

☐ PhD

4. 1.4 Place of residence

5. 1.5 In which country did you spend your Study abroad?

☐ Portugal

☐ Spain

6. 1.6 Name of the foreign institution :

7. 1.7 How old were you in the time of Exchange ?

8. 1.8 How long did you study abroad?

- ☐ One semester
☐ One year
☐ More than one year

2. Decision making

9. 2.1 Where did you searched for information regarding your erasmus options? *

- ☐ At the faculty services
☐ Among Friends and Relatives
☐ In the Internet using websites and social media
☐ Directly with the destination universities
☐ Inne: _____

10. 2.2 What do/did you consider to be the greatest benefit of studying abroad? *

- ☐ Studying at this foreign University , living campus life
☐ Meeting new people , party , travelling
☐ Cohabiting with international students
☐ Learning new language , new culture
☐ Staying away in a new country , living the adventure

11. 2.3 Why did you select the particular Institution you studied at as an exchange student? *

- ☐ I had heard of its reputation
☐ People I know also go/went there
☐ I liked the country it is/was located in
☐ It was available as a partner of my home institution
☐ I could not go anywhere else
☐ It was a cheap alternative
☐ Inne: _____

3. Erasmus Experience at the destination University

12. 3.1 According to your experience at the university, please state to what extend do you agree or disagree with the statements. *

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I learned a lot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was a real time Experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The experience made me more knowledgeable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It stimulated my curiosity to learn new things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Activities of others were amusing to watch.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching others perform was captivating.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Activities were fun to watch.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt a real sense of harmony.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Just being there was very pleasant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The setting was very attractive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The setting was pretty bland.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt I played a different character there.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The experience there allowed me to imagine being someone else.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I completely escaped from reality.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt like I was living in a different time or place	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3.2 Holistic Experience

You may choose more than one option

13. The experience of studying abroad was globally mostly composed of: *

- ☐ Educational (learning)
- ☐ Entertainment (fun)
- ☐ Aesthetics (beautiful setting)
- ☐ Escapism (evasion)
- ☐ Inne: _____

14. 3.3 How would you rate the quality of the overall experience abroad? *

- ☐ Strongly Relevant
- ☐ Relevant
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Irrelevant
- ☐ Strongly Irrelevant

4. Satisfaction

15. 4.1 How satisfied are you with your erasmus experience ? *

- ☐ Strongly satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neutral
☐ Dissatisfied
☐ Extremely dissatisfied

16. Why?

17. 4.2 How would you assess the relevance of your experience abroad: *

	Strongly Relevant	Relevant	Neutral	Not relevant	Strongly irrelevant
To your personal development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To your academic curriculum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. 4.3 Regarding your experience abroad, would you? *

	Very Likely	Likely	Neutral	Not likely	Very unlikely
Repeat your experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recommend to friend and family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recommend to others personally	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rate it positively on internet and social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>