

Students' Motivations and Hurdles in Choosing Audencia Business School for Higher Education

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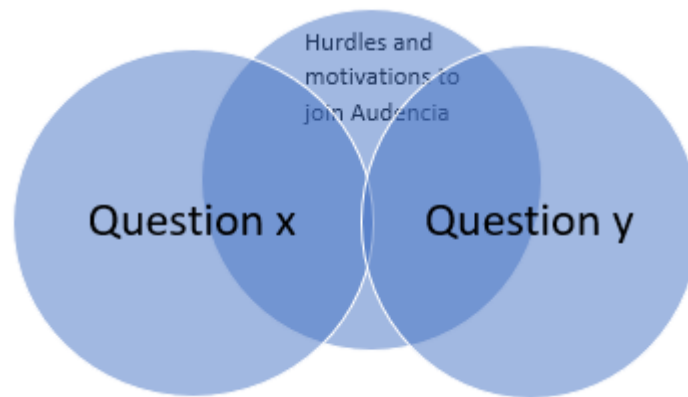
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I. Issues and Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the question: "What are the students' motivations and hurdles in choosing Audencia for higher education?". It is then important not only to question our classmates who both study in DMF but also other students outside the DMF program given that the search for information on the school, the prices, and even the ranking differ according to the program. The DMF program has been organized recently 2 years. Indeed, there is much less information available than in other programs such as the Grande Ecole program and the IMM program. The scope was broad and complicated to perceive. Moreover, the topic applied on the hand qualitative methods. Therefore, we have created a set of questions trying to cover the question as much as possible. The difficulty then is to cover all the facts of the question without asking questions that could be overlapping.



We then aim to interview students of different nationalities along with different majors in order to cover the question in the most relevant way, given that certain parameters change according to nationality. For instance, Audencia's presence in France is not the same as abroad and differs according to the country/continent. We run a pilot test on some responders. Then, based on the feedback. Those are listed below:

Firstly, the path of the interview was not logical.

Secondly, some questions were too broad and did not allow us to know in detail and depth the opinion of the interviewees.

Thus, we decided to follow a precise methodology then back to the questionnaire rephrased and narrowed down the questions list to be concrete. We came up with a new questionnaire to test it again to find out if its effectiveness made it possible to extract everything that the person questioned thought about the subject of study.

II. Topic Guide

The interviews took place simply, and an explanation of the topic was announced so that the interviewees understood the subject of study. We appreciated them for agreeing to answer our questions. It is necessary to understand the population portrait such as their nationality, their program, etc. We are aware that the interview process is needed to break into 2 parts. First, we asked preliminary questions to clarify the interview objectives. Finally, we moved on to the main questionnaire. The discussion was structured but fluid. The order of the questions was predefined, but we were allowed to bounce back during the discussion to dig a little deeper without guiding the person questioned, being careful not to be biased.

Part 1: Preliminary information

1. Nationality
2. Background
3. Major

Part 2: Striking questionnaires

Motivation questions:

1. What were the main criteria for choosing a school?
2. How easy/difficult was it to find the program that corresponds to you in Audencia?
3. How did Audencia's website and social media content influence you in choosing to study here?
4. How did Audencia France/international presence help you in your choice?
5. Can you explain how can Audencia contribute to your professional and personal projects?
6. Besides your professional projects are there some other aspects of Audencia that made you choose Audencia?

Hurdle questions:

7. What were the difficulties when you were searching for information about Audencia?
8. What are the biggest points that let you ever think you should choose another school over Audencia?
9. What would you have thought if the tuition fees were higher along with the ranking?
10. How did Audencia's website influence you in choosing to study here? (Application system, uploading of files, communication with the school)

III. Analysis of Results

After compiling, grouping, and analysing the results, we found that the majority of respondents had similar ideas and remarks. Mostly the same factors were grouped in the motivations and hurdles.

Motivations:

Redundant themes were generally ranking, national or international presence, and website completeness. Most of the respondents, both international and French, found that the most important factor in joining Audencia Business School was the school's ranking in the national and European rankings. Also, for the French students, the school's presence and reputation were very important. This proves the school's legitimacy among employers. As for the international students, the result is mixed. Some were motivated by Audencia's international presence and alumni network, but most regretted that Audencia was unknown in their home country. The quality of the website also came up in the responses. It seems easy to find the main information on the website and the brochures. The plurality of programs available is also appreciated by most of the students asked. However, there are some nuances as some regret a lack of information about the timetable and facilities available on campus.

Hurdles:

As for the motivations, the answers are almost unanimous regarding the hurdles, but there are small differences depending on the program and whether the students are French or international. The main obstacle to applying to Audencia was often the price, which was to be expected. However, it is interesting to note that despite complaints about tuition fees, students would not mind an increase in price if it resulted in a better ranking of the school nationally and internationally. Better employability figures could also justify a price increase without being inconvenient. On the other hand, some of the students interviewed complained about the lack of content on the website regarding facilities, the sometimes-scattered information that must be requested by email, and the lack of availability of accommodations. The search for an apartment was sometimes laborious and some students felt abandoned in their search. And finally, we note that some students complained about the website application that they find not optimal (i.e. files that they did not manage to upload because they were too heavy).

IV. Recommendations

Thanks to the insight obtained from our analysis, we could implement the feasible recommendations as follows:

- ***Provide More Assistance in Terms of Accommodations.*** The school should extend their support, especially to international students since CROUS and Studapart platforms are not enough to meet the current demand. For instance, by providing its own online database of housing options, connecting them with local property management companies and landlords, or offering on-campus housing. The school could also provide resources for students on budgeting for housing, how to look for rooms, and how to negotiate rental agreements.
- ***More Information About the Classes' Schedule on The Websites.*** In doing so, students would understand what to expect from a typical day at school and could be well prepared mentally and physically for the compact schedules that they are going to face.
- ***All In One Place Information Especially for Student Life.*** Most of the students agreed that the information provided about their chosen program is plenty enough, but some have raised concerns about the lack of information in the **Student Life** section on the website regarding Caisse des Allocations Familiales (CAF) and Social Security Number (SSN) procedures. This could be improved by offering richer information on these two procedures and direct links to useful and updated sources.
- ***Update The Information About Each Program Regularly.*** By having a contact person responsible for regularly reviewing, updating, and maintaining the program information. This contact person should review the information on a regular basis and make changes as needed. Additionally, the school can solicit feedback from students, alumni, faculty, and staff about any changes that need to be made.

All the students we interviewed also expressed their thoughts on areas for improvement that the school should make based on their experiences thus far, as follows:

- *Dedicated Smoking Areas*
- *More Food Choices at The Cafeteria*
- *Try To Shorten the Length of The Classes Per Day*
- *Provide Faster Internet Access*
- *Cleanlier Facilities (I.E. Toilet)*
- *Provide Spacious Cafeteria*
- *Expand The Available Space for Resting*
- *Put Available Resources to Good Use (I.E. Student Association Room)*
- *Caring About the Students' Well-Being*
- *One IC Buddy Per One Group of Students*
- *A Gentle Reminder for The Students About All Procedures They Must Follow*
- *Toughen The Selection Criteria (I.E. Conduct Interview to Assess Student's Competences)*

V. Appendix

Motivations:

1. What were the main criteria for choosing a school?
 - Program – 25%
 - Reputation – 21%
 - Ranking – 21%
 - Location – 21%
 - Tuition fees – 7%
 - Well-known Professors – 5%
2. How easy/difficult was it to find the program that corresponds to you in Audencia?
 - Easy to find with the help of Audencia website - 64%
 - Easy to find with help of external sources – 27%
 - Difficult due to lack of information – 9%
3. How did Audencia's website and social media content influence you in choosing to study here?
 - The website information was sufficient – 58%
 - The webinars conducted by Audencia helped me to take a decision – 14%
 - The social media contents had a positive impact on my decision – 14%
 - The information on website and other platforms are insufficient – 14%
4. How did Audencia France/international presence help you in your choice?
 - Good reputation and high ranking – 54%
 - An open door to the network pool – 27%
 - Great experience with international students from all walks of life – 19%
5. Can you explain how can Audencia contribute to your professional and personal projects?
 - Acquire reputed business degree – 32%
 - Learn a foreign language – 16%
 - Improve networking – 24%
 - European Exposure – 12%
 - Job opportunities upon graduation – 16%

6. Beside your academic projects which are the other aspects of Audencia that made you chose Audencia?

- Strong Alumni network – 15%
- Campus amenities – 20%
- Student services (Career centre, Studapart, CROUS) –26%
- Associations – 6%
- Was not aware – 33%

Hurdles:

7. What were the difficulties when you were searching for information about Audencia?

- Lack of information on website – 45%
- No difficulties – 55%

8. What are the biggest points that let you ever think you should choose another school over Audencia?

- Campus location - III
- School ranking - II
- Fees - I
- Program duration - I
- Entry requirements - II
- Didn't think about another school - III

9. What would you have thought if the tuition fees were higher along with the ranking?

- I would have accepted a higher tuition fee for better ranking – 73%
- I would have not accepted a higher tuition fee for better ranking – 27%

10. Have you encountered any difficulties when applying for Audencia (application system, uploading of files, communication with the school)?

- Too many documents to be uploaded – 36%
- None – 64%