

**UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

*Final Degree Project – Applied Project*

*The Internationalization of Pangea Academy*



**Author:** Maria Palet López

**N.I.A:** 758275

**Date of presentation:** May 2021

**Specialisation:** Track on Communication

**Supervisor:** Enrique Schonberg-Schwarz Letzen

**Institution:** Blanquerna, Ramon Llull University, School of Communications and  
International Relations, Degree in International Relations.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the international environment has drastically changed, producing a rapid technological leap, and effecting core issues like is education. This last was forced to respond to the urgent transition from face-to-face to online learning. It is at this point where, in the spotlight of many online learning, Pangea Academy is born.

Hence, the aim of this paper is to elaborate a potential business plan for the internationalization of Pangea Academy, an online academy that I created in April 2020, given the urgency to prepare Catalan students for its pre-university exams online. By successfully covering the gap of Spain's educational system, I came to realise that Pangea could definitely internationalize.

Through the use of strategic analytical and marketing tools, the company's internationalization plan will be designed, where a new potential European market will be chosen. However, some areas of work like the elaboration of a financial plan will remain open for the future.

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## INTRODUCTION

### I. Motivation of the chosen topic

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted education at all levels in various ways. Not only students had to adapt to a new learning environment following online courses, but also institutions and educators had to quickly respond to an unexpected and ‘forced’ transition from face-to-face to remote teaching (Carrillo & Flores, 2020). In this context of rapid and unexpected transition from face-to-face to remote teaching, a number of challenges and constraints have been pointed out, but also opportunities that need to be examined: the creation of Pangea Academy.

Pangea Academy is an online academy created in April 2020 by my brother Miquel Palet, Javier Prados and myself, during the quarantine period caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This online platform, considered a service company, was initiated with the aim of preparing young people for the 2020 university entrance exams in Catalonia – also called *Selectivitat* –, by offering them online courses, since we saw the dramatic situation of Catalanian institutes in adapting themselves to online education. The project was a success, exceeding 400 students in less than 2 months and being able to provide them with affordable online classes and summaries for almost every subject included in *Selectivitat* exams. Thanks to the great support of students, the Pangea Academy team accomplished one of its core goals: to offer quality courses at the lowest price possible, in order to embrace as many people as possible. Once the exams concluded, the degree of satisfaction of our students proved really high as well as their exams’ results.

Thus, due to the success of this initiative, Pangea Academy has expanded into other educational areas and now accounts for a driving test course, a finance course and in the creation of a dietary and nutrition course and a sexual education course. Moreover, this year we are expecting to prepare for *Selectivitat* exams in a more professional way, taking into account not only Catalonia but other autonomous communities. These smaller but new steps are also part of a long-term vision in which, not only envisions to expand into the educational sphere but also to take advantage of our globalized world and offer those services internationally. In other words:

*To make education more exciting and fill the gaps of traditional school.*

In this context, Pangea Academy's vision goes hand in hand with the aim of this paper, which entails the internationalization process of Pangea at the European level. Hence, this paper will be key in the development of this start-up and its long-term goals, providing the necessary tools for Pangea Academy's evolution and further fulfilling one of the steps to achieve our desired goals personally and professionally.

## **II. Relevance towards the field of International Relations**

The relevance of this paper in the field of international relations (IR) will be four-fold. First, the process of internationalization will study international trade in export-oriented services. In fact, as an online platform conferring educational programs, Pangea Academy's labour can be translated into the deliberation of export-oriented services rather than deliberating manufactured goods or products. These types of services are becoming an increasingly important sector in world trade and simultaneously, the trading of these services is facing new challenges due globalization and the advances in information and communication technologies, and the acceptance of service outsourcing (Wymbs, 2000). Globalization has not only included new determinants of export performance internationally, but has facilitated the opening of previously off-limits markets as well as the transcending of national barriers. Therefore, while services have proved crucial in our current patterns of globalization and internationalization procedures, it is incumbent on academicians to develop and test theory that relates specifically to the internationalization of service firms. Consequently, the current plan of expansion of Pangea Academy aims at furthering the research on the internationalization of services, relevant in the study of IR.

Second, another feature in the study of IR and pertinent to this analysis is the conceptualization of a new type of business: digital trade. Digitally enabled transactions, be they in relation to goods or services, have been part of the landscape for many years and often raise similar issues as non-digital transactions. Digital trade is not just about digitally delivered services, but also about increased traditional trade in goods and services enabled through growing digital connectivity (OECD, 2019). However, the scale of transactions, the emergence of new (and disruptive) players and business models are transforming production processes and industries, including many that were little affected by globalization. Although existing World Trade Organization rules and agreements cover digital trade, there are questions about how well

adapted current frameworks are to the new realities of trade in the digital era. Also, as the current debate on data flows is still ongoing, many digital infrastructures are increasingly raising key challenges for domestic and international policy in a world where borders and regulatory differences between countries remain. Thus, this study will also entail further research in digitally enabled services, which form the backbone of digital trade transactions. Not only the setting of Pangea Academy's online services in a new framework will be key in understanding digital trade, but also, will enhance a new approach involving different actors – stakeholders, governments, civil society and the business community – with diverse interests, located in various countries at different levels of development.

Third, the role of education in Pangea Academy's labour is essential as it is inherently linked with one of the firm's goals: building an education online system not only at the community level, but at the European level. Simultaneously, the outstanding quality of education is one of the core elements defining a country's soft power in IR, thereby representing another factor to be considered. Due to the transformations in the global economy and a corresponding shift in values, the role of education in the international prestige of a country has been increasing in the recent years.<sup>1</sup> Education becomes even more important in the context of the transformation to a knowledge economy and it is considered to be one of the intensive factors of economic growth and competitiveness. Knowledge itself becomes more transnational, given information and communication technology, scientific advances, and the general spread of awareness of the importance of knowledge internationally. These effects can be sources of a country's attractiveness, therefore building its soft power. The current transformation, in which the world is becoming "softer" and in which political legitimacy derives from the capacity to make a society prosperous, is making education more important internationally<sup>2</sup>.

Fourth, another feature is International Entrepreneurship (IE), which sits at the intersection of two areas – international business and entrepreneurship<sup>3</sup> – and thus, labelling itself as its own field of research, although relatively new. IE is the creation of economic value through cross-

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<sup>1</sup> Wojciuk, A., Michalek, M. and Stormowska, M. "Education as a source and tool of *soft power* in International Relations". *Eur Polit Sci* **14**, 298–317 (2015).

<sup>2</sup> Gallarotti, G.M. (2000) 'The advent of the prosperous society: The rise of the guardian state and structural change in the world economy', *Review of International Political Economy* 7(1): 1–52.

<sup>3</sup> McDougall-Covin, P., Jones, M.V. & Serapio, M.G. (2014). High-Potential Concepts, Phenomena, and Theories for the Advancement of Entrepreneurship Research. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 38(1), 1-10.

border entrepreneurship activity and it describes internationalisation as a “combination of innovative, pro-active, and risk-seeking behaviour that crosses national borders and is intended to create value in organizations”<sup>4</sup>. Although its newness in the international world, it has become an important research domain both in quantity and quality in the number of published articles and journals, making it imperative in the field of IR.

### **III. General and specific objectives of the project**

The main objective would be to design a potential business plan to internationalize the services of Pangea Academy over the European market – with the exception of including a financial plan. The project entails the need to push for a more well-founded and pragmatic approach to the current education online system. In the long run, this primary objective could not only constitute a big step towards the upgrading of the European educational system, but also, be an alternative path to conventional learning, being a tipping point for the long-term educational strategies.

For achieving the objective at hand, it would be needed to get to three specific objectives:

- (1) The first objective would be to analyse Pangea Academy’s role both at the current regional level and evaluate its future and possible potential at the European level. In order to comply with this objective, a market and strategic analysis will be conducted, including the assessment of the main direct and indirect competitors in the online world as well as the identification of the different entry barriers of European countries in the exporting of Pangea Academy’s services.
- (2) The second specific objective will be to study the adaptability of Pangea Academy into the market selected. This will include the study of the market and of the company itself, in order to provide a plan to reach the company’s expansion goals.
- (3) Last but not least, once the market reliability has been proven, the third objective will be to elaborate a marketing and communication plan. In this way, a plan of action and future prospects will also be estimated.

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<sup>4</sup> McDougall, P., & Oviatt, B.M. (2000). International Entrepreneurship: The Intersection of Two Research Paths. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 43(5), p. 903.



#### **IV. Methodology**

The methodology that will be used for developing an accurate business plan for Pangea Academy internationalization will consist of three main blocks: the first one will be theoretical and descriptive, the second one will be of analytical nature and the ultimate one will take an appraising character.

Therefore, the first block will include some literature review in regards to education, the pandemic impact to IR and digitalization. Then, I will go deep into the contextualization of online learning geographically, starting from an international analysis to the portrayal of the Catalonian case during the pandemic.

Within the second block, according to some selected criteria, an analysis of Europe's educational systems will be developed, where target markets will be chosen and analysed and some conclusions will be made to the marketing research. Once this last is concluded, a PESTLE analysis of the country chosen will be portrayed, as well as other marketing tools such as the SWOT, TOWS and CANVAS analysis. This block, in turn, will provide room for defining Pangea Academy's ensuing framework at the European level: how the business will be incorporated in the country chosen and which impact is expected.

Finally, the third block will account for the evaluation process in order to estimate the degree of implementation of the marketing strategy; consisting of an Action Plan and a GANTT chart to track the project's evolution, schedule and development. Finally, the project will reach some conclusions in order to evaluate the achievement of the paper's goals, the research, as well as the validity and reliability of the paper.

#### **V. Literature Review**

##### **a. Education**

Education for all has always been an integral part of the sustainable development agenda. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 adopted the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) which addressed the need to integrate sustainable development into formal education at all levels, as well as through informal and non-formal education opportunities (World Summit on Sustainable Development & United Nations, 2003). The 2030

Agenda also relies on education as the most powerful tool for personal and collective progress, one that allows us to build more prosperous, educated and just societies. Note how, beyond SDG 4 itself, education is necessary to achieve many of the other goals set out in the 2030 Agenda. In fact, sustainability cannot be effective if it is not made into a paradigm by raising awareness and training everybody on the planet (Vilalta & Martínez-Samper 2021).

According to Carmen Păunescu, member of the UNESCO Department for Business Administration, education is regarded as a means through which individuals can improve their quality of life, while also contributing to the development of societies (Păunescu and Găucă, 2017).

Both the Muscat Agreement adopted at the Global Education for All Meeting (GEM) in 2014 and the proposal for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) developed by the Open Working Group of the UN General Assembly on SDGs (OWG) include ESD in the proposed targets for the post-2015 agenda (United Nations, 2015). The proposed Sustainable Development Goal 4 reads “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all” and includes a set of associated targets (United Nations, 2015). Following with this statement, Gian Luca Gardini (2020, 5) holds that “education is key to human all-round self and sustainable development” and portrays education as “the most significant trait of possible unity, change, and opportunity brought about by the coronavirus”.

#### **b. Pandemic impact to IR**

The pandemic has also affected IR, global politics and international trade. Thus, this literature review must also be contemplated as it correlates consistently with the aim of this research: to develop a plan of internationalization of an online academy.

On this basis, Gardini (2020) refers to the role of political leaderships – both of decision-makers and decision-takers – as more important than ever; in which not only education has been redefined, but the role of the state, especially at the domestic level, has been under long and consistent attack (2020, 17). While neoliberalism has been the internationally dominant paradigm since 1990, the primacy of the state as the main international actor still occupies much of the agenda at the international level. Yet, it is true that states have ceded part of their

sovereignty to international organizations such as the EU, and NGOs perform tasks once reserved to states. However, Gardini (2020, 19) holds that during the COVID-19 crisis, nobody has appealed to international organizations or other global platforms such as Amazon or Google to save the world, but instead, everyone has called for state intervention.

Thus, the recent economic and health crises have taught us one incontrovertible lesson: the state, understood as the collective organization of a community and the representation of its interests and values, is still indispensable to any project aiming to govern a territory and the people who occupy it (Luca 2020, 19). In fact, it is in period of crisis where we hold tight on reassuring identity; one that is yet to be identified, as we live in a world which is eco-system-centred and holistic (Gardini 2020, 18).

Finally, from a functionalist perspective, one of the state's primary tasks is to guarantee basic health and education for its residents and not only COVID-19 has shown states' commitment to fulfil those tasks, but also, citizen's duties to comply with states' set of rules. Thus, for the state to function effectively, the good will, good faith and sense of responsibility of its citizens is necessary. Ideally, the pandemic might prompt a tighter commitment with politics, education and economy, leading then, to a better management of the state (Gardini 2020, 18).

As a final approach, the COVID-19 pandemic has also led to greater awareness of the fragility of our increasingly globalizing and interdependent international order. The lockdowns, quarantine rules, air travel restrictions and border closures have threatened the post-industrial societies – mainly sustained, by a variety of increasingly external supply chains. Hence, this crisis has not only portrayed a new scenario for IR, but has also destabilized international trade. Global value chains have been particularly damaged, affecting on its way, the transnational network that supports international flows of good and services (Aramayo & Vokoun 2020, 61). Despite sanitary restrictions in several countries, although trade has continued, a significant contraction is taking place.<sup>5</sup> Yet, the consequences and opportunities brought by the COVID-19 are expected to be region-specific (Aramayo & Vokoun 2020, 62). This means that imbalances in the market for goods and services as well as the labour market will vary according

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<sup>5</sup> World trade is expected to decline by 25% in absolute terms and by 15 percentage points as a share of world GDP (from about 60% to 45%), given that some international trade takes place despite restrictions.

to each national economy and thus, the capacity of each state to combat the pandemic.<sup>6</sup> Aramayo (2020, 63) emphasizes that each country must analyse carefully which strategic sector it will support during this pandemic, to monitor the future functioning of the country's economy and the well-being of the population.

On a more positive note, the crisis is expected to bring major changes in the current way of doing business, investing and working. The need to improve digital literacy of developing countries will arise with the development for social interaction platforms at all levels, from education and business to telemedicine (Aramayo 2020, 64). Although we have adapted quite rapidly, Aramayo (2020) argues that there are still gaps in infrastructure, institutional platforms, devices and resources to access digital education and how to take advantage of its potential. In order to fill the gap, Gaston Fornes and Javier Rovira (2020, 70) argue that we must boost access to internet in order to reduce the growing digital divide. Internet reach in China and India, for instance, is only 60% and 42% of the population respectively.<sup>7</sup> In fact, they also discuss the importance of the digital divide and how technology might be a possible solution to critical challenges especially in health, education and environment (Fornes & Rovira 2020, 70).

Indeed, COVID-19 has demonstrated the interdependency and interconnectedness in which we live in, prompting the need to act globally, where education is at the core of society's development; and simultaneously, crucial in the development of this project.

### **c. Digitalization in times of pandemic**

Although there is a huge literature review about the prominence of education and IR, the analysis must be positioned at the junction between education and digitalization. Before entering to this debate, both digitalization and technology must be grasped as essential drivers to this new "ecosystem" supported by a wide-reaching alliance among different players and stakeholders (public and private sectors, institutions, governments, NGOs, etc.); and where a new kind of education can become the key to seize this golden opportunity (Fornes & Rovira 2020, 71).

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<sup>6</sup> During this time, protectionist measures have been on the rise.

<sup>7</sup> Statista (2020), "Internet usage worldwide – Statistics & Facts". Accessed 03/03/2021. <https://www.statista.com/topics/1145/internet-usage-worldwide/>

Thus, this new opportunity emerged in an attempt to contain the spread of the COVID-19, where new educational strategies have been adopted and shall be reviewed – specifically, what they call e-learning<sup>8</sup>. In this context, the world educational institutions have had to readjust to a remote learning model of delivery. On this basis, Hall and Snider (2000) define e-learning (or remote learning, distance education, online education etc.) as the process of learning via computers over the Internet and intranets. Hall and Snider (2000) extended that e-learning is also referred to as web-based training, online training, distributed learning or technology for learning. Distance learning, however, was not included in the e-learning definition and was defined as its own entity as a learning process meeting three criteria: a geographical distance that separates communication between the trainer and participant; the communication is interactive; and some form technology is used to facilitate the learning process.

Having reviewed the definition and contextualizing e-learning education in times of a pandemic, new literature assesses the role of education in such time. This refers to an ‘emergency remote teaching’ (Bozkurt and Sharma 2020, i) or ‘emergency eLearning’ (Murphy 2020, 492) and to difficulties associated with poor online teaching infrastructure, inexperience of teachers, the information gap (i.e., limited information and resources to all students) and the complex environment at home (Zhang et al. 2020; Judd et al. 2020). As far as this new type of distance education –referred as a process characterized by “distance in time and/or space” (Bozkurt and Sharma, 2020) – is concerned, many authors agree that it is essential to go beyond emergency online practices and develop quality online teaching and learning resulting from careful instructional design (Hodges et al. 2020). In fact, issues of agency, responsibility, flexibility and choice are key elements as are ‘careful planning, designing and determination of aims to create an effective learning ecology’ (Bozkurt and Sharma 2020, ii).

In such context, the study of online teaching and its limitations has made evident that some areas of research deserve much attention. Especially, practical learning areas such as learning design need further research (see also Best and MacGregor 2017). Plus, the use of suitable and relevant pedagogy for online education will depend on the expertise and exposure to information and communications technology (ICT) for both educators and learners (Pokhrel

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<sup>8</sup> According to UNESCO, due to the pandemic, at the end of April 2020, educational institutions shut down in 186 countries, affecting approximately 74% of total enrolled learners on the plane.

and Chhetri, 2021).<sup>9</sup> Thus, although studies are acknowledging the different pedagogical approach required for an effective online learning experience (e.g., Doering et al. 2009; Niess and Gillow-Wiles 2014), more research is to be conducted to examine teaching and learning procedures in such environment.

On the whole, what is evident is that an increase in digitalization is leading firms and educational institutions to shift to work-from-home (WFH), resulting in most people taking to internet-based services to communicate, interact and continue with their job responsibilities from home. Internet services have seen rises in usage from 40% to 100%, compared to pre-lockdown levels. Video-conferencing services like Zoom have seen ten times increase in usage, and content delivery services like Akamai have seen a 30 % increase in content usage (Branscombe 2020). Thus, technology has become an asset and will entail research on design and regulations (De'R, Pandey & Pal A 2020) in all sectors, and, as we have seen, founding a new hybrid model of education which needs further research.

Hence, it is in this unexplored gap of the existing literature that Pangea Academy found its relevance and has responded to the pandemic with an alternative remote “learning” design in the current state of online learning. In this case, Pangea Academy was first established in the region of Catalonia, which will be contextualized in the next chapter.

Coming to the end of this literature review, we have observed the prominence of education and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic to education. This in turn, has entailed an extensive analysis of the effects of the pandemic to IR, international trade and evidently, education – where digitalization has become a key asset. In this regard, due to the uniqueness of this initiative, provided not only by the rare origins of the pandemic and the scarce development of online educational platforms, there is no further literature available providing a basis for this research.

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<sup>9</sup> Some of the online platforms used so far include unified communication and collaboration platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom, Canvas and Blackboard, which allow teachers to create educational courses, training and skill development programmes (Petrie, 2020).

## CONTEXTUALIZATION

The COVID-19 crisis that originated in Wuhan, China (Wu et al., 2020), spread rapidly throughout China and other parts of the world (Wickremasinghe et al., 2020). After it was declared a pandemic disease by the World Health Organization (2020), additional urgent measures were required in the social and economic spheres. In this context, great challenges have appeared for each country, affecting its national economy, its health services and indeed, requiring educational institutions to adopt online teaching and learning strategies.

In this context, the crisis has unfolded differently for individual countries. In the US, the Trump administration disbanded the National Security Council directorate overseeing pandemic threats, redirecting the attention to China's failure to spread the virus; not seeking a constructive, multilateral and joint solution to explore the origins of the outbreak (Falke 2020, 81). US learning and development has been interrupted for millions of students, resulting in chronic absenteeism in the online classes and consequently, more disengagement (García & Weiss 2020). Moreover, the pandemic has exacerbated well-documented opportunity gaps that put low-income students at a disadvantage to their better-off peers (García & Weiss 2020, 2). That is the case of students' unequal access to internet and internet devices.<sup>10</sup> In this context of intense international competition for trade and technology that emerged during the pandemic, China has presented itself as a champion of international solidarity, sending medical equipment and other aid to countries in need (Costa 2020, 87). As for Chinese educational strategies, Chinese schools used Tencent<sup>11</sup> as an alternative to conventional classes, when the Chinese government instructed students to resume their studies online. This resulted in the largest "online movement" in the history of education with approximately 730,000 students attending classes via the Tencent K-12 Online School in Wuhan<sup>12</sup>. Indeed, China's education sector has benefited from the boom of online learning, demonstrating to be the best equipped for developing new tech for online learning.

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<sup>10</sup> For example, García, Weiss, and Engdahl (2020) show that nearly 16% of eighth graders, or one in six who participated in the National Center for Education Statistics' National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for 2017, do not have a desktop or laptop computer at home on which to follow their classes.

<sup>11</sup> Tencent Classroom is a professional online education platform launched by Tencent, which gathers massive course resources from educational institutions and excellent teachers

<sup>12</sup> Other Chinese online platforms such as Alibaba's "DingTalk," Tencent's "WeChat Work" and "Meeting," ByteDance's "Feishu" and Huawei's "WeLink" have been leaders for remote working and collaboration (Gulati 2020, 7).

On that account, having portrayed how the two superpowers are coping with the effects of the pandemic in the educational sector, Europe's socio-economic reaction must be analysed. Concretely, we will scrutinize Spain's reaction to the pandemic – which proved to be quite deficient than other countries in the European context, opting for a very cautious and gradual response to the crisis (Bernecker 2020, 89).

To understand this response, it has to be taken into account that Spain had undergone the great recession of 2008/2010 in which the Spanish health system was left damaged. Therefore, scholars agree that there is a relationship between the austerity policies practices since the first euro crises and the outbreak of the coronavirus (Bernecker 2020, 88). Hence, due to Spain's less solid productive fabric, its huge debt and public deficit, the country was already sensitive to the economic blow that came with the pandemic. According to IMF estimates, Spain's public deficit in 2021 will be 6,7% GDP, while that of the European area as a whole will be 3,6% (Bernecker 2020, 91); in other words, Spain's recovery (along with Italy) will be far more the slower than Northern Europe.

Another aspect that was questioned was Spanish educational system and how this would survive the crisis. In this context, it is clear that COVID-19 has exposed an educational reality with numerous shortcomings that Spain was already suffering. However, scholars point out at the PROA programme (Plan de Refuerzo, Orientación y Apoyo en centros de Educación Primaria y Educación Secundaria)<sup>13</sup>, as a key asset during the pandemic; providing extra support to disadvantaged students who have been most affected by school closures and in so doing, has improved academic performance in reading and learning by 8.5%. In fact, regions like Galicia or Murcia, which tailored the programme by signing school-based contracts for schools that needed more support, had better learning outcomes and a long-lasting impact (Capilla 2020).

However, all Spanish regions are still suffering from the difficulties that has brought the pandemic. Such is the case of Catalonia, where Pangea Academy found its origins. Catalan professors like Salvador Carrasco has referred to this new education that has followed from the crisis as “educació de subsistència” – which literally means a live-saving education and refers

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<sup>13</sup> The PROA programme had already been used during the Great Recession of 2008.



to the difficulties that educational institutions have had to face in order to keep afloat with the learning process of students. According to him:

“The COVID-19 pandemic has reflected on the reality of education and the Catalan school, with its potential and limitations. The beginning of the confinement has plunged us into many uncertainties, sparking doubts, indecisions and a more than remarkable bewilderment in much of the educational community.” (Salvador Carrasco, 2020).

In this context, Xavier Diez, Catalan historian and professor, has argued that the remote learning shift has evidenced even more the inequalities between students and even worse, has followed with an uncoordinated response of schools, which have acted differently at all fronts (Xavier Diez, 2020). Thus, although there is still room for change, the challenge of achieving an educational equality is still at stake when it comes to online education.<sup>14</sup>

Following with Catalonia’s case, Catalan scholar Joan Escules already talks about the “post-confinement education” referring to the new type of education that will emerge throughout the current renovation of digital education and the already pending developments of the school system (Joan Escules, 2020). In this regard, questions regarding the effects of the long school closure caused by the pandemic on children’s learning are still at play, both in the short-term and long-term vision.

## **MARKET ANALYSIS**

In this section, we will be analysing the market in order to identify the most suitable for Pangea’s services. For this reason, not only a number of variables have had to be selected, but it must be noted that the internationalization of Pangea’s services is focused on the region of Europe. Thus, the analysis is centred only in seven European countries, selected on the basis of the following criteria:

Firstly, they represent a geographical balance, covering Western EU Member States, a Nordic EU country, a Southern EU country, a Central and Eastern European EU country, and a candidate country. The geographical dimension of the study has a substantial meaning, because

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<sup>14</sup> See: Educació 360, (2020) “El repte de l’equitat educativa, davant la crisi del Coronavirus”, *Educació 360: a temps complet*. Retrieved from: <https://www.educacio360.cat/repte-lequitat-educativa-davant-crisi-coronavirus/>

the performance of the higher education system as a whole and the policies influencing this performance have been shown to be clustered geographically (Universitas21, 2012).

Secondly, countries include various types of entry requirements, these being secondary qualifications or entrance exams as in France. Plus, it has been seen how standardized aptitude tests are also common in competitive examinations such as in Sweden, where applicants are selected based on minimal grade requirements and a standardized aptitude test.

Thirdly, the different types of entry requirements are combined with differences in degree of selectivity of entry to higher education and the school structure. Two thirds of the selected European Union countries have an open system of admissions, where fulfilling a minimal criterion guarantees access. However, almost all case studies have some form of selection related to admissions to higher education.<sup>15</sup>

Fourthly, the systems of the selected countries also vary according to their aptitude level. For instance, Sweden has a unitary system in upper secondary education which accommodates students regardless of their aptitude levels. Nevertheless, Germany, France, Italy have different school types for students of different aptitudes, typically separated between an academic and a vocational track. England has a mixed system where students can choose to specialize in academic or vocational routes.

Fifthly, these higher education systems are embedded into political systems of various types, with different levels of control, as summarised in Figure 1:

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<sup>15</sup> The categorisation of a system's selectivity does not necessarily reflect entry rates, as it might happen that those selective systems cover more population than open systems, as they have higher number of total places available.

**Figure 1: Overview of regulatory schemes in country case studies**

Country	Regulation
<b>UK</b>	Education is a devolved competency across the UK. Ministries define some of the regulations.
<b>France</b>	Ministry defines national policies, guidelines and curricula. Devolved responsibility (via academies) to regions for upper secondary education.
<b>Italy</b>	Centralized. Increasing formal delegation of administrative powers from central government via regions, provinces and municipalities / communes to schools.
<b>Czech Republic</b>	Decentralized. The Ministry defines national education policy and long-term policy objectives that guide the system at all education levels. Its administrative regions must set long-term development plans for their school systems aligned with national steering documents, and organise upper secondary education in their jurisdictions.
<b>Sweden</b>	Municipalities decide how schools are run, following national Ministry guidelines. Universities decide on admissions, but Government decides on ceiling through funding requirements and goals by discipline.
<b>Germany</b>	States set guidelines. Standing Conference of Ministers of Education & Cultural Affairs of the 16 states Länder is main instrument of cooperation at national level.
<b>Turkey</b>	Governmental and school/higher educational institutions' responsibility.

(Source: Prepared by the author on the basis of Sargeant et al. 2012)

In Figure 1, a federal system like Germany, the British devolved system and the more centralized French and Italian systems are represented. Devolved, decentralized and federal systems may lead to greater national and regional differences but they do not exclude some form of federal coordination <sup>16</sup>. Having decentralized or federal governments also do not exclude centralized information system for admissions.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, these systems reflect differences in the involvement of various levels of government, including institutions, cantons, states, municipalities and regions, as well as Ministries and influence the administration of admissions and quality controls.

<sup>16</sup> In Germany, collaboration takes place through the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education & Cultural Affairs of the 16 Länder acts as cooperation bod.

<sup>17</sup> British students apply through the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), which contains information from universities across Northern Ireland, Wales, England and Scotland.

## I. Selected criteria

On the other hand, the study has been conducted throughout the evaluation of these following variables that will help to identify the most suitable country.

1. Presence of entry requirements: this variable is definitely the most key in order to estimate Pangea's suitability to the market. Entry into higher education is organized through admission systems that aim to ensure students have the necessary level of education, knowledge and skills to succeed in their chosen course<sup>18</sup>. In fact, numerous types of admissions tests exist to help universities admit students, including secondary leaving examinations<sup>19</sup>, entrance examinations<sup>20</sup>, and standardized aptitude tests<sup>21</sup>.
2. E-learning Development: this variable will be measured by a selected number of criteria that for instance, include access to computers at home, number of online courses, government expenditure per student, internet speed, etc. These criteria have been thoroughly analysed from a final report from *Preply* that punctuated the level of e-learning advancements from 1 to 100.
3. Average income per capita: this variable helps determine the average per-person income to evaluate the standard of living for the population of each country. However, it has to be considered that per capita income as a metric has limitations that include its inability to account for inflation, income disparity, poverty, wealth or savings. So, the data provided will assess if people are getting wealthier or poorer, and thus, more or less disposed to buy our services – even if our prices are as competitive as possible with the market's value.
4. Potential customers: this data will take into account (1) the number of students enrolled in higher education and (2) the number of students that take the secondary leaving. These will serve as a basis to identify the potential consumers of Pangea's services.
5. Competitors: this variable will be calculated by the number of corporates or online platforms that already exist in each country and its presence could affect or impede Pangea's entry to the market.

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<sup>18</sup> In some cases, students may be admitted to higher education without undertaking a formal examination, but they may be required past performance records or other combination of requirements

<sup>19</sup> These lead to the acquisition of a high school diploma or certificate. Admission systems in each country require students to hold a secondary school diploma and/or refer to specific secondary school leaving exams.

<sup>20</sup> These may be based on the scores acquired during secondary school leaving exams and/or entrance examinations, but can also provide other information such as a grade point average, interviews, portfolios, application essays, referee reports and evidence of extra-curricular activities.

<sup>21</sup> These measure broader cognitive abilities that allow higher education institutions to compare the applicant's potential to successfully complete their chosen course.

**Figure 2: Comparison of different criteria per country**

(Source: Personal Collection)

Country	Entry requirements	E-learning Development <sup>22</sup>	Income per capita (2019) <sup>23</sup>	Potential costumers <sup>24</sup>	Competitors <sup>25</sup>
<b>France</b>	Secondary leaving exam ( <i>Baccalauréat</i> ); Competitive entrance exams and interviews may be required for some for some higher education institutions and for the <i>grandes écoles</i> .	52,7	40.493,93 USD	2,7 million (2019)	1
<b>Germany</b>	Secondary school leaving exam ( <i>Abitur</i> ) leading to a general higher education entrance qualification ( <i>allgemeine Hochschulreife</i> ); Institutions may require additional exams, for example standardised aptitude tests for medical degrees.	60,8	46.445,25 USD	2,9 million (2019)	0
<b>Italy</b>	Secondary school leaving exam ( <i>esame di stato di II ciclo</i> ); Institution or subject-specific exams may be required for certain degrees.	41,0	33.228,24 USD	1 million (2018)	1
<b>Czech Republic</b>	Secondary school leaving exam ( <i>Matura</i> ); Institutions may require additional exams.	44,1	25.946,18 USD	311,000 (2016)	1
<b>Sweden</b>	Secondary school diploma and high school performance ( <i>slutbetyg från gymnasieskolan</i> ); Standardised aptitude test ( <i>SweSAT</i> ); Institutions may require additional exams.	40,2	51.615,02 USD	359,673 (2019)	0
<b>UK</b>	Secondary school leaving exams (General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE A-level; A-levels); GCSEs); Institutions may require additional exams	51,9	42.330,12 USD	2,46 million (2019)	+10
<b>Turkey</b>	Secondary school diploma ( <i>Lise Diplomaci</i> ); Higher education Exam and Undergraduate Placement Examination.	4,3	9.126,56 USD	7,94 million (2020)	0

<sup>22</sup> In this section, the data portrayed is from Table 3: final punctuation data on e-learning development (extracted from Preply report data).

<sup>23</sup> Income per capita (2019) has been extracted from World Bank. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>. [Accessed 18 April 2021]

<sup>24</sup> For comprehensive and coherent reasons, the data portrayed in this table regarding potential customers will only comprise the first indicator that has been measured to analyze the variable: the number of enrolled students in higher education.

<sup>25</sup> In this section, the data portrayed in the table will only show direct competitors of Pangea.

## II. Analysis of the variables per country

### a. Entry requirements by country

As seen in Table 2, entry requirements vary in each case study, not only in terms of which type of requirement is needed, but also in terms of content and structure. In this context, although the complete the analysis will be in Annex 1, a summary of each country's entry requirements will be portrayed in order to identify which is the most viable market.

**Figure 3: Entry requirements per country**

Country	Entry requirements
<b>France</b>	Secondary leaving exam ( <i>Baccalauréat</i> ); Competitive entrance exams and interviews may be required for some for some higher education institutions and for the <i>grandes écoles</i> .
<b>Germany</b>	Secondary school leaving exam ( <i>Abitur</i> ) leading to a general higher education entrance qualification ( <i>allgemeine Hochschulreife</i> ); Institutions may require additional exams, for example standardised aptitude tests for medical degrees.
<b>Italy</b>	Secondary school leaving exam ( <i>esame di stato di II ciclo</i> ); Institution or subject-specific exams may be required for certain degrees.
<b>Czech Republic</b>	Secondary school leaving exam ( <i>Matura</i> ); Institutions may require additional exams.
<b>Sweden</b>	Secondary school diploma and high school performance ( <i>slutbetyg från gymnasieskolan</i> ); Standardised aptitude test ( <i>SweSAT</i> ); Institutions may require additional exams.
<b>UK</b>	Secondary school leaving exams (General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE A-level; A-levels); GCSEs); Institutions may require additional exams
<b>Turkey</b>	Secondary school diploma ( <i>Lise Diplomaci</i> ); Higher education Exam and Undergraduate Placement Examination.

(Source: Personal Collection)

In general terms, it is seen how in the countries selected, whether they are termed secondary leaving exams, higher education or entrance exams, an entry requirement for attending the next level of education is required. The structure of these exams varies according to each country, but all follow a general set of guidelines. In France, to acquire the secondary education diploma, students must pass the *Baccalauréat*, and in Germany, the *Abitur* exam – although this is not mandatory for all institutions. In Italy, *Esame di Stato di II ciclo* is the name for its main secondary leaving exam, although other entry tests are regulated nationally. In the Czech Republic, students must pass the *Matura* exam and in Sweden, the *SweSAT*, a standardised aptitude test. Finally, in the UK, secondary leaving exams are called GCEs and GCE AS/A-levels and in Turkey, students must pass the Higher Education Exam (TGS) and the Undergraduate Placement Examinations (LYS).

## **b. E-learning Development**

The European e-learning landscape is definitely crucial for Pangea's internationalization. In fact, the total number of enrolled student population in e-learning, in Europe, is approximately 111m as compared to US with approximately 77m enrolled students. European governments spent approximately 674bn in 2011, equivalent to approximately 5.3% of GDP.<sup>26</sup> Also, market acceptance of e-Learning has resulted in increasing use for both large and small companies; being UK and Spain the leading countries in the adoption of e-Learning in Europe <sup>27</sup>.

In this regard, throughout a study from the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), the statistical data from *StudyPortals*, the numbers from the World Bank (2020), the Speed test Global Index research and the data extracted from the International Telecommunication Union, the educational online platform *Preply* conducted a benchmarking to analyse the development of e-learning between the countries of the OECD (Preply, 2021). In its final report (updated in July 2020), the variables selected were: (1) access to computers at home; (2) number of online courses; (3) government expenditure per student; (4) Broadband internet speed; (5) speed of mobile internet; (6) monthly costs to have access to internet; (7) salary of online experts; (8) market's volume per country and (9) market's growth per country.

The complete analysis of these variables is seen in Annex 2. Hereby, it must be emphasized that they have proved key to understand the e-learning growth per country, and for this reason, this report has been the main source for identifying e-learning development in each country selected.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See Figure 1 in Annex 2

<sup>27</sup> See Figure 2 in Annex 2

<sup>28</sup> It has to be noted that to obtain the final punctuation remark, a comparison of the results was standardized on a scale of 0 to 100. The country with the highest potential in e-learning, based on the influencing factors studied, received a rating of 100. The country with the lowest potential in e-learning received a rating of 0. The rating given to each country received a score from 0 to 100 based on your results. The final result of a research field was the sum of the points of all the influencing factors in the respective research field (Preply, 2021).

Figure 4: E-learning Development per country

Country	Accessibility to online education			Accessibility to internet			E-learning environment			Final Punctuation (Preply 2020)
	Access to computer at home	Online courses	Government expenditure	Broadband internet speed	Mobile internet speed	Monthly costs of internet	Expert Salary	Market's volume	Market's growth	
Germany	92,9%	220	33,6%	91,3 Mbit/s	38,1 Mbit/s	37,05€	11,00€	15.382.694	29,6	<b>60,8</b>
France	84,1%	127	31,6%	135,2 Mbit/s	48,5 Mbit/s	25,34€	7,17€	1.791.758	36,6	<b>52,7</b>
UK	91,7%	4.281	38,0%	67,2 Mbit/s	36,4 Mbit/s	29,66€	16,16€	15.401.610	97,0	<b>51,9</b>
Czech Republic	82,2%	80	20,3%	60,5 Mbit/s	47,8 Mbit/s	30,71€	10,19€	2.068.763	23,1	<b>44,1</b>
Italy	72,5%	218	24,3%	60,0 Mbit/s	38,2 Mbit/s	43,47€	17,00€	10.876.792	63,5	<b>41,0</b>
Sweden	92,8%	51	43,2%	141,1 Mbit/s	51,9 Mbit/s	33,88€	16,89€	2.665.410	70,2	<b>40,2</b>
Turkey	50,0%	12	35,3%	25,4 Mbit/s	33,5 Mbit/s	15,40€	3,99€	24.901.924	18,3	<b>4,3</b>

(Source: Prepared by the author on the basis of Preply 2021)



Table 3 shows that Germany is the country more developed, with a final punctuation of 60,8, in terms of e-learning growth; having analysed its accessibility to online education, internet access and its e-learning environment. On the other hand, and very distinguished from the rest of countries, Turkey obtains a punctuation of 4,3 in comparison with the other case studies, regarding its e-learning advancement.

**c. Income per capita**

Per capita income measures the average income earned per person in a given country in a specified year – in this case, 2019. This data will be portrayed in Table 4, helping us determine if the average wealth per person (in US dollars) of the country could be competitive with Pangea’s services and prices.

**Figure 5: Income per capita per country**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Income per capita (2019)</b>
<b>Sweden</b>	51.615,02 USD
<b>Germany</b>	46.445,25 USD
<b>UK</b>	42.330,12 USD
<b>France</b>	40.493,93 USD
<b>Italy</b>	33.228,24 USD
<b>Czech Republic</b>	25.946,18 USD
<b>Turkey</b>	9.126,56 USD

(Source: Prepared by the author on the basis of World Bank 2021)

**d. Potential costumers**

As mentioned above, potential costumers comprise (1) the number of students enrolled in higher education and (2) the number of students that take the secondary leaving exam. Thus, this section will comprise the summary of potential customer’s analysis (see complete analysis in Annex 2).

**Figure 6: Potential costumers per country**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Potential costumers</b>
<b>Turkey</b>	7,94 million (2020)
<b>Germany</b>	2,9 million (2019)
<b>France</b>	2,7 million (2019)
<b>UK</b>	2,46 million (2019)
<b>Italy</b>	1 million (2018)
<b>Sweden</b>	359,673 (2019)
<b>Czech Republic</b>	311,000 (2016)

**(Source: Personal collection)**

Although the complete analysis is offered in Annex 3, we can conclude that Turkey has indeed, the highest number of potential customers, with 7,94 million students enrolled in universities (International Trade Administration, 2021) and specifically, 2,296,138 high school graduates took the pre-university exams (International Trade Administration, 2021). Secondly, in Germany, students enrolled in university accounted for 2,9 million in 2019 (Statista, 2021), and in 2012, 305,172 students took the abitur exam (more recent data has not been found) (Dstatist Budnesmat, 2013). Taking the third role, 2,7 million students in France attended higher education, while 500,000 took the entrance examinations in 2021 (FISNA, 2021). Fourthly, in the UK, 2,46 million students attended university in 2019, while at the same year, 245,300 students took A-levels in England (UCAS, 2021). Fifthly, in Italy, 1 million students enrolled to university programs (Statista, 2021). Sweden and Czech Republic have proved to be the countries with less potential customers. The former registering 359,673 students in university in 2019 (Statista, 2021) and the latter, 311,000 students in 2016 (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2016).

#### **e. Competitors**

As the analysis of the competition proves crucial for elaborating a strong market analysis, this section will encompass Pangea's possible competitors, which, in other words, will be those corporates that are in the e-learning industry, preparing students for the different type of entrance exams.

Although the complete analysis of the competition is analysed in Annex 4, it must be emphasized that the only direct competitors that have been found are present in the UK – such as ICS Learn, Open Study College, UK Open College or Wolsey Hall Oxford; in France, where there is the Online French American Lycée offering supplemental French Baccalaureate education; in Italy, with the platform called *Studenti.it*, , and finally, in the Czech Republic, with a new platform called META (See Annex 4).

**Figure 7: Competitors per country**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Competitor</b>
<b>UK</b>	<i>ICS Learn, Open Study College, UK Open College, Wolsey Hall Oxford</i>
<b>France</b>	Online French American Lycée
<b>Italy</b>	<i>Studenti.it</i>
<b>Czech Republic</b>	META
<b>Sweden</b>	No competitor
<b>Germany</b>	No direct competitor, only indirect such as platforms like <i>English in Britain, Proyecto Espanyol</i> .
<b>Turkey</b>	No competitor

(Source: Personal collection)

### **III. Conclusions of the market analysis**

Once the analysis of each variable has been portrayed, several conclusions are to be made in order to elaborate on the decision of which is the market most suitable for Pangea’s expansion.

Firstly, we can state that countries like France, Germany and the UK are well-positioned in terms of e-learning development, ranking the first three positions of all case studies most developed in this sector. On the other hand, income per capita of these three proves positive for the establishment of Pangea’s services. Another factor in common is their huge array of potential customers: students attending high school, doing its entrance or leaving school exams. The difference relies on its market competitors. In France, there is an important established online platform, which would definitely be a setback for installing Pangea. Also, the UK would be inaccessible as for the number of different platforms that exist and its longevity in the market.

On the contrary, Germany does not have a potential competitor, hence, could definitely be Pangea's future market.

Second, the next group of countries that I have taunt to gather are: Italy, the Czech Republic and Sweden. Its correlation relies on its e-learning development – which have a punctuation of 40 approx. –. However, when it comes to its income capita, Sweden proves much wealthier. Another contrasting fact is Italy's potential customers, which are greater than those of the Czech Republic or Sweden. However, these contrasting facts do not impede Pangea's entrance as they are still countries that have, in average, a population economically apt and, with high potential customers. However, the problem of Italy and the Czech Republic is its competitors. This is not the case of Sweden, as there is no provision for the SweSAT exams. However, this is not unusual as the exam structure includes a quantitative part that would be difficult to prepare and assess via online.

Finally, Turkey has proved to be the country less suitable, especially for its low e-learning development (ranking the country less developed of the seven case studies), proving to be the main setback as well as its low income per capita. On a positive note, the enrolment of students in high education is great, so a lot of available potential customers and furthermore, analysis shows there is not a single online platform that prepares students for its Higher Education Exam and Undergraduate Placement Examination.

In conclusion, it is to be noted that the most suitable country would be Germany. The decision comes from its huge e-learning industry potential and from the fact that there are no market competitors yet. On this basis, the PESTL analysis and the marketing strategy will be designed.

## **DEVELOPMENT: STRATEGIC ANALYSIS**

Once having analysed and chosen the market most suitable for Pangea's services, Germany, we shall move towards an analysis of the country's current state of affairs. Therefore, to evaluate the strategy for the proposed internationalization of Pangea, I will first look at the PESTL(E) analysis.<sup>29</sup>

### **I. PESTL: GERMANY**

The following PESTL analysis of Germany aims to address some of the political, economic, social, technological and legal factors that currently affect Germany. It has to be emphasized that this will be a summary of the overall PESTL, which can be read in Annex 5.

#### Political factors

Germany is a democratic republic in which the political system functions under a system called Grundgesetz. The political elite in Germany is important in the way that it is the government that decides over the education system of the country. Thus, it is significant to analyse the governmental role in education.

Although the Chancellor is the head of government, the country's federal system grants its member states a high degree of autonomy in education policy. In this regard, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research in Berlin (BMBF)<sup>30</sup> has an important role in areas like funding, financial aid, and so on. Other aspects of education fall under the direct authority of the education ministries of the 16 individual states. However, a coordinating body, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Culture, facilitates the harmonization of education policies between states. In addition, the Conference of University Rectors, which represents most universities, coordinates the development of common norms and standards. Hence, academic degrees, vocational and professional qualifications are mutually recognized between the states, so that the system runs smoothly, by and large (Trines, 2021).

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<sup>29</sup> The Environmental section of this analysis was not taken into consideration, since this project does not have a direct harmful effect on the environment.

<sup>30</sup> See more in: <https://www.bmbf.de/en/index.html>

In the case of public institutions, they are regulated and funded by the governments of the states. However, the current digitalization effort during the pandemic has also been provided by the federal government, which funds for research and development, as well as funding for projects of “supra-regional importance” (Trines, 2021). Furthermore, universities have a high degree of autonomy and can independently award academic degrees within federal guidelines (Trines, 2021).

### Economic factors

Germany has the largest national economy in Europe, the fourth-largest by nominal GDP in the world, and fifth by GDP (PPP) (Index Economic Freedom, 2021). It has been one of the strongest economies when it comes to economic freedom, despite challenging environment prevailing in the European Union.<sup>31</sup> The economic freedom index of Germany is recorded to be 72.5 in 2021 (Index of Economic Freedom, 2021).

As aforementioned, the political system functions under three levels and in the case of deciding over the financing of education, the three levels participate in it, but around 90 per cent of public expenditure are provided by the Länder and the local authorities (European Commission, 2021). In 2009, the Länder covered 72.2% of expenditure in primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education. Private schools receive financial support from the Länder based on lump-sum allocations, and aid from local authorities (OECD, 2014). The Länder are also responsible for funding of higher education institutions.<sup>32</sup>

In 2019 according to the financing statistics, the public sector expended a total of Euro 150.1 billion on day-care centres for children, general and vocational schools, higher education institutions, financial assistance for pupils and students, other educational expenditure as well as out-of-school youth education and youth association work (European Commission, 2021). According to the International Standard Qualification of Education (ISCED), expenditure on education in Germany in 2017 totalled Euro 189.3 billion on pre-school education, schools and the associated areas, the tertiary sector, miscellaneous and other expenses.

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<sup>31</sup> According to Atkinson (1983), economic freedom is mainly defined as a combination of economic actors which explain how national income is accumulated, distributed, under which institutional structure it is accumulated, and the kind of economic policy at work that time.

<sup>32</sup> You can see more information in Figure 8 in the Annex.

### Social factors

To understand the compatibility of Pangea, it is also indispensable to analyse German culture and values. In terms of values, a study conducted by Salford Business School found that Germans prioritize time, privacy and structure. In this way, hard work and time management are strictly related, being key values inculcated in Germany's values. This can be seen in the amount of time Germans devote to their jobs: about 4% of employees work very long hours, less than the OECD average of 11% (OECD, 2021).

For Germans, graduating from upper secondary education has become increasingly important, as the skills needed in the labour market are becoming more knowledge-based. High-school graduation rates therefore provide a good indication of whether a country is preparing its students to meet the minimum requirements of the job market. In Germany, 87% of adults aged 25-64 have completed upper secondary education, higher than the OECD average of 78% (OECD, 2021).

According to Zimmermann (2015), German is the official language of Germany, which is spoken by more than 95% of the population. Regarding religion, from 65 to 70% of Germans declare themselves Christians, 3.7% Muslims, and 28.3% report to be related to a religion other

### Legal factors

The legal landscape of Germany promotes the establishment of business ventures by both citizens as well as foreign investors. In fact, in terms of legal stability, foreign investors rank Germany second. Consequently, this attracts foreign businesses and is to the benefit of investments and entrepreneurial activity in Germany (MarketLine, 2019). Moreover, German legal system is driven by the constitutional law but is also influenced by international law. State law is mainly focused on matters as schools and universities, the press, radio and television, as well as the police and local government (All answers Ltd, 2018). Moreover, The Federal Cartel Office holds the responsibility to control unfair market behaviours (All Answers Ltd, 2018) and Act Against Unfair Competition monitors the fair competition in the market.

Although 4% of global direct investments are incurred by Germany, doing business in Germany can still be a challenge for those that are unfamiliar with the taxation and legal structures. Issues

faced by businesses comprise (1) strict business requirements; (2) property registration, involving bureaucratic processes and (3) tax payments: Germany has a complicated fiscal system for businesses (see complete analysis in Annex).

## **II. SWOT**

Once the study of Germany has been conducted, a SWOT analysis will be done in order to pinpoint the main benefits and limitations of the future project of internationalization. It must be mentioned that the data extracted from the following tables has been taken from the previous analysis and statements done in this paper.



Figure 8: SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>First</b> on-line platform in preparing students for all Selectivitat exams in Catalonia</li> <li>2. <b>Strong reputation</b> in Catalonia: leading academy in preparing for Selectivitat.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Presence</b> in Adolescents.cat, Tv3, Votv and Catalunya Radio.</li> <li>b. <b>Strong image</b> in social media (specially Instagram, YouTube, Tik Tok and Facebook)</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. <b>Well-built community</b> of students: quantified by the number of customer retention through Mail, Instagram and YouTube</li> <li>4. <b>Low financial costs</b>: monthly costs for maintaining the website and one-time payment to professors</li> <li>5. <b>Competitive prices</b>: one-time payment of 79,99 to have access to all courses of Selectivitat, including notes. Competitors' prices do not include a whole pack, so average costs to buy all courses are 250€ if you want to do all mandatory subjects (e.g., PCE Academy).<sup>6</sup></li> <li>6. Courses offer a <b>unique design</b> and excellent quality (e.g., use of Mesotech microphones for excellent audio quality and a Canon camera for HD quality in video recordings)</li> <li>7. <b>Simple</b> and easy <b>management</b> of website (e.g., user registration and payment)</li> <li>8. <b>Effective communication</b> and marketing through social media (e.g., use of influencers)</li> <li>9. <b>Experience</b> in communication, social media promotion and marketing</li> <li>10. Our services can benefit from <b>economies of scale</b></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Not accredited</b> by any official institution (e.g., Generalitat de Catalunya or a university)</li> <li>2. <b>No international reach</b>: no global customers nor international reputation.</li> <li>3. <b>Lack of experience</b> in business administration: first business created.</li> <li>4. <b>Difficulty</b> to build <b>confidence</b> in our product: due to the intangible character of the services.</li> <li>5. <b>Difficulty to understand</b> what type of services we offer</li> <li>6. <b>Limited product portfolio</b>: weak adaptability to other markets outside Catalonia</li> <li>7. <b>Small target</b>: 294.730 students from all Spain that do Selectivitat</li> <li>8. <b>Irregular cashflow growth</b>: company grows when Selectivitat exams take place, this temporary timing causes difficulty in managing income</li> <li>9. <b>Weak financial back-up</b>; financial risks are demanded</li> </ol>

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>“Boom” of the e-learning industry:</b> almost 1.6 billion children in 195 countries worldwide could not use their classrooms due to the COVID-19 situation<sup>7</sup>; market demand expected to increase.</li> <li>2. <b>Schools’ lack of expertise</b> in preparing students for Selectivitat via online</li> <li>3. <b>Teacher’s lack of experience</b> in online classes (e.g., ISC Research surveys found that 41.5% of teachers said they experienced significant challenges delivering distance learning through technology during their campus closures<sup>8</sup>)</li> <li>4. <b>Development of new courses</b> that can be of interest for students/other targets (e.g., Finance course or Nutrition course)</li> <li>5. <b>Opening of new markets</b> in which Pangea could enter</li> <li>6. <b>Possibility of partnership/collaboration</b> with universities or other online platforms designed for the same purposes or with correlated interests (e.g., Seleactivitat)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Possibility that <b>government changes the structure</b> of Selectivitat exams.</li> <li>2. <b>Post-coronavirus crisis:</b> economy backlash which pushes forward economic limitations for each family</li> <li>3. <b>International market restrictions</b> to entry to new markets (e.g., England and its EU limitations)</li> <li>4. <b>Increase of national competitors:</b> schools’ online platforms or others such as Academia 5C, Unicos, Yoteayudoconlasele, ecedemy.es, Escuela PCE.</li> <li>5. <b>Cultural differences:</b> differences in language, religion and educational attitudes can limit Pangea’s development in that country.</li> </ol>

(Source: Personal collection)

Through this SWOT assessment, it is seen how the e-learning sector is not only an opportunity but a rising tendency that needs further research to see its future evolution. In this regard, Pangea could definitely benefit from this research and find more niche opportunities such as the one already found. However, it should also be noted that obstacles such as the cultural differences existent among countries and the difficulty to build a wider identity tare to be considered. These obstacles, among others that cannot be predicted, but have to be considered when doing the financial reserve.

### III. TOWS Analysis

Figure 9: TOWS Analysis

<p><b>Defensive Strategy</b> (<i>Use of internal strengths to reduce external threats</i>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adjust the prices to the competitive characteristics of each market, to target correctly the public and be able to strive with national competitors. (S4.S5.S10.T2.T4)</li> <li>2. Elaborate a more inclusive, internationally-based identity that can mitigate cultural differences among students. (S.3.S8.T5)</li> </ol>	<p><b>Survival Strategy</b> (<i>Minimize internal weaknesses and reduce external threats</i>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Get accredited by an official institution/university to differentiate our company from possible competitors. (W1.W4.T1.T4)</li> <li>2. Make an action plan with the help of other start-ups or institutions such as “Barcelona Activa” to boost our business. (W2.W3.W6.T3.T4)</li> </ol>
<p><b>Offensive Strategy</b> (<i>Use of internal strengths to maximize external opportunities</i>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use Pangea’s experience in Catalonia to adapt its services to new possible markets. (S1.S2.O1.O5)</li> <li>2. Invest in training on the e-learning sector to offer better services to clients. (S3.S.4.S8.O1.O2.O3.O5.)</li> <li>3. Invest in expanding product portfolio (S2.S3.S4.S10.O4.O5.O6)</li> </ol>	<p><b>Reorientation Strategy</b> (<i>Use of external opportunities to overcome internal weaknesses</i>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Joint Venture with other companies or start-ups such as <i>Seleactivitat</i>; they offer all kind of notes and we offer online courses, to mitigate financial loses (O1.O2.O5.W1.W4.W9)</li> <li>2. Collaboration with other platforms which have correlated interests (e.g., such as OBV Allfinanz). (O1.O2.O6.W1.W3.W4.W9)</li> <li>3. Expand Pangea’s reputation internationally, reaching new customers over the globe. (O1.O2.O5.W2)</li> </ol>

(Source: Personal collection)

Throughout this analysis, different actions have been portrayed in order to achieve Pangea’s internationalisation. Although I offer a variety of strategies, the most key to have the maximum possible guarantees for internationalizing Pangea are, firstly, the elaboration of a more inclusive identity. This is crucial in order to adapt to the German market and get the customer’s trustworthiness. Secondly, it would be fundamental to get the accreditation of some university or institution in order to add value and recognition of certain quality standards to our services. Thirdly, it would be vital to collaborate with other platforms which have correlated interests, not only in Germany but also in all markets that Pangea is established. As for the last strategy, a Joint Venture with other companies or start-ups proves also decisive to reorientate Pangea’s services.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> It is to be noted that offensive strategy (1) is, in fact, the aim of my project and thus, the reason why is not mentioned.

#### IV. Business Model Canvas

In this section, a Canvas will be provided to help us understand Pangea’s business model in a structured way. In this regard, the model is divided into easily-understood segments which will lead us to the recognition of the areas of the company that can be improved and where to build Pangea’s organizational innovation strategy.

Although the Canvas will shape itself as the company grows, it is to be said that the following Canvas is the current model applied in Pangea. Hence, it has been the basis for Pangea to achieve its goals and communicate its value proposition to the Spanish clients since its beginnings in April 2019.

**Figure 10: CANVAS Business Model**

<b>Pangea’s Business Model Canvas</b>		<i>Designed for:</i> Pangea Academy	<i>Designed by:</i> Maria Palet
<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Value Propositions</b>	<b>Customer Relationships</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Acció</li> <li>- Barcelona Activa</li> <li>- Stakeholders</li> <li>- Pangea’s Team</li> <li>- Pangea’s professors and collaborators</li> <li>- Social media and traditional media</li> <li>- Agency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Course’s production and design</li> <li>- Advising and consulting</li> <li>- Interviews</li> <li>- Sales and marketing</li> <li>- Data analytics</li> <li>- Research and innovation</li> <li>- Promotion and sharing</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online self-service</li> <li>- On-demand</li> <li>- Trust through verification and engagement</li> <li>- Tailored-made</li> </ul>
	<b>Key Resources</b>	<i>To develop an e-learning platform alternative to the classic presential learning</i>	<b>Channels</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Platform</li> <li>- Employees</li> <li>- Social media profiles</li> <li>- Agency</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Digital ad campaigns</li> <li>- Word of mouth</li> <li>- Social media and website</li> <li>- PR – media coverage</li> <li>- Google marketing tools</li> <li>- Traditional media (radio, TV)</li> </ul>
<b>Cost Structure</b>		<b>Revenue Streams</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fixed costs of website acquisition and maintaining</li> <li>- Cost of services’ development</li> <li>- Variable costs: Lobbying /PR &amp; Advertising</li> <li>- Fixed costs: payroll / contractors</li> <li>- Fixed costs: legal services / Agency</li> <li>- Economies of scale</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Courses selling (volume dependnt)</li> <li>- Product placement</li> </ul>	

(Source: Personal collection)

#### V. Marketing Mix

Once the marketing techniques have been employed, the elements of the marketing mix ought to be analysed in order to clarify Pangea’s adaptability to Germany. In this regard, the scrutiny of the 4Ps will be of help to set up the appropriate strategy for Pangea’s business in Germany (Yudelson, 1999).

### **(1) Product**

Firstly, it has to be said that, although Pangea's online courses are considered products themselves, Pangea is a service company, offering online goods and services via internet. Pangea start product is the delivery of online courses to prepare students for the pre-university exams in Spain's main autonomous communities: Catalonia, Andalucía and Madrid. However, Pangea offers other courses such as the preparation for the driving test exam or the basic finances course. To enter to the German market, new online courses would have to be created to prepare students for the Abitur exams, which comprises three written exams: (1) Language, literature and the arts; (2) Social sciences and (3) Mathematics, natural sciences and technology (Frietsch, 2003).

### **(2) Place**

Pangea's services are delivered through Pangea's official online website: pangeacademy.com, where customers can buy courses, notes and are directed to our social media channels where promotion takes place. Other nets used are the platform called *Stripe*<sup>34</sup>, in which embedded payments take place and where revenues' growth is portrayed. In Germany, the online platform would be the same, although with the possibility to translate it into German. As there is no specific German law for online platforms, Pangea's platform in Germany would not be a problem – the only applicable legal document is the E-Commerce Directive of the European Union. Yet, the domain would have to be taken into account as, to have a '.de' domain – the German address. (Prakash & Mallipeddi, 2019). As Germans do not use much credit cards as a method of payment, Pangea would have to offer other payment means apart from this, such as direct debit, electronic payments as PayPal and the open invoice system.

### **(3) Price**

Pangea's expansion of services to the German market would follow a similar strategy to the one employed in Spain. This would be a penetration pricing strategy, by offering a starting offer of a 20% discount of the original. Another strategy would be the use of promotional codes where they could obtain a 15% discount with the purchase of the courses. The discounts associated with this promo code would also be used in special festivities of Germany or in accordance with special sales' days in Germany. Finally, psychology pricing would be employed, as it is in Spain, where the price to buy the whole pack for Selectivitat is 79,99€ -

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<sup>34</sup> For more information about this platform: Stripe.com (2021) [online] Available at: <https://stripe.com/use-cases/platforms> [Accessed 1 May, 2021]

proven to attract more customers than setting it at 80€. Moreover, compared to Spain, prices would be a little higher as for the costs of changing the website domain, establishing new alliances with other German institutions, finding German professors that will need a salary as well as a 20% of margin profit for the company.

#### **(4) Promotion**

Promotion would definitely focus on the channel and the public. Thus, it would go for a pull marketing strategy. Sales tactics used for pull marketing would include mass media promotions, email marketing, word-of-mouth referrals and advertised sales promotions in social networks like Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Tik Tok. In these social networks, the collaboration with influencers and other online platforms would be crucial.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the strategy would be to establish long-term customers – a community of students – that have a strong bargaining power with retailers and distributors, focus on brand equity and product value and finally, to have an active consumer with no need to conduct outbound marketing.

To conclude, throughout the product analysis and the channel distribution' definition, it is seen how our services would fit in Germany's market; not only for the benefits of online formatting, but also for Germany's suitability to our pricing and promotion strategy.

## **VI. ACTION PLAN**

In this section, a detailed list of actions – in a chronological approach – for achieving Pangea's goals of internationalization will be pointed out. The main steps to be considered are the following:

1. Market research: Complete and update the market research seeking for possible new competitors, new governmental decisions or other market limitations.
2. Financial plan: If the market research is optimistic, there's the need to elaborate a solid financial plan in order to lay out the costs, manage Pangea's cash flow and especially, as a reminder of all the necessary expenditures to keep the business growing.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Although German market of influencers is not as expanded as other European countries, social media platforms have enjoyed strong user growth in Germany in recent years, and that expansion is expected to continue in the following years (StarNgage, 2021)

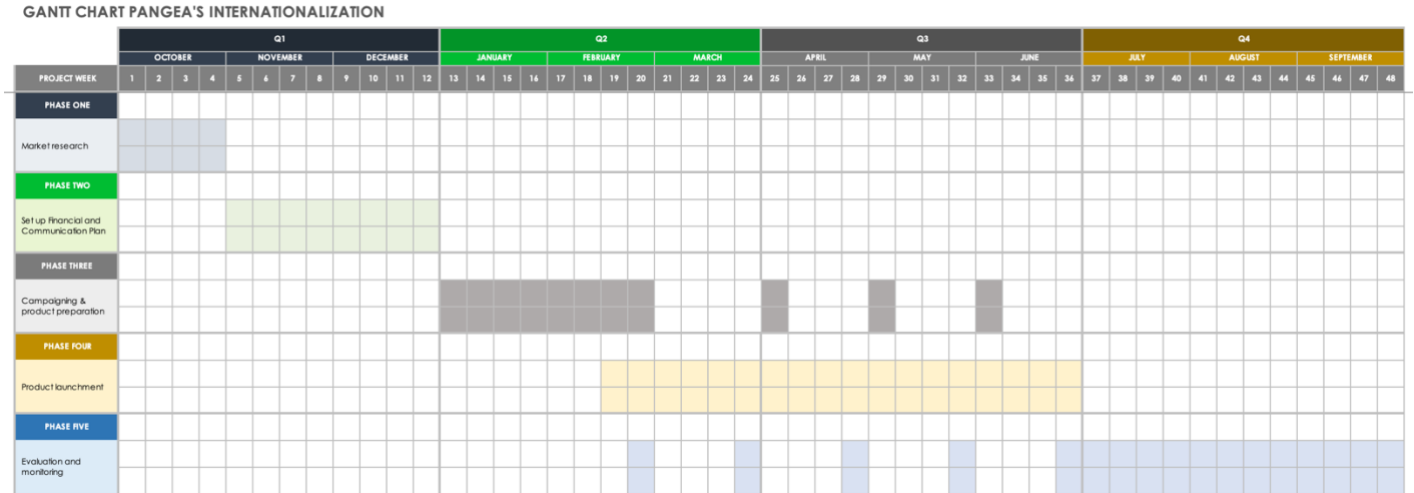
<sup>36</sup> See the complete development of the Financial Plan in Annex 7.

3. Marketing strategy: once we have reviewed our internationalization strategy and elaborated a financial plan, the marketing strategy ought to be revised to figure out new promotional strategies.
4. Marketing campaigning: the launch of the online platform in social networks would be the next step. For this reason, Pangea would start promoting itself through different media, especially radio and social media, and through paid advertising from influencers and other educational online platforms.
5. Preparation of the products: While the business is creating customer awareness through marketing campaigning, the provision of all products would be, simultaneously, under way. This would require contracting employees, legal advisors and data engineers to create the online platform.
6. Product launch: Having penetrated into the market through its campaigning, following a marketing media blitz – by building a little but solid community, – Pangea would finally launch its online courses.
7. Evaluation and monitoring of the impact: Once the products are launched, Pangea would have to manage its impact throughout an analysis of the results that have been achieved, weaknesses that have been encountered and so on. In this context, a track of customer evaluation would also be conducted to assess the publics' perspective.

## VII. GANTT CHART

In this section, a GANTT chart has been created to complement the action plan and track the project schedules, allowing the company to know what needs to be done and when.

**Figure 11: GANTT Chart**



As a final overview, this GANTT chart presents the periods dedicated to the aforementioned tasks from the Action Plan. It is to be emphasized that phase 3 is prolonged as for the campaigning that we would still do when the courses are launched. Moreover, phase 5 which consists of evaluation and monitoring, would be done the last week of every month after the launch of the courses. In this way, the follow-up of the company's growth and progress would be monitored since the beginning.



## CONCLUSIONS

The e-learning industry has become indeed, essential during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but especially since the pandemic started. In this health crisis that we are still living, being in lockdown did not only prevented the spread of the virus, but also became, accidentally, a door that opened to new opportunities. It is in this context that, many companies and online platforms like Pangea emerged. In this case, Pangea's initial aim was to offer students the possibility to study at home for the Selectivitat exams in Catalonia. Thus, as the project proved efficient in the region, the aim of this research has been to internationalize the company to other European markets.

In this regard, this study has successfully achieved its main goal: to export Pangea's online services to another European market: Germany. However, for achieving this goal, relevant sub-tasks were to be taken. Firstly, a market analysis of possible suitable European countries was to be conducted, and certainly, throughout the study of certain criteria for determining the best market, the German was the one chosen as most suitable for expanding Pangea's services. The second sub-goal was to adapt our company to the market decided, which was conducted by a PESTL analysis of the German market as well as the employment of other marketing practices (SWOT and TOWS analysis). Finally, throughout the Marketing Mix and the Action Plan, a marketing strategic plan has been elaborated to forecast Pangea's entry to the German market. Therefore, we can state that the methodology used has proven successful for attaining the desired goals.

On the other hand, it must be noted that business plan has not been fully completed as for the lack of a financial plan. Plus, there is still room for research in the area of competitors, as the online market is evolving really quickly and the creation of online educational platforms with common characteristics are growing every day. Besides, future areas of work could definitely study the different online platforms' tendencies in the educational sector that have emerged due to the pandemic. Or, more precisely, to analyse which are those online educational platforms that have been more successful in achieving customer satisfaction and in granting good learning results. Moreover, as the landscape of the pandemic changes expeditiously and it is difficult, if not impossible, to predict the future of learning, it is to be noted that the suitability of this project strictly depends on the current context and its evolution.

However, although online services were on the rise during the pandemic, the pike does not seem to go down. In this respect, I have come to realize how much potential this business has, not only into this post-pandemic environment, but also, what a big step represents towards conventional education. This was indeed, seen during the launch of our first online courses, but it has also proven successful during all this time. Furthermore, I have been able to understand how the German market works, and how suitable this would be for expanding Pangea's services in the near future.

Additionally, certain difficulties have been encountered into the making of this project. Firstly, as there were no antecedents or any case study of a company that had done a market research on this specific issue, I had to seek some help from other platforms to learn more in-depth about what criteria study and how to analyse it. In this process, I received support from Barcelona Activa and its online webinars as well as its private counselling. Secondly, another problem has been the lack of specific updated data (especially, in English) regarding high school in Germany: number of students, examinations, structure of the educational system in numbers, etc. This, indeed, delayed my work and limited my research. Last but not least, the fact that the company's growth strictly depends on the variable of time and the customers' needs, the action plan has not been as extensive and specific as I would have wished to be.

To conclude, it is imperative to emphasize the need to furtherly study new e-learning methods that not only profit from the new technological advancements, but also, differentiate themselves from conventional education, which, as noted, might not be the most efficient tool in this changing environment. Consequently, I believe it remains crucial to support entrepreneurs that aim to bring new ideas into the market as well as backing-up new start-ups and all those people that are implicated in finding innovative educational practices that distance themselves from traditional learning. Indeed, these market needs that I remark are not directed to any specific country, but instead, have an interdependent nature and are globally and, internationally, required.

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## ANNEXES

### 1. Annex 1: Analysis of entry requirements per country

In **France**, applicants must have a secondary education diploma (*Baccalaureate*), a certified equivalent from the vocational stream, or the national diploma (*Diplôme d'accès aux études universitaires* – DAEU). Although the most common path is to make the Baccalaureate – which is divided into three types: general (53% of the students), technological (23%) and professional (26%) –, requirements may vary according to institutions' demands (Ministère Education Nationale, 2020). Students may register for non-selective universities or a variety of other higher education institutions, including the vocational University Institute of Technology (IUT), section of senior technicians (STS), Diploma in Accounting and Management (DCG) or the prestigious *Grandes écoles* pathways<sup>37</sup>.

Students in **Germany** who attend the upper secondary school attend a *Gymnasium* to do a secondary leaving examination, which provides them with a general higher education entrance qualification called the *Abitur*. The *Abitur* qualification allows them to study all subjects at all types of higher education institutions. Another way to enter to university is for applicants to access higher education after adult training, (in a *Kolleg*) which leads to the completion of an *Abitur* (European Parliament, 2014). Applicants may also enter university after vocational training or if they have worked for three years and passed an entrance exam called *Eingangsprüfung* (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2010).

The only requirement to be fulfilled in order to access a degree in **Italy** with free access is to have successfully completed secondary school and obtain a secondary school leaving certificate through the completion of an exam (*esame di stato di II ciclo*). Core subjects include Italian, history, a modern foreign language, mathematics and physical education. Optional subjects depend on the type of secondary school, e.g., classical, languages, scientific, technical, professional, teaching, and artistic (UCAS, 2018). In degrees such as medicine, veterinary medicine or architecture, there are other standardized entry tests regulated nationally, as well as

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<sup>37</sup> For more information, see Service-Public (2020) *Études supérieures : première inscription d'un étudiant*. Available at: [fr http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/particuliers/F2861.xhtml#N10073](http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/particuliers/F2861.xhtml#N10073).

in some cases, universities have the authority to set ceilings on the number of students that they admit and to design their own admissions tests (UCAS, 2018).

In **Czech Republic**, applicants have to pass a secondary school leaving examination (the *Matura or Maturita* exam), which have a common part that includes evaluation of Czech language and literature, a foreign language and mathematics, and a vocational part which comprises school subjects that are selected by the student and depend on each school's itinerary (European Commission, 2021) (Markéta Bačáková, 2011).

Entry requirements in **Sweden** are based on school-leaving grades for most undergraduate programmes. Applicants are also admitted on the basis of the independent Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test (abbreviation SweSAT; *Högskoleprovet*) and previous validated experience (Amft, 2021). As in the other case studies, supplementary entry requirements are often demanded by universities for particular degrees like Medicine, Law and fine, applied and performing arts (Stefan Trines, 2021).

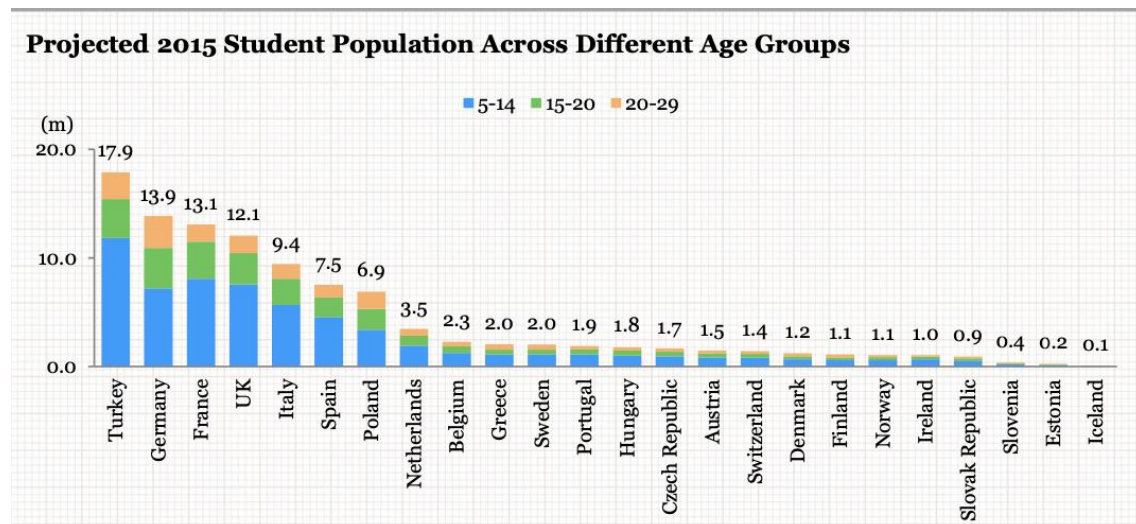
In **England**, the most common school-leaving exams are GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education) and GCE AS/A-levels. GCSEs' compulsory subjects include English, Mathematics and Science, although schools may have additional required subjects. Students who complete five or more GCSEs with grades higher than a C are eligible for and may choose to study GCE A-levels (Pearson, 2021). GCE A-levels are a two-year qualification, which involves the study of the theory of a subject, with some investigative work. There is no set of compulsory GCE A-level subjects or exams, so students are free to choose their own set of subjects depending on their future interests. Students apply with their GCE A-levels results to universities, which offer conditional offers where the student must obtain or exceed their predicted grades, or, with achieved grades. Higher education institutions may also require specific grades and/or specific subjects for the General Certificate of Secondary Education usually completed at age 16 (University of Cambridge, 2021).

In **Turkey**, students successfully complete high school through the obtainment of a valid high school diploma, and achieve a sufficient score on the Student Selection and Placement Examinations. Student Selection and Placement Examinations consist of the Higher Education

Exam (YGS, *Yükseköğretime Geçiş Sınavı*) and the Undergraduate Placement Examination (LYS, *Lisans Yerleştirme Sınavı*)<sup>38</sup>. Before entering the examination process, most applicants conduct a one-year non-compulsory preparation course at schools (*dershane*).<sup>39</sup> Admission to higher education in Turkey depends on students' secondary school achievement scores, which is the outcome of a composite calculation of secondary school grade point average and the performance on already-mentioned two-staged standardised national test, the YGS and the LYS. The YGS includes the subjects of Turkish, Basic Mathematics, Social and Natural Science (European Parliament, 2014). On the other hand, the LYS covers the subjects of Mathematics, Natural Science, Literature and Geography, Social Science and Foreign Language. Finally, there are also entrance exams in each university. Since 1999, the entrance examination system has been essentially based on a one-stage examination, namely the ÖSS (The Student Selection Examination) which comprises two tests. One is to measure candidates' verbal ability and the other their quantitative abilities (European Parliament, 2014).

## 2. Annex 2: E-learning Development across Europe

**Figure 1:** Student Population enrolled in e-learning studies across Europe

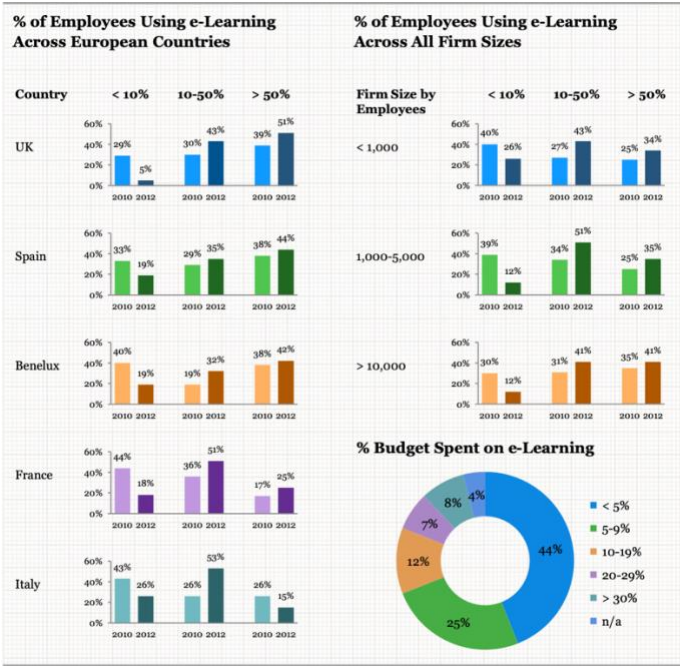


Source: OECD, EuroStat.

<sup>38</sup> In 2010, it was decided to implement the two-stage examination system named ÖSYS (Student Selection and Placement Examination). The stages were called YGS (Transition to Higher Education Examination) and LYS (Undergraduate Placement Examination). Students who pass YGS are entitled to take LYS. (European Education Directory, 2020)

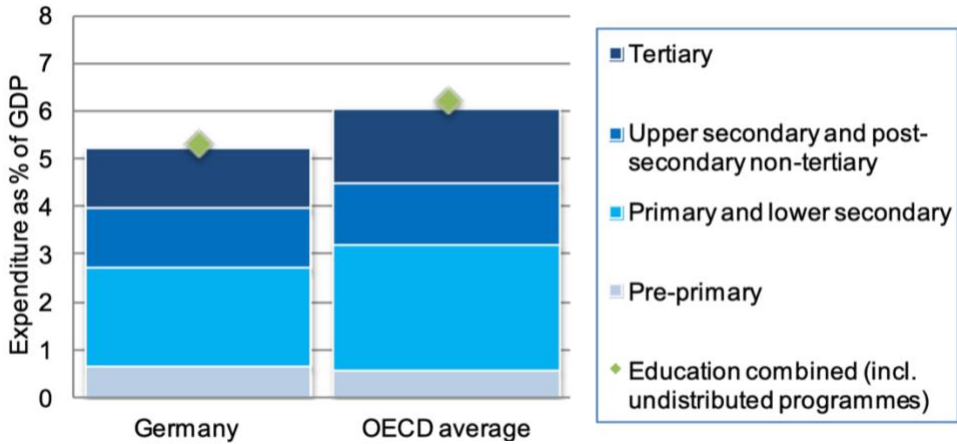
<sup>39</sup> Further information is available on the website of the Student Selection and Placement Centre, <http://osym.gov.tr>.

**Figure 2:** E-learning penetration Increasing in European Corporates



Source: Ipsos, CrossKnowledge, Fefaur

**Figure 3:** Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP, by level of education, 2009.



Source: OECD

**Analysis of selected variables to understand e-learning development:**

- (1) Access to computers at home: percentage of the total population that have computers at home, which simultaneously, means that they will have greater access to online education that those that do not have computers.

- (2) Number of online courses: number of courses or programmes that are available online, which indicate the variety of opportunities and facilities to have access to digital education.
- (3) Government expenditure per student: proportion of the PIB per capita that is invested in education. The public expenditure in this sector will indicate how much governments invest in their population. As greater is the expenditure, greater will be the available budget to develop new methods for online education.
- (4) Broadband internet speed: Internet speed when transferring data via broadband was measured by download speed in Mbit per second. If the internet speed is faster, the opportunities to be able to participate in classes exclusively online are more jump and higher quality. Thus, the internet speed indicates if the country studied has the necessary technical requirements for general use. of virtual learning methods.
- (5) Speed of mobile internet: The figure of the internet speed in the transfer of data via mobile. If the speed of the mobile internet is fast, the possibility of being part of the e-reading regardless of the place is greater. For this reason, mobile internet speed indicates whether the country studied has the technical requirements necessary for the general use of virtual learning methods throughout the national territory (Gaebel; Kupriyanova; Morais; Colucci, 2014)
- (6) Monthly costs to have access to internet: The average monthly costs for broadband internet access were taken from the report “Measuring the Information Society Report, Volume 1, 2018”, published by the International Telecommunications Union (2018). The lower the price for Internet access, the larger the population will consider participating in online courses. Therefore, the cost of broadband is a determining factor for e-learning.
- (7) Salary of online experts: This is the average salary for instructors or private tutors that do online courses. This number indicates the accessibility to online private courses, which, if big, indicates that the population have the opportunity to e-learn. Plus, this factor also shows the balance between supply and demand.
- (8) Market’s volume per country: To obtain this result in online education, the total number of students enrolled in preschool, primary and secondary school has been taken into account. The total number of students is an indicator of the quality of the resources available to students, which is also included in online education

(9) Market's growth per country: This factor was taken from internal data from our Preply platform. To obtain the result, the figures of the users (students, tutors, hours of classes) for 2019 and 2020 were evaluated. They were compared with each other and the percentage of growth corresponding to each country was calculated. A growing market indicates increased demand and a desire to take advantage of more e-reading services. As an indicator, market growth can be used to measure the demand for digital education and e-learning.

### **3. Annex 3: Analysis of potential costumers**

In 2019, more than 2.7 million students were enrolled in a higher education structure in **France** (Statista, 2021). Specifically, more than 500.000 students take the examination for the general track Baccalauréat, among whom 12.000 are enrolled in accredited French high schools abroad (FISNA, 2021).

On the other hand, in 2019-20 there were 2.46 million students at **UK** higher education institutions (Paul Bolton, 2021). This was 3% higher than in 2018/19 but below levels in 2009 to 2012. Looking at the enrolment in the secondary school leaving exams, more than a quarter of a million people sit A-levels in England, Wales and Northern Ireland each year (BBC, 2021) More specifically, in 2019, 245,300 students took the A-levels in England (UCAS, 2021). No certifiable data has been found regarding whole's UK enrolment to these exams.

In the winter semester of 2019-20, almost 2.9 million students were enrolled in **German** universities, according to preliminary figures (Statista, 2021). However, not all students who go to university have to do the Abitur exam. In fact, approximately 64,000 people without an Abitur, have enrolled in German universities in 2019, marking an increase of 1,750 people compared to the previous year (Erudera, 2021). But, although numbers have decreased in student's enrolment to Abitur; in 2012, a total number of 305,172 students did the Abitur exam and obtained the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (the German diploma) (Dstatist Bundesmat, 2013).

In **Sweden**, 359,673 students were registered in universities and other higher education institutions in the fall semester 2019 (Statista, 2021). Particularly, the proportion of students who receive a high school diploma after having done the SweSAT (Swedish Scholastic

Aptitude Test or *Högskoleprovet*) within three years of national programs increased slightly compared with 2018 - from 76.1 to 76.6 % (Skolverket, 2020). However, not specific numbers have been found regarding student's obtaining this diploma. Only a report from spring 2013 analysed that of the 95.600 pupils that received school leaving certificates and course and diploma-related grades from upper secondary school, 87 % met the basic eligibility requirements for higher education. The proportion of pupils with basic eligibility for higher education was 90 % from spring 2003 to 2009, but decreased to 87 % in 2010 and has stabilised at that level in the last four years (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2016)

In the academic year 2018/2019, over one million students were enrolled in a bachelor program in **Italy** (Statista, 2021). In this same academic year, the Central regions of Italy registered the highest enrolment rate, where 46 % of all high school graduates decided to attend university (Statista, 2021). Regarding the maturity exam that is done in Italy (*Esame di Stato*), in 2017, 96.2% of fifth-year high school students were admitted to the baccalaureate exam, of these 99.5% passed (Bartozzi, 2020).

In **Turkey**, as of December 2020, there are 131 public and 78 foundation (private) universities serving 7.94 million students in various academic programs. However, entrance into universities is competitive due to the limited capacity of high-quality university programs. In 2020, 2,296,138 high school graduates took the pre-university exam and around 16% of these applicants were enrolled in a 4-year program, 13.5% in a 2-year program, and 6% to the Open University (distance education in the various subfields) (International Trade Administration, 2021). Regarding the Higher Education Institution Exam (YGS), in 2020, the multiple-choice questionnaire was taken in physical spaces by 2.5 million people, despite the COVID-19 pandemic (Demirgüneş, 2017).

Finally, in the **Czech Republic**, the number of students attending higher school education was of 311,000 in 2016 (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2016). No other data has been found regarding this last year attendance. However, another relevant data is that 74% of all leavers of upper secondary school (the compulsory education) terminate their studies taking the school leaving examination certificate – the *Matura* exam (The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2011, 24) (OECD, 2020).



#### **4. Annex 4: Competitor's analysis**

In **France**, the e-learning is organised in *Campus virtuels* (Virtual campuses), MOOC Platforms such as the *Fédération Interuniversitaire de l'Enseignement à Distance*<sup>40</sup> and in *Universités Numériques Thématiques* (UNT) (Thematic Digital Universities) (Arneberg et al, 2007). The virtual campuses were created in the years 2000-2002 as projects funded by the Ministry of Education. More recently these virtual campuses were amalgamated into Thematic Digital Universities. However, these e-learning platforms are not directed to prepare students for its higher education entrance exams (Baccalaureate). If we focus on these last, we find as the biggest competitor, the Online French American Lycée (OFALycée), which is the first institution to offer online, supplemental French Baccalaureate education to students in the United States or anywhere else in the world (OFALycée, 2021). Apart from this institutionalized platform, other competitors would be those private tutors that offer online private lessons to prepare for the exam, announced in platforms such as *Apprentus* or *Superprof*.<sup>41</sup>

In **Germany**, universities such as the Bavarian Virtual University offer online learning. However, when it comes to prepare for Abitur exam, we encounter a variety of platforms specialized in preparing for single exams, such as *English in Britain*, which prepares students for the English Abitur exam, or *Proyecto Espanyol* which prepares them for Spanish Abitur exam. These are part of Goethe Institutes, which prepare students for the language exams<sup>42</sup> However, there is no single platform that is design with an online remote system that comprises the full preparation for the Abitur Exam in Germany.

In **Italy**, due to the pandemic, a platform called *Studenti.it*, from the Mondadori Group brand – leader in Italy in the digital area in the world of Education with over 4.3 million users per month according to Audiweb (Gruppo Mondadori, 2021) – for more than 20 years, has been helping student to pass the *Maturita* exams. The figures for April 2020 demonstrated its success and once again, confirmed the brand's success, with an increase in traffic of 50% compared with the same period last year. In this period of virtual lessons, it has been the teachers

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<sup>40</sup> For more information, see <https://www.fied.fr/>

<sup>41</sup> For instance, French student Lou offers online lessons. See more in: <https://www.apprentus.com/en-fr/private-lessons/online/tutoring/literature/preparation-french-bac-french-at-college-h>

<sup>42</sup> See more information in: <https://www.goethe.de/de/index.html>

themselves that have suggested to their students the resources of *Studenti.it*<sup>43</sup> and the boom in traffic shows that users recognise the reliability and authoritativeness of the available content (Gruppo Mondadori, 2021). The Facebook page has reached almost 500,000 fans with a group dedicated to the *Maturità 2020*, to which has been added a new group on Telegram. They are also well-positioned in YouTube and even help students to decide what they are going to study, with content and targeted tests to orientate their choices, and with the creation of ad hoc Facebook groups such as *Orientamento Università* (Gruppo Mondadori, 2021).

In **Sweden**, online preparation for the SweSAT has not been found. Although international students might register online to do this standardized test through Swedish universities webpages, there is not a single online platform for the preparation for these exams.

In **the UK**, there are plenty of online platforms that help in the preparation for A-levels. These platforms, for instance, are *ICS Learn*, *Open Study College*, *UK Open College*, *Wolsey Hall Oxford*. These offer online courses that can be synchronic or not, or even private courses of specific subjects with private tutoring.<sup>44</sup> Thus, the extensive online preparation in UK is quite immense, offering a huge extent of possibilities to study and prepare for the A-levels.

In the **Czech Republic**, online learning was not much developed until the pandemic arrived. In that moment, platforms such as META (2020) started offering online courses. In this case, META also developed an online course (not only temporary for the pandemic) that prepared students for the *Maturita* exam. Also, the Minister of Education in the Czech Republic provided regular updates on recommended procedures for online education/learning. Access to didactic tests and worksheets for *Maturita exams* was available to both students and teachers. A version for smartphones and tablets was also provided (CEDEFOP, 2020).

In **Turkey**, online learning was also outdated and during the pandemic, the government had to find out ways to incentivize the e-learning industry as quickly as possible. Within the scope of the FATİH Project, a web based social education platform called Educational Information Network (EBA) was formed in order to support teaching activities both in the classroom

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<sup>43</sup> See its content website in <https://www.studenti.it/>

<sup>44</sup> See example in: KeyStone Online Studies. [online] Available in: <https://www.onlinestudies.com/A-levels/Programs/> [Accessed 28 April 2021]

environment at schools and outside the school (Yıldız & Gündüz, 2019). There are various sections in EBA such as EBA Course, Content Modules, Competitions and Applications (MEB, 2017). However, although the emergence of this network played a key role for students, no data has been found regarding the preparation of the Higher Education Institution Exam (YGS), or the Undergraduate Placement Examination (LYS, *Lisans Yerleştirme Sınavı*).

## **5. Annex 5: PESTL Analysis**

### Political factors

The political elite in Germany is important in the way that it is the government that decides over the education system of the country. Thus, it is significant to analyse the governmental role in education. That said, general details are to be pointed out. Germany is a democratic republic in which the political system functions under a system called Grundgesetz, laid out in the 1949 constitutional document. Also, the political and administrative hierarchy in the Federal Republic of Germany is made up of three levels: 1) Federation; 2) Länder; and 3) local authorities (*Kommunen*), which are, for instance, districts, municipalities with the status of a district and municipalities forming part of districts. Since 1949, the party system has been dominated by the Christian Democratic Union and the Social Democratic Party of Germany.

The President, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, is the formal executive head of the State elected for a term of five years. He appoints the Federal Chancellor, currently being Angela Merkel, and his Cabinet. Although the Chancellor is the head of government, it's important to understand that concerning German education, the country's federal system grants its member states a high degree of autonomy in education policy. In this regard, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research in Berlin (BMBF)<sup>45</sup> has an important role in areas like funding, financial aid, and the regulation of vocational education and entry requirements in the professions. But most other aspects of education fall under the direct authority of the education ministries of the 16 individual states, called *Bundesländer* in German. Given their autonomy, there can be considerable variation in education from state to state, such as differences between curricula, types of schools, and so on. However, a coordinating body, the Standing Conference

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<sup>45</sup> See more in: <https://www.bmbf.de/en/index.html>

of the Ministers of Education and Culture, facilitates the harmonization of education policies between states.

In higher education, a federal law called the *Hochschulrahmengesetz* (Higher Education Framework Act, 1976)<sup>46</sup> provides an overarching legal framework. In addition, the Conference of University Rectors, which represents most universities, coordinates the development of common norms and standards. Hence, academic degrees, vocational and professional qualifications are mutually recognized between the states, so that the system runs smoothly, by and large (Trines, 2021).

In the case of public institutions, schools and universities are regulated and funded by the governments of the states. However, the current digitalization effort during the pandemic has also been provided by the federal government, which funds for research and development, as well as funding for projects of “supra-regional importance” (Trines, 2021). Since the state governments are increasingly harried to support universities amid rising numbers of students, the role of the federal government in higher education funding has expanded significantly in recent years.

Furthermore, universities have a high degree of autonomy and can independently award academic degrees within federal guidelines. (Trines, 2021). In this sense, final graduation examinations in professional fields like medicine or law are conducted by government authorities of the individual states. The same holds true for vocational education, even though the final examinations in this sector are often conducted by government-authorized private industry associations, such as regional Chambers of Industry and Commerce. Vocational schools fall under the purview of the states, but the federal government oversees on-the-job practical training, which is an integral part of most vocational programs. Important regulations in this sector are codified in a federal law on vocational education (Niemann, 2009)

### Economic factors

In general, Germany has a highly developed social market economy. In fact, it has the largest national economy in Europe, the fourth-largest by nominal GDP in the world, and fifth by GDP

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<sup>46</sup> The full document can be viewed in: <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/hrg/HRG.pdf>.

(PPP) (Index Economic Freedom, 2021). On the other hand, it has to be noted that Germany has a mixed economy: it allows a free market economy in consumer goods and business services, but the government imposes regulations even in those areas to protect its citizens. Germany has been one of the strongest economies when it comes to economic freedom, despite challenging environment prevailing in the European Union.<sup>47</sup> Business as well as investment freedom remains strong in the country, which consequently, allows for entrepreneurial growth and competitiveness supported by strong property and business environment. Overall, the economic freedom index of Germany is recorded to be 72.5 in 2021 (Index of Economic Freedom, 2021).

Skantze (1992) described standard of living as the dimension of how well the basic needs of life are met. Germany outperforms a lot of countries when it comes to standard of living and better life indices. The average household net-adjusted disposable income per capita is USD 34 297 a year, higher than the OECD average of USD 33 604 a year. But there is a considerable gap in terms of income inequality: the top 20% of the population earn nearly five times as much as the bottom 20% (OECD, 2021). Employment remains substantially high in the country, with 75% of the people aged in between 15-64 having a paid job, a figure higher than the OECD employment average of 68. Similarly, in terms of gender, 79% of the men have paid work and 72% of the women have paid work (OECD, 2021).

In this regard, Germany's education budget will be analysed in order to understand how the educational system works. According to the European Commission (2021), the financing of education from the public purse is currently based on the following arrangements:

- Most educational institutions are maintained by public authorities.
- They receive the greater part of their funds from public budgets.
- Certain groups undergoing training receive financial assistance from the state to provide them with the money they need to live and study.
- The public financing arrangements for the education system are the result of decision-making processes in the political and administrative system in which the various forms of public spending on education are apportioned between Federation, Länder

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<sup>47</sup> According to Atkinson (1983), economic freedom is mainly defined as a combination of economic actors which explain how national income is accumulated, distributed, under which institutional structure it is accumulated, and the kind of economic policy at work that time.

and *Kommunen* (local authorities) and according to education policy and objective requirements.

As mentioned above, the political system functions under three levels and in the case of deciding over the financing of education, the three levels participate in it, but around 90 per cent of public expenditure are provided by the Länder and the local authorities (European Commission, 2021). The Länder can take over responsibilities from local authorities for special schools. In 2009, the Länder covered 72.2% of expenditure in primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (both public and private). Local authorities covered 17.5% and the federal level 10.3%. Out-of-school education in the dual system is largely funded by companies, whereas vocational schools are funded by the Länder. Private schools receive financial support from the Länder based on lump-sum allocations, and they also receive aid from local authorities (OECD, 2014). The Länder are also responsible for funding of higher education institutions.<sup>48</sup> Funding comes mostly from public sources, with 87% covered by the Länder and 13% by the Federation (2009). Further funding is provided by organisations concerned with the promotion of research, such as the German Research Foundation (OECD, 2014).

In 2019 according to the financing statistics, the public sector expended a total of Euro 150.1 billion on day-care centres for children, general and vocational schools, higher education institutions, financial assistance for pupils and students, other educational expenditure as well as out-of-school youth education and youth association work (European Commission, 2021). In this regard, this amounted to Euro 9.9 billion for the Federation, Euro 105.3 billion for the Länder and Euro 35.0 billion for the local authorities; corresponding to 4.4 per cent of gross domestic product and 21.5 per cent of the total public budget (European Commission, 2021)

According to the International Standard Qualification of Education (ISCED), expenditure on education in Germany in 2017 totalled Euro 189.3 billion on pre-school education, schools and the associated areas, the tertiary sector, miscellaneous and other expenses. Additional German expenditure related to education amounted to Euro 20.9 billion for in-company vocational education, further education offers and the promotion of participants in continuing education.

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<sup>48</sup> You can see more information in Figure 8 in the Annex.

The education budget thus comprised a total Euro 210.2 billion in 2017, which meant 6.5 per cent of gross domestic product (European Commission, 2021). However, no specific data has been found regarding the exact expenditure on Abitur examinations in Germany.

### Social factors

To understand the compatibility of Pangea, it is also indispensable to analyse German culture and values. Taking into consideration only the 19<sup>th</sup> century, three major events have strongly influenced the country and its culture: World War I and II, and the Cold War. In this regard, World War I was strongly characterized by the development of a Nazi culture (an example of culture imperialism), which has dissolved over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, the Cold War deeply influenced the entire country and German culture because of the construction of the Berlin Wall, which divided Germany in two parts as well as the rest of the world (Davis, 2015). However, although the division of Germany brought repercussions that still affects the country, Germany is considered one of the most influencing countries in Europe and the rest of the world (Zimmermann, 2015).

In terms of values, a study conducted by Salford Business School found that Germans prioritize time, privacy and structure. In this way, hard work and time management are strictly related, being key values inculcated in Germany's values. This can be seen in the amount of time Germans devote to their jobs: about 4% of employees work very long hours, less than the OECD average of 11% (OECD, 2021). In fact, full-time workers in Germany devote 65% of their day on average, or 15.6 hours, to personal care (eating, sleeping, etc.) and leisure (socialising with friends and family, hobbies, games, computer and television use, etc) (OECD, 2021).

However, these values and scores are also vital for understanding students' behaviour regarding education. In this sense, students are considered very disciplined and consequently, their studies are met as a priority in their lives. In this regard, for Germans, graduating from upper secondary education has become increasingly important, as the skills needed in the labour market are becoming more knowledge-based. High-school graduation rates therefore provide a good indication of whether a country is preparing its students to meet the minimum requirements of the job market. In Germany, 87% of adults aged 25-64 have completed upper secondary education, higher than the OECD average of 78% (OECD, 2021). This is truer of men than

women, as 88% of men have successfully completed high-school compared with 85% of women. In terms of the quality of its educational system, the average student scored 508 in reading literacy, maths and science in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). This score is higher than the OECD average of 486 (OECD, 2021).

In fact, Germany is categorized as an individualist nation (vs a collectivist one) and in terms of work motivation, Germans strongly rely on a self-actualization model, which is characterized by honesty, direct communication but especially, responsibility and a sense of duty (Hofstede, n.d). Also, a study analysing Germany's future orientation scored Germany 83 out 100; defining the country as long term oriented and pragmatic. This is important as determination in achieving results (such as in Abitur exams) and capability to adapt to new conditions are considered fundamental (Hofstede, n.d). Finally, Germany is defined as a monochronic culture; as for instance, German population prefer dealing with one aspect at time, deeply respect deadlines and schedules, and show a great respect for their job and privacy (Citeman, 2008).

According to Zimmermann (2015), German is the official language of Germany, which is spoken by more than 95% of the population. On the other hand, other languages such as Serbian, Danish, Romani or even Kurdish are also spoken, as for the country's borders, but especially, its historical and political background.

Another fact that has to be taken into account is religion. From 65 to 70% of Germans declare themselves Christians, 3.7% Muslims, and 28.3% report to be related to a religion other than Christianity or Islam (CBSNews, 2012). It is also important to underline the fact that a fundamental branch of today's Christianity, known as Protestantism, emerged in Germany in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Its founder was Martin Luther (Biography.com, n.d.).

### Technological factors

Technological advancements and digitalization of the market economy also play an important role, since after all, the success of Pangea's internationalization strictly depends on acquiring a competent and efficient technological system. This will be necessary to use of *Emergency Remote Teaching* (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020), a practice that has been accelerated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this way, the development of e-learning tools in the current state of Germany will be analysed as well as student's experience in this sector.



Firstly, it has to be pointed out that the use of digital media for learning and teaching has been promoted in Germany for quite some time. In 2000, for instance, funds from the auctioning of UMTS licenses were used to finance the major funding program “New Media in Education” of the BMBF with a total volume of EUR 185 million. The aim of the funding line was a permanent and broad integration of the “new” media as teaching, learning and communication tools in education (Zawacki-Richter, 2020).

Despite all efforts for triggering digitalization, it can be stated that a sustainable integration of digital media has not taken place across the entire range of higher education. This has been seen through the numerous project fundings (for an overview of e-learning funding in Germany, see [e-teaching.org](http://e-teaching.org), 2019) as well as in the area of distance teaching institutions (Bernath & Stöter, 2018). In a study on the state of digitalization of universities in Germany, just 1.7% of the universities surveyed (n = 116) rated the state of digitalization of teaching and learning as well advanced. There is a large controversy between the significance of digitalization perceived by university management and the current implementation (Gilch et al., 2019, p. 29 f.).

However, it is noticeable that due to the general digital transformation and globalization (Stalder, 2016), pressure to innovate and change mortar universities has increased. Digitalization is seen as the key to innovation in the European Higher Education Area (Rampelt, Orr, & Knoth, 2019). This development was taken up by the Federal Government in the Digital Agenda 2014–2017, which also launched the “Education Offensive for the Digital Knowledge Society” to better prepare people for the demands of the digital professional world and to strengthen their media literacies (Federal Government, 2014). In response, the BMBF presented a digitization strategy in October 2016 which describes five fields of action. These include the provision of digital education and media skills (1), the expansion of digital infrastructures (2), the creation of a modern legal framework (3), support for strategic organizational development (4) and the use of the potential for internationalization (BMBF, 2016). At the same time, the BMBF established the Higher Education Forum on Digitalization (Hochschulforum Digitalisierung—HFD) to study and develop new works on digitalization at universities in expert groups. In its final report, the HFD emphasizes that processes of change must be initiated at the strategic level of higher education in order to use the potential of digital education

(Zawacki-Richter, 2020). Other initiatives have been the Digital Pact for Schools. Germany is making more than EUR 5 billion available over a period of five years to bring the country's schools into the digital age. The funding, equivalent to EUR 500 for every one of Germany's 11 million school pupils, will help schools upgrade their digital infrastructure through the provision of smartboards, Wi-Fi provision, online learning platforms, and the use of mobile devices (GTAI, 2021).

Moreover, private consumer uptake of digital learning platforms and services is also on the rise. According to Global Market Insights, the global e-learning market passed USD 200 billion in 2019 and its growth is predicted at more than 8 % compound annual growth to grow for the period 2020 to 2026. Cloud computing and artificial intelligence technologies married to high internet penetration levels across the globe are driving market growth (GTAI, 2021).

In sum, it is seen how the general trend towards digitalization is leading to a focus on innovation or “modernization” (Getto & Kerres, 2017) of teaching and learning in the mainstream of higher education. Since 2017, experts from the HFD have advised numerous universities on the development of digitalization strategies for teaching and learning. Therefore, optimistic outcomes are to be seen by the suddenly switch to online teaching by Covid-19<sup>49</sup> (Zawacki-Richter, 2020).

### Legal factors

The legal landscape of Germany promotes the establishment of business ventures by both citizens as well as foreign investors. In fact, in terms of legal stability, foreign investors rank Germany second. Consequently, this attracts foreign businesses and is to the benefit of investments and entrepreneurial activity in Germany (MarketLine, 2019).

Moreover, German legal system is driven by the constitutional law but is also influenced by international law and the law of the European Union. Laws are passed by the Bundestag, and decrees on the basis of laws are enacted by the Federal government. State law is mainly focused

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<sup>49</sup> For more information about digital competences of European countries, see: European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019. *Digital Education at School in Europe*. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

on matters as schools and universities, the press, radio and television, as well as the police and local government (All answers Ltd, 2018).

The legal codes are divided into two main categories. The first one is General Codes which includes penal code, civil code, and civil procedure code. The second one is Specific Codes which include commercial codes. Although the business environment of Germany is based on competition, it is still essential to protect it against unfair practices. The Federal Cartel Office (Bundeskartellamt) holds the responsibility to control unfair market behaviours (All Answers Ltd, 2018). Moreover, Act Against Unfair Competition monitors and safeguards the fair competition in the market.

Nearly 4% of global direct investments are incurred by Germany. However, doing business in Germany can still be a challenge for those that are unfamiliar with the taxation and legal structures. Some of the issues faced by businesses are as follow:

1. Starting a business: Despite the global economic standing of Germany, the World Bank and International Finance Corporation (IFC) rank it 106<sup>th</sup> in the world for ease of starting a business. The businesses are required to register and coordinate with the local chamber of commerce and industry, the local office of business and standard, and the required professional association (All answers Ltd, 2018). However, it is to be noted that there are a lot of advisory centres, services and private consultors for foreign young entrepreneurs that want to start a business in Germany (German Federal Government, 2021).
2. Property Registration (“Grundbuch”): The property registration in Germany is performed by the bureaucracy – a German lawyer or a or a German notary. Plus, companies go through a length process of obtaining abstract from the land registry, notarizing the transfer agreement, and paying transfer taxed before being allowed to get properties officially registered (WF, 2021).
3. Paying Taxes: The fiscal system of Germany is intense as businesses must make nine different tax payments during a year which takes about 207 hours of its time. Altogether there are 14 different taxes to be paid by businesses operating in Germany. A part from that, due to the current Coronavirus situation in Germany the *Finanzamt* (tax authority)

have been willing to alter or suspend pre-payments of certain income taxes for certain taxpayers (Expatica, 2021)

## **6. Annex 6: Marketing Mix**

### **(1) Product**

Firstly, it has to be said that, although Pangea's online courses are considered products themselves, Pangea is a service company, offering online goods and services via internet. More precisely, Pangea delivers online courses to prepare students for the pre-university exams in Spain's main autonomous communities: Catalonia, Andalucía and Madrid. These services are the "star" product, but Pangea also offers other online courses such as the preparation for the driving test exam or the basic finances course as well as other services such as private consulting on degrees and future paths after school. However, if we had to enter to Germany's market, new online courses would have to be created to prepare students for the Abitur exams. In this context, Abitur examinations offer a variety of subjects to be chosen by the student. Three areas must be covered: (1) Language, literature and the arts; (2) Social sciences and (3) Mathematics, natural sciences and technology (Frietsch, 2003).

However, since 2013, all other states except Rheinland-Pfalz introduced centralized written exams at least in the core subjects (these are German, foreign language and mathematics). It is in these standardized exams that Pangea would find its market niche. It is worth noting that there is also an oral *Abitur* examination taken in a subject that has not been examined in written form. As a rule, written and possibly oral examinations are taken in three subjects, whilst in the fourth subject (if done) only an oral examination is taken<sup>50</sup>.

The structure of Abitur exam is important in order to understand which are the topics that Pangea Academy would be tackling, and consequently, how the online courses would be structured. Thus, the structure is the following:

- **German**: Choose 1 out of 3 tasks. Topics are usually lyric poetry, classic and contemporary literature or linguistics. Each task is usually divided into two or three parts (UCAS, 2016)

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<sup>50</sup> Depending on the legislation of a Land, a fifth subject can be examined in either oral or written form, or a particular achievement (*besondere Lernleistung*) which has been performed over at least two half-year terms (e.g. a year paper, the results of a multi-disciplinary project or the performance in a recognised competition) may be incorporated in the *Abitur* examination (European Commission, 2021)

- English: Choose 1 out of 3 tasks. Topics may vary but are usually connected to personal identity and multiculturalism, science and technology or environmental change and globalization (politics, economy and culture). Classical literature is rarely taught, and students primarily deal with literature of the last century. Each task consists of three parts: comprehension (summary), analysis and interpretation and commentary and discussion (UCAS, 2016)
- Mathematics: Choose three of six tasks, one in each area: differential and integral calculus, analytic geometry and linear algebra and probability theory. Each task is usually split into five or six smaller tasks (UCAS, 2016)

## (2) Place

Pangea's services are delivered through Pangea's official online website (pangeacademy.com). Through this platform, customers can buy our courses, our notes and go to our other channels where promotion takes places (such as Instagram, Facebook, Tik Tok or Twitter). Other channels used are the platform called *Stripe*<sup>51</sup>, the channel in which embedded payments take place and where our revenues' growth is portrayed and followed. Through this system, we also keep track of the people who have downloaded the notes of every subject and we let access to our professors for them to see the numbers and to keep transparency and reliability with them. In this way, they can preview their payments of 1% of commission that they own for every sale of their subject.

In Germany, the online platform would be the same, although with the possibility to translate it into German; as, to have a website working in their native language highly increases the trust of German customers. Plus, as there is no specific German law for online platforms, Pangea's platform in Germany would not be a problem – the only applicable legal document is the E-Commerce Directive of the European Union. Yet, the domain would have to be taken into account as, to have a '.de' domain – the German address – is an important step to gain German customers' trust (Prakash & Mallipeddi, 2019).

Regarding payments, as Germans do not use much credit cards as a method of payment, Pangea would have to offer other payment means apart from this, such as direct debit (SEPA-very

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<sup>51</sup> For more information about this platform: Stripe.com (2021) [online] Available at: <https://stripe.com/use-cases/platforms> [Accessed 1 May, 2021]

common and broadly used in the whole European Union and makes it easier also for customers of other countries to shop in other countries' online shops), electronic payments as Paypal and the open invoice system. In this sense, Pangea will also need a good privacy policy, with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) applied to it (Prakash & Mallipeddi, 2019).

### **(3) Price**

Pangea's expansion of services to the German market would follow a similar strategy to the one employed in Spain. This would be a penetration pricing strategy, by offering a lower price during the initial offer (a 20% discount of the original price) and once there is enough customer awareness, prices would rise back to the original prices. Another pricing strategy would be the use of promotional codes on certain days in which the person would obtain a 15% discount with the purchase of the courses. The discounts associated with this promo code would also be used in special festivities of Germany or in accordance with special sales' days in Germany. Furthermore, it has to be noted that prices would be higher if the customer wants to buy one subject and not the whole pack of subjects that are needed to complete the exam. In this way, the strategy is set up to encourage the customer to be more practical and buy the whole pack. Finally, psychology pricing would be employed, which refers to techniques to encourage customers to respond on emotional levels rather than logical ones. This technique is already employed in Spain, where the price to buy the whole pack for Selectivitat is 79,99€, which is proven to attract more customers than setting it at 80€. The goal of psychology pricing is to increase demand by creating an illusion of enhanced value for the consumer (Martin, 2021).

Moreover, compared to Spain, prices would be a little higher. This rise would not be because of logistics but for the costs of changing the website domain, establishing new alliances with other German start-ups, companies or universities, finding German professors that will need a salary as well as a 20% of profit for the company. Although being a high profit margin, this would be needed for possible unforeseen expenses.

### **(4) Promotion**

In this section, having seen there are no local competitors to take into account nor international competitors that offer Pangea's services, promotion would not focus on competing but on the channel and the public. In this regard, the aim of our business would be to get our services known and reach as many people as possible. Thus, Pangea would definitely go for a pull marketing strategy, used to increase product exposure by establishing a loyal following and

draw customers to our products. Sales tactics used for pull marketing would include mass media promotions, email marketing, word-of-mouth referrals and advertised sales promotions in social networks like Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Tik Tok. In these same social networks, the collaboration with influencers and other online platforms will be crucial, as to gain more reliability and influence.<sup>52</sup> In this way, our strategy is focused on building a community of students that are loyal to our business; not only willing to buy our preparation courses for Abitur exams, but also, completely involved in our company. In other words, customers that would be willing to buy other courses or seek our help to decide over their future scenarios after school. In this way, the main goal is to establish a long-term customer, have a strong bargaining power with retailers and distributors, focus on brand equity and product value and finally, to have an active consumer with no need to conduct outbound marketing.

To conclude, throughout the analysis of the 4Ps, we now have a clearer marketing strategy for launching Pangea's products to Germany. Therefore, with the new product definition and the channel distribution' analysis, it has been seen how our services would fit in Germany's market. Not only for the benefits of online formatting, but also for Germany's suitability to our pricing and promotion strategy.

## **7. Annex 7: Financial Plan Development**

- 1) Review strategic plan: identify the need of new resources such as new staff, equipment, legal and promotional expenses of the new market.
- 2) Development of financial projections: in this section, a balance sheet and an income statement are needed. It helps to develop sales' forecasts and anticipated expenses for labour and other expenses. In this regard, the distribution of payments to the professors and other employees can be measured and agreed.
- 3) Arrangement of financing: throughout the financial projections stated above, the company determines its financial needs and discusses them with their partners.
- 4) Plan for contingencies: this is key in order to have some cash reserves maintained for the worst scenarios, where emergency resources would be required.

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<sup>52</sup> Although German market of influencers is not as expanded as other European countries, social media platforms have enjoyed strong user growth in Germany in recent years, and that expansion is expected to continue in the following years (StarNgage, 2021)