„Senior educational programs for compensating future student decline in German universities“

The Silver Market Phenomenon – Business Opportunities and Responsibilities in the Aging Society

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1. Problem description

- **Present**
  - Aging
  - Collapse of birth rate

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  - Labor migration

Student decline

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### 2. Background

#### a. Demographic change in Germany

The shrinking of the population in Eastern Germany seems to be dramatic primarily due to …

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aging</td>
<td></td>
<td>collapse of birth rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>(labor) migration</td>
<td>net migration</td>
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#### Diagram

- **Legend:**
  - **Net migration loss**
  - **Net migration gain**

- **Net migration 2001-2010**
  - 50,000 persons
  - 100,000 persons
  - 200,000 persons

b. Third Agers and their leisure activities

Third Age =
- exempt from regular employment
- exempt from raising a family

Third Agers
- are good in health,
- are socially and politically engaged,
- aim for personal self-fulfillment
- enjoy life more than the previous generations,
- are willing to spend time in consumptives activities like education

2. Background

b. Third Agers and their leisure activities

- Daily activities of senior citizens aged 60 to 69:
  - Sleeping: 34%
  - Sports/hobbies/use of mass media: 18%
  - Eating/personal hygiene: 12%
  - Contacts/arrangements/amusement: 8%
  - Education/training activities: 4%
  - Voluntary activity: 24%

- In average, they spend most of their active time on voluntary activities.

- Followed by sports and special hobbies.

- Averaged they spend around 60 minutes on education and training.

2. Background
c. Business opportunities – educational Silver Market

- Meet elderly people’s interest and demand for participation in social life and mental activities
- compensation of decline?
- win-win-situation for elderly people and public institutions of higher education?
- Economic advantages for universities through study fees and governmental funds

number of potential senior students will increase
number of regular students will shrink

© Author’s illustration; Vellas n.d.; Wenzke 2007, p. 78; Meynen 2003, chapter IV, 2.
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### 3. Universities of the Third Age (UTA) in answer to student decline

#### a. Facts of UTAs in Germany

**UTA-institutions** (Wenzke 2007, 158)
- institutions for senior citizens, e.g. day-care centers, senior clubs, service center (20%),
- admitted senior groups (13%),
- educational institutions, e.g. senior universities (13%)
- adult education centers (12%) and
- cultural and municipal institutions (9%)  

**Possibilities for studying at UTAs** (Saup 2001, 18)
- register as an ordinary student, participating in required courses & taking examinations
- participating as guest auditors without requirements & without educational achievements
- registration as specific guests with specific offers like advisory courses, regular courses
- post-professional training, and lecture series

**Current motivations for studying** (Hirsch 1980, 59; Saup 2001, 15; Meynen 2003, Chapter IV, 4)
- compensating the gap of previous education, renew study abilities, discuss questions
- qualifying for honorary work or extend employability
- satisfying the need for participating in a desired study
- keeping able to communicate with younger generations or avoiding loneliness
- securing physical and mental mobility
3. Universities of the Third Age (UTA) in answer to student decline
b. Example of Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus

**UTA at the BTU Cottbus**
- founded in 2001
- focus on increasing the general competencies and competencies to qualify for honorary/regular employment
- number of participants increased from 87 persons in 2001 to 1186 registered senior students in 2006

**Offer**
- sports courses (23.8%)
- lectures and series of lectures (19%)
- lectures including discussions (17%)
- computer courses (16%)
- self-organized project groups (11%),
- sightseeing (8%),
- no admission requirements, but a semester fee of 30 €

3. Universities of the Third Age (UTA) in answer to student decline
   
c. Dilemma of the educational Silver Market

**Demand**

- Aging of the population
- Increase of number of Third Agers
- Good health & well-being of Third Agers
- Third Agers spend most of their time in voluntary activities, hobbies and consumptive activities

**Supply**

- Variety of institutions that offer an educational program for the Third Agers
- in many cases focus on leisure and philosophical topics
- mostly UTAs don’t request degrees or certificates
- often low fee or fee free educational programs

*Although there is an attractive offer by UTAs the participation & the benefit for universities is still low.*

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4. Conclusion: Strategies to enlarge the benefit for universities
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**Marketing**
- analysis of seniors needs  
  © Meynen 2003; Picton 1995
- improvement of information
- improvement of public relations

**Incentive System**
- Low-cost learning programs versus
- specific curricula with educational achievements  
  © Williamson 1997; Picton 1985, cit. in Minichiello 1992; Lemieux 1995

**Program of the UTA**
- enlargement of the offer  
  © Argote & Ingram 2000; Barney & Zajac 1994; Barney 2001; Clough 1992
- improvement of the quality
- realization of a unique program  
  © Swindell 2002; Swindell & Thompson 1996

**Support**
- governmental (financial) support  
  © Marginson 1990
- honorary work  
  © Swindell 2002; Timmer & Aartson 2003; Clough 1992; Williamson 1997; Graney & Hays 1976; BMFSFJ 2004
- synergies through networks  
  © Wenzke 2007
4. Conclusion: Strategies to enlarge the benefit for universities

Option 1: No changes

Future

Student decline

Future

Option 2: Integrating UTA

Present

Absorption of student decline

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4. Conclusion: Strategies to enlarge the benefit for universities

We have to get a new understanding of …

**The Third Agers:**
- acceptance as an active & interested generation
- as customers in the near future

**Senior education:**
- as an option to benefit from Silver Market growth
- as a win-win-situation

… and should connect them in a beneficial way!
Thank you for your attention!

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