This paper examines the logos of Finnish universities which have failed to meet the aesthetic criteria established by the author in her earlier work. The research investigates the logos in order to determine a reason for their non-conformance and, in doing so, finds that they are examples of an emerging branding trend in higher education, a trend which coincides with and supports the latest tendency in higher education to internationalize and commercialize.
Changing University Logos and Evolving Values in Finnish Higher Education

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The recent unrest at the University of Warwick owing to the administration’s plans to revise the school’s branding scheme – although significant – is just one example of what has become an ordinary, commonplace occurrence on the university scene. The University of Warwick publicly unveiled its new logo - a £16,000 consequence of a heretofore £80,000 branding consultation, in which the word “university” has been controversially omitted and replaced with cheap graphics reminiscent of a new age accounting firm - and was met with an onslaught of derisive commentary on social media and a petition on change.org which received 4000 signatures within its first four days (Gil 2015, Smart 2015, and Warwick University 2015). Although the administration defensively proclaims students and other stakeholders contributed to the decision-making process, others contend that the participation of only 160 individuals, who represent barely one percent of the wider population concerned, is symptomatic of a general lack of communication and disconnect between the university’s administrators and its students (Gil 2015).

Similar accusations plague administrators at higher education institutions around the world, and – given the popularity of rebranding initiatives – it is entirely likely that after a week or two, a different vice chancellor will engage the spotlight due to comparable efforts to revitalize a school’s personality (whether a revitalization was deemed necessary or otherwise). Ordinarily, consumers might not feel so impassioned towards a rebranding of their favorite good, but higher education exists in a special marketplace where the product being branded is – to a large extent – produced by the consumers themselves (Temple 2006, 17). Due to the recent shift from an emphasis on teaching to one on learning, students “play a big role in determining the quality and quantity of the academic enterprise (Temple 2006, 17)”, so perhaps in the case of these Warwick students, their anger about not being informed or consulted during the rebranding is justified.

But why should Warwick administrators feel compelled to rebrand a school when the old program was performing so respectably? Warwick has, after all, managed to assert itself as a top Russell Group university in less than 50 years of existence. This paper aims to address this question, by researching how one aspect of branding – that is, the logo –
represents two conflicting mandates in the modern university construct: producing knowledge and selling itself in the marketplace (Temple 2006, 17).

More specifically, it builds on the work of Drori (2013), who identifies three trends concerning logos in higher education. First, since the 1990s, some universities have begun restyling their traditional insignias (which were loaded with figurative imagery and meaningful text) into logos (which are typically more austere and minimally ornate). Second, rather than replace their traditional emblems, some universities have instead retained them for formal purposes (such as on official documents), and in the meanwhile, they have introduced logos for promotional functions; in this way, the school’s identity (whether seal or logo) reflects the function and the audience. Third, universities have sought to protect their icons by establishing proprietary claims on them, having recognized their commercial value. Drori argues that the existence of such trends in higher education is indicative of a metamorphosis in which the university, once regarded as a guild-like professional institution, is now consumed by market logic and managerialism. The present research aims to support this claim by providing illustrative examples from Finland.

1.1 Summary

This study begins with Chapter 1, in which the context, research question, and importance of the study are discussed. Chapter 2 includes a literature review about the massification of higher education, branding in higher education, logos in marketing, and logos in higher education. Chapter 3’s methodology details the theoretical and conceptual framework and describes the study’s limitations. The study begins in Chapter 4 after background information concerning Finnish higher education is presented. Following that, the three merged universities are discussed and thereafter the three modernized universities. The conclusions are presented in the final chapter, as well as recommendations for future study.

1.2 The Context

A small community of scholars have so far attempted to address the evolution of graphic imagery in higher education. Their contributions to the topic are summarized below,
followed by a description of the current state of affairs within the Finnish university system.

1.2.1 The Evolution of Logos in Higher Education

The research presented herein attempts to contribute to the author’s earlier work (Kerber and Miller 2013), in which a model was produced to help identify and analyze the stylistic choices between Finnish university and polytechnic logos. The model reveals the following two stylistic guidelines: (1) university logos are usually distinguished by classical and heraldic influences, denoting a preoccupation with the cultivation and protection of the “supreme ideals and high principles governing human life” (Lund 2005, 247), and (2) polytechnic logos are usually distinguished by abstract, colorful, and modern imagery – seemingly inspired by corporate attitudes - denoting a practical and accessible association with the industry and the workforce. Kerber and Miller (2013) contend that the Finnish universities not fitting the criteria established by the model are instead imposing on themselves the polytechnic design aesthetic, perhaps in an attempt to achieve greater relevancy or better position in the increasingly competitive higher education market.

Similarly, this thesis relies on the author’s background in art history and uses pictorial semiotics in order to explain graphically how the current higher education “revolution” – driven, as Dill (1997, 163) states, by new economic forces - can be explained.

Throughout most of the history of emblems and logos in higher education, universities have preferred very formal and noble imagery, usually manifesting as armorial bearings or as seals and crests. Their conception is, in fact, traced to the middle ages where it is clear they were designed according to the impresa genre associated with the chivalric culture of the time (Lund 2005, 247). The name of the institution, its motto (called an inscriptio), and its image (called the pictura) were integrated and enclosed by a circle or chevron. Throughout the ages, popular pictura from university seals include sources of light (such as the sun, a star, a torch, or an oil lamp), books, and aspects of Greek architecture, symbolizing enlightenment, learning, and classical education (Lund 2005). The traditional iconography – further dignified by the inclusion of the inscriptio, which was generally a Latin phrase expressing the institution’s and students’ promise to promote the ideals associated with an
ethical and virtuous way of life (Lund 2005) - legitimately denoted “respect and authority” (Potts 2010, 102) and served to designate an affiliation.

For newer universities established in the 19th and 20th centuries, using a coat of arms was “the branding equivalent of mock Tudor architecture – inappropriate, slightly dishonest and a bit naff” (quoting Bodoh and Mighall 2002 from Melewar and Akel 2005, 46). Still, coats of arms were created and used by newer institutions, and where they were not, logos emerged, the early versions of which still included the same verbivisual elements of seals - but generally in a more modern, streamlined, and colorful context (Lund 2005, 256).

The use of seals and logos which contain traditional imagery by new universities who intended to duplicate the heraldic attributes of their predecessors have created a deception – according to Potts - by adopting comparable rituals and insignia to support an illusion of heritage and saga (2010 and City University 2008) where none existed, in an attempt to construct a strong and distinctive college identity (Thelin 2009). For instance, Bulotaite (2003, 449) describes the situation in Lithuania, in which very young universities have embraced and use “marks of heritage” with greater fervor than ancient institutions such as the 400-year-old University of Vilnius. She argues that the incorporation of traditional insignia is for the sake of brand creation and promotion, a sentiment echoed by Potts (2010).

Sagas, whether legitimately actualized or artificially contrived, can be important resources for academic institutions, offering a strong social foundation on which trust and loyalty are built and on which a competitive edge can be based (Clark 1973). The notion of organizational saga is famously addressed by Burton Clark (1973), who defines it as “a collective understanding of unique accomplishment in a formally established group” (178), embellished over time and operating as a source of pride and emotional identity within the group. According to Clark, an institution’s saga, which fosters a devotion and sentimentality akin to religion and magic, serves as a rationalizing device, justifying individuals’ commitment of time and energy and creating value in one’s placement therein. Traditional university seals and logos, visually epitomizing the legend and grandeur associated with their respective institutions’ sagas, contained strong emotional appeal and served as a perfect branding tool for communicating a unique identity (Bulotaite 2003).
According to Hatch and Schultz (1997), a university’s choice of design and use of visual imagery both contribute to and are defined by its organizational identity and the established but dynamic culture within it, a culture which develops at all hierarchical levels and is realized in the material aspects (or artifacts) of the organization - for example, its name, products, buildings, logos, etc. (159). Thelin (2009) explains that artifacts containing universities’ symbolic and graphic memories (such as seals and logos) contribute to “higher education’s lively and useful past (5)” and asserts that they are necessary for identity preservation.

1.2.2 Examples in Finland

The universities within Finland which appear to meet the criteria as set by Kerber and Miller’s (2013) guidelines include the University of Turku, the University of Tampere, the University of Jyväskylä, Hanken School of Economics, the University of Oulu, and the University of Lapland. Although these institutions were all established during the twentieth century, their university logos (depicted below, in Figure 1) indicate a preference for traditional iconography and the meanings and values associated with it.

The Universities of Turku, Jyväskylä, and Lapland demonstrate a predilection for the torch, a classical symbol long associated with Prometheus, the philanthropic Titan from Greek mythology who stole fire from the gods in order to give life to mankind. According to Lund (2005), icons representing sources of light symbolize “education, insight, enlightenment, understanding, wisdom, and ethical and religious truth” (247).

Hanken School of Economics, founded in 1909 by the local business community in Helsinki, offers instruction in Swedish and is the only independent business school of university standing in Finland. The Hanken logo features the Greek messenger god, Hermes, and his caduceus, a short, winged rod intertwined by two serpents. Popularly recognized in antiquity and today as the patron god of trades and commerce, Hermes is a felicitous expression for a business school.

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1 The caduceus is commonly confused with the traditional symbol for the medical community, the rod of Asclepius, which features a staff and one snake.
The University of Tampere has embraced classical iconography throughout its history. The first image within Figure 2 depicts the seal of the School of Social Sciences, a private civic school operating in Helsinki called Yhteiskunnallinen Korkeakoulu which moved to Tampere in 1960 when it was assured financial support from the local communities there (Korkeakoululaitos). The school’s seal features a torch (already established as a symbol for knowledge) encircled by a laurel wreath, an accessory commonly associated with the Greek god Apollo\(^2\). In 1966, the school was reclassified and called the University of Tampere, and the old seal (which originally bore the name of the civic college) was altered to include a Latin inscription of the school’s new name (seen in the second image within Figure 2). Later, a logo was devised which features a single, fluted Doric column accompanied by three laurel leaves (seen in the third image within Figure 2), reminiscent again of antiquity.

Changing a school’s visual identity from one which formerly relied upon an ancient seal to a modernized logo is common contemporary practice within the higher education community. Lund (2005) explains that this is because of the emerging importance of marketing and the need for clean and simplified design, especially that which can be easily read on a computer screen via the internet. Moreover, seals are now widely reserved for official uses only, such as on letterheads and various other documents, as it has been acknowledged that they carry special meaning. In Tampere’s case, the seal is more pervasive than elsewhere, appearing on merchandise available for purchase on the

\(^2\) In antiquity, laurel wreaths were conferred upon victors of athletic competitions and poetic meets and were symbols of victory and merit. The word ‘laureate’ and its various academic associations is derived from the same meaning.
university website’s alumni pages and on announcements for the 50th year celebration in 2010 (seen respectively in the fourth and fifth images within Figure 2).

**Figure 2**

Unlike the aforementioned Finnish universities (which were influenced by classical Greek themes), the University of Oulu found inspiration in the medieval concept of heraldry (which is also a traditional element in university logo design). The towers depicted on Oulu’s logo are a stylized version of the ones that appear on the castle on the city of Oulu’s coat of arms (seen in the first image within Figure 3). In a pamphlet produced in 2006 to dictate the graphic guidelines for using the logo, colors, and typefaces associated with the school (in an effort to preserve its visual identity and to strengthen the public image of the university), the author explains that the castle’s four towers (on the coat of arms) were rearranged in the shape of a cross. The image was made more dynamic in 1994 when it was renewed and adapted (seen in the second image within Figure 3). The tower’s outline was changed in 2006 from gray to white, in order to more closely resemble Finnish culture (seen in the third image of Figure 3), and the blue was maintained, as it symbolizes “wisdom, intelligence, and science” (Oulun Yliopisto Viestintäpalvelut 2006). It is the author’s opinion that the addition of the English text emphasizes the university’s latest desire to diversify and internationalize.

**Figure 3**
1.3 Research Question

There are, however, Finnish universities that have lately introduced logos which do not meet the aesthetic criteria long associated with university branding, and, it is argued, that those examples serve as visual reference for changing academic values. The meanings embedded within the ancient symbols of traditional university seals and logos are lost on today’s students and what once was seen as a marketing asset and a reminder of the chivalric ideals of higher education is presently a drawback, a source of intimidation and esoteric, long-lost concepts (Lund 2005).

As Lund (2005) and Holloway and Holloway (2005) describe it, the massification of higher education - as well as the increased cooperation among universities, national governments, and industry - and the reduction in government funding have influenced educational politics and programs, replacing the traditional status of academic values with a market-driven, corporatist system in which knowledge is a “product for sale, [and no longer] a goal in itself” (Lund 2005, 250). The old-world imagery traditionally associated with university logos does not properly convey the evolving attitudes within modern higher education institutions, and, therefore, some schools have chosen to divest themselves of it altogether in favor of more commercial designs. The new imagery often communicates, as a matter of strategic importance, the organizational identity of the institution (Stensaker 2007, 15), thus revealing its core values and objectives (Melewar and Akel 2005, 52). If logos, which originally functioned to increase visibility, now find greater purpose in disclosing corporate strategy, then perhaps it is prudent to analyze them as primary source of information.

The purpose of this research is to explore the accuracy of these statements within the Finnish higher education context, answering the question: Why do Finnish universities change their logos, and – from this - what can be understood about evolving values in higher education?

1.4 Importance of the Study
This thesis aims to be the first comprehensive source of research on the topic of evolving graphic imagery in universities; it is especially unique in that it applies conclusions from previous studies to examples from Finland.

It is the first study to analyze the university logos of a particular state system, and more usefully, it attempts to classify the logos and provide justification for those which have undergone a transition. The approach requires a multi-disciplinary focus, thus, the reader can expect a higher education text which measures equal contributions from history, marketing and branding, graphic design, and semiotics. While providing insight into the specific processes involved with logo creation in various university contexts, this study intends also to emphasize the value of these changes from a broader, anthropological point of view.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following literature review seeks to provide the reader with the necessary background to fully understand and appreciate the analysis presented in Chapter 4. It introduces ideas related to the recent development of higher education (including those which pertain to its massification, internationalization, and the emergence of the student as a consumer), which in turn leads to a discussion on branding within the field. Due to the prevalence of logos within this research, background on logos in marketing, and – more specifically – logos in higher education, is provided.

2.1 Massification, emergence of consumer, Internationalization

According to Teixeira et al. (2006), individuals during the eighteenth century realized that, despite the costs, there were enduring benefits of an early investment in one’s personal and intellectual development. This concept developed greater appreciation during the second half of the twentieth century when economists, such as Theodore Schultz, began to promote the reality of human capital theory, in which an individual’s decisions regarding his own health, migration, competencies, and education directly relate to his levels of productivity and the availability of his opportunities. As politicians began to appreciate the potential economic impact of human capital, government investments stimulated the development of many education systems (as well as other social welfare schemes) beginning in the 1960s.

Higher education - which had previously been accessible only to the social elite - greatly expanded, leading to a massification of the system in “mature” economies (Teixeira et al 2006, 4 and Trow 1999, 307), the internationalization of the higher education sector, and the emergence of knowledge societies (Altbach and Knight 2007, 291). As access continued to broaden, and most recently has begun to include non-traditional students (such as those aged 25 years or older, part-time students, returning students, employed students, etc.) and laborers became required to have specialized training for the workforce (Trow 1999, 303), the costs began to exceed the limits of governments’ financing capabilities. The growth in demand for higher education - spurred particularly by industries like information and communication technologies, which require educated personnel (Trow 1999, 304) - and the personal advantages (namely the financial benefits) gained by those
who pursue higher education (as opposed to the societal benefits of maintaining a knowledgeable citizenry) has resulted in the vocalization by many that higher education is a private good – a commodity, in fact - and therefore, those primarily responsible for its financing ought not be the taxpayers but rather the recipients – i.e. the students (Altbach and Knight 2007, 292 and Trow 1999, 318). In Anglo states (where tuition fees are the highest), many students and their families are unequipped to wholly finance tertiary education, and in Europe, governments have resisted imposing tuition fee increases on students, preferring instead to leave their institutions underfunded at the risk of properly maintaining the integrity and autonomy of universities (Trow 1999, 304). In response to lack of funding provision (whether from students or the government), the economic austerity endured by many institutions has led to the establishment and proliferation of the entrepreneurial university.

The problem is reiterated by Clark (1998, 6) who explains that entrepreneurial universities emerged in response to a “demand overload” initiated by the following four sources: (1) increasing expectations from the growing numbers of students seeking access, (2) an enlarging technical labor force requiring skilled workers, (3) a diversification of patrons (and therefore interests, including but not limited to those within governments and industries) who seek accountability measures, and (4) an impossible quest to capture the ever-expanding frontiers of knowledge while working with an ever-diminishing supply of resources. A demand-response imbalance results, as universities find their financial resources dwindling and their abilities to make timely and continuous decisions hampered by elaborated college faculties, schools, and departments – each with their own unique set of privileges and interests to pursue.

In order to combat the strain elicited by the aforementioned system shortcomings, higher education institutions have attempted to transform their activities from a passive mode to an active mode. Called the “entrepreneurial university” Clark (1998) describes these institutions as including one or all of the following components: (1) a strengthened managerial core (consisting of individuals who work to find resources for the institution), (2) an enhanced developmental periphery (which promotes applications for knowledge, such as contracted research, contracted education, and consultancy), (3) a diversified
funding base (to develop additional discretionary sources of income from patrons and to enable cross-subsidization), (4) a stimulated academic heartland (capable of finding educational as well as economic value in becoming more enterprising), and (5) an entrepreneurial culture (present at all organizational levels and which leads to a unifying identity). When collective entrepreneurship is obtained, universities exhibit stronger, more assertive, and autonomous behaviors at the managerial administrative level, while enjoying a unified, integrated character among their academic groups. Entrepreneurial universities pursue well-defined foci and specialized niches of knowledge (admittedly at the expense of others) in order to gain distinction and, therefore, a favorable reputation.

Rhoades and Slaughter (1997, 9) expand Clark’s work, attributing the contemporary repurposing and restructuring of higher education to an ideological shift whereby higher education institutions become more privatized, deregulated, and commercialized - a process which can be evidenced by “the emergence and growth of academic capitalism (in which universities generate revenue streams by selling their employees’ activities, knowledge, and products to private enterprise [13]); of increasingly managed professionals (in which the balance of power at higher education institutions becomes more centralized, shifting from faculties to the ever-growing administration which has seized authority to retrench programs and faculty according to their profitability [17]); and of supply-side higher education focused on economic competitiveness (in which students are prepared for entering - and programs are geared towards supporting - the workplace [29])”.

Whereas higher education historically provided important social functions like cultivating citizenship, preserving cultural heritage, and forming individual character and habits of the mind (Gumport 2000, 71), its modern role has crossed into the realm of economics and has become fodder for politicians. Higher education is embedded in the modern market, its seemingly sole purpose to produce and sell goods and services, and the corporate management mindset – with its unwelcome performance metrics - has overcome what was traditionally observed as a “sacred” social construction. Scholars who have studied this shift, and academics who have lived it, lament the obtrusion of the competitive, corporate context with its debasing effects on education and the resulting growing inequalities across socioeconomic groups (Gumport 2000, 70). The conflicting mandates which drive higher
education reform (or those which strive to preserve its bygone conventions) are evident, and – worse – they are breeding an atmosphere of disorder and deep concern.

A separate, equally relevant source of higher education transformation is identified by Rothblatt (2008, 28) as the “world-class university”, which gained popularity concurrently with the global ranking indices (such as the Times Higher Education World University Rankings and the Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities). Universities aiming to compete globally for the best graduate students, academic talent, and Nobel-quality researchers promote excellence within a few principal subject areas thereby concentrating their government-financed resources in order to enhance national prestige and produce cutting-edge innovation, particularly in science and technology. In doing so, these universities attract private funding sources, thus strengthening their endowment base and creating an instrument of sustainability. Additionally, Rothblatt remarks that when a few academic disciplines receive prioritization, excellence is likely to spread throughout the institution, as the fervor it evokes is considered contagious.

2.2 Branding in Higher Education

As the university’s mission shifted from training and educating the social elite (and thereby cementing students’ positions within the caste in positions related to the civil service or other learned professions) to providing access universally, the traditional relationships between universities and governments, industries, and societies have evolved (Trow 1999, 309). As universities adjust to their (relatively) new position serving a wider (and international) community in an increasingly competitive education marketplace, they have adopted specific constructs, such as branding, which were previously confined to the corporate world (Melewar and Akel. 2005 and Chapleo 2010).

In an effort to improve global recognition, higher education institutions have begun constructing brands, a concept derived from consumer economics (Rothblatt 2008, 28). In fact, the ancient Greeks introduced the concept of branding when they began marking their cattle around 1500 BC, but - more recently - branding has been associated with corporate enterprises, when - in 1931 - Procter & Gamble started labeling their products to help consumers differentiate theirs from the rest (Whisman 2009).
Whereas in the past, an institution’s reputation was communicated indirectly by merely stating its age, size, and endowment base, today public awareness contributes to the equation (Moore 2004, 58) – public awareness which is achieved by skillful brand management, as attested by Jason Cook of Texas AM University (Vice President’s 2013), who utilized social media to enhance his school’s image. According to Bennett and Ali-Choudhury, 

A university’s brand is a manifestation of the institution’s features [or core values] that distinguish it from others, reflect its capacity to satisfy students’ needs, engender trust in its ability to deliver a certain type and level of higher education, and help potential recruits to make wise enrollment decisions (2009, 85).

While the authors identify three basic components of a brand, including its covenant (or “a collection of promises presented to the outside world concerning the brand’s benefits [87]), its quiddity (“a set of distinctive features that define the brand’s inherent nature and reality”), and its symbolic and external representation (“an assortment of aesthetic designations and external communications that describe the brand”), it is their research supporting the last idea that proves most useful for the topic of this thesis.

Bennett and Ali-Choudhury (2009, 89) identify the following devices as those which contribute to a brand: logos, typefaces, color schemes, stationery, forms, uniforms, vehicles, and premises. The aforementioned aesthetic designations are tools for transmitting ideas regarding an institution’s aims and values to the general public and to facilitate the understanding of “organizational meaning” – a concept which might otherwise go unrecognized, as is common among service institutions, such as universities, which do not provide tangible products (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana 2007, 943). Along with the brand, there is evidence that an organization’s public image is also defined by its behavior, history, strategies and organizational structure, and that – together – these conceptualizations have proven to affect “student recruitment, attitudes of governmental funding authorities, public perceptions of an institution’s prestige and quality, and a university’s overall competitiveness (Bennett and Ali-Choudhery 2009, 90)”.

One hundred years ago, the University of Chicago began marketing itself (Bok 2003), a maneuver which was unprecedented and viewed by many as unnecessary. Today, however,
institutional branding is compulsory, and schools that do not prioritize the creation and maintenance of their brand risk the unsavory alternative of allowing competitors to establish one for them by default (Judson, et al. 2009, 55). With so much at stake, effective brand management must support the creation and viability of universities’ reputations. Fortunately for administrators, a growing body of literature provides support in this area.

Jevons (2006) reminds university administrators of the importance of appropriate brand management - that which effectively communicates an institution’s values, goals, and attitudes so that prospective students can measure degrees of congruence and assess compatibility (thereby assuring a lesser risk of dropping out).

Waeras and Solbakk (2008) chronicle the trials of a Northern Norwegian university to devise a meaningful brand identity that encompasses the many facets of a regional, multidisciplinary institution. They posit, after documenting the many challenges involved in the process, that “if the complexity of higher education institutions cannot be reduced to a common essence, perhaps one should refrain from reducing it (459)”. The authors, and Stensaker (2007), present a paradox in higher education branding: in an effort to attract a wide range of potential students, universities adopt the same successful but tired branding themes, thus eliminating the unique or distinguishing characteristics worth marketing, which – according to Moore (2004, 60) – are necessary to retain in order to maintain a niche in the marketplace. Stensaker further explores successful branding strategies for organizations in the midst of change (a useful topic when considering institutional mergers, as this research does), emphasizing that the process must be incremental and involve internal stakeholders as well as outside experts.

Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana (2007), although reluctant to introduce branding terminology into their text, use the concept of brand architecture in their study framework. They describe two brand architecture systems – the first being a monolithic, corporate brand, in which the university brand is utilized for all programs and services offered by the university, and the second being a house-of-brands in which the university acts as a holding company, and each product or service bears its own brand identity (the concept is also explained by Baker and Balmer 1997, 372). Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana’s research suggests that when higher education institutions develop their marketing
strategies, they rely on their schools’ mission statements and core values to provide focus to the process (944).

Celly and Knepper (2010) offer an informative catalogue of events having occurred within the California State University system – the United States’ largest, boasting 450,000 students and 45,000 faculty and staff - when it attempted to transform its house-of-brands system into that of a centralized, corporate brand system, thus harmonizing its 23 campuses. Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana would argue that developing brand coherence and consistency in this manner is an effort to consolidate the university’s market position and achieve corporatization (2007, 944). Although a transformation of this kind risks stifling diversity and eroding the individuality of faculties, a brand consolidation can provide clarity, especially from an international point of view (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana 2007, 946).

An organization’s corporate identity is established during the organization’s formation and early years (Baker and Balmer 1997, 368). In a context outside higher education (but not necessarily excluding it), Melewar and Jenkins (2002) describe corporate identity as an organization’s personality, one that is influenced by its strategy, philosophy, history, business scope, the range and type of products and services offered, and its communications (both formal and informal). It refers to the internal and external promotion of ideas which are deliberately communicated (and/or manipulated) by management but also those ideas which are unintentionally perceived by audiences (Hatch and Schultz 1997, 359). Generally speaking, a corporate identity needs little management in the beginning, because it is typically inseparable from that of the founder(s). Only after the founder has left (taking his vision and his drive with him) do organizations require management in this area to serve as a “surrogate for the personality of the founder (Baker and Balmer 1997, 368)“. The task of corporate identity management is to achieve a favorable image and, therefore, a good reputation in order to promote the consumption of the organization’s goods and services.

Baker and Balmer (1997) freely commingle marketing terminology with higher education research, presenting a case study in which a British university adopts a new corporate visual identity (CVI), one of several components contributing to an organization’s
corporate identity which, unsurprisingly, relates to its visual aspects. CVI consists of the corporate name, logotype and/or symbol, typography, and color (Baker and Balmer 1997). In the study, an audit revealed glaring inconsistencies within the visual program of the university, with over 1000 different visual and oral representations identified (among the university’s graphic symbols, typefaces, academic dress, uniforms, badges, vehicles, key fobs, bookmarks, signage, publications, videos, etc.). Streamlining the visual identity proved a superficial task, as the process revealed that the earlier decentralized and fragmented marketing efforts were the result of similarly uncoordinated policies surrounding the university’s core identity which needed to be addressed.

Baker and Balmer’s work supports Moore’s (2004, 58) statement in which he claims that effective university brands are not produced by accident, but rather are the result of deliberate and calculated planning carried out with disciplined consistency and focus. As Baker and Balmer (1997, 367) put it, a university without a distinct marketing program will advance as well as a symphony orchestra without its conductor. A university’s brand ought to evoke a (singular) promise among those students whom it wishes to attract, and with much weight given to an individual’s alma mater, it is vitally important that students never feel the impact of buyer’s remorse when it comes to their education (Moore 2004) – in other words, it is essential that a brand lives up to its promise (a task which is presumably easier to do once that promise has been defined, which was not the case with the university in Baker and Balmer’s study). Furthermore, effective marketing, it is argued, can contribute to a school’s success by making it stronger, by motivating employees, by inspiring confidence among its stakeholders, and by enabling it to withstand changing market conditions - a particular advantage in the competitive higher education environment (Moore 2004, 61 and Melewar and Jenkins 2002). For these reasons, the elements of a school’s visual identity are commonly addressed in a set of visual guidelines - guidelines which require strict conformance - published by today’s higher education institutions (Baker and Balmer 1997, 376). Such guidelines contribute to a high degree of standardization, thereby helping to project a uniform and consistent corporate visual identity, which - in turn – elicits conceptions of security and continuity (and therefore, trust) among stakeholders and potential customers (Melewar and Saunders 2000, 546-7).
Because this research focuses more specifically on one feature of branding – logos – the following section provides still more background information in order to better prepare for the analysis portion of this study.

2.3 Logos in Marketing

In printing, a logo (or logotype) traditionally referred to groups of letters, such as a syllable or short word, that were cast together as a single type in order to avoid frequent and repeated recasting of individual letters. Today, logos (and logotypes, which are the stylized presentation of a name [Kohli, Suri, and Thakor 2002, 60]) serve as symbols of company names and include a variety of graphic and typeface elements. Logos can include the company name, or they can stand alone, especially if there is a space or time constraint (Kohli, Suri, and Thakor 2002, 60); regardless, they serve as a signature, existing to help consumers identify a company and its products (Henderson and Cote 1998, 14) - a task made easier when the logo evokes a clear, commonly held meaning.

The elements of a logo, including the pictogram, color, and letter font, serve to bring added value to a brand (Doyle and Bottomley 2004, 873), and when they coexist harmoniously, the opportunity for improving consumers’ brand memory is optimized (Childers and Jass 2002, 104). Because they will be under discussion later in this thesis, some background information – which has been pulled from the graphic design, psychology, and marketing literature (as it is not addressed in the higher education research) - about each of these components is provided in the following sections.

2.3.1 Pictogram

The purpose of the pictogram, or the symbol, is to present the central idea of the organization with impact, brevity, and immediacy (Melewar and Jenkins 2002 citing Olins 1995, 11). The Nike swoosh, a mere $35 logo commission with an objective to create a design which expressed speed and movement, characterizes these ideals better than most (Zaichkowsky 2010, 552). Recognized globally and perhaps the most famous logo ever, it is special also in that its image, like other effective logos, transcends language and alphabets.
Effective logos, like the swoosh, include pictograms that stimulate familiar meaning (or rather, consensually held understandings among a group or subgroup) when viewed. A corporation or organization can maximize familiar meaning with its logo by incorporating a unique - but natural and easily interpreted (since consumers look for meaning in logos [Kohli, Suri, and Thakor 2002 60]) - design of an ordinary object. Logos with familiar meaning enable correct recognition, the ability for consumers to remember seeing a logo to which they have previously been exposed (Henderson and Cote 1998, 24), and thus the brand and its products and services. Logos which are not natural (in other words, they are highly abstract) - and therefore generally poorly recognized and not well liked by consumers - can be improved and made more meaningful when they are given a name (such as “the swoosh”). Abstract logos can also enhance their effectiveness by using more non-geometric shapes and by increasing the elaborateness (through complexity, depth, activeness) and harmony (without being too symmetric) of the design.

Research has shown that memorization scores, visual recognition, and cognitive recall among consumers increase when moving from abstract names and logos to figurative names and logos, for example IBM versus Apple (Zaichowsky 2010, 553). Logos using characters (such as KFC or Betty Crocker) can also be well recognized, as long as they are simplified and not too elaborate or overly natural (Henderson and Cote 1998, 25). They should also be incrementally updated so as not to appear old-fashioned or outdated. Using simple abbreviations, such as those exemplified already by International Business Machines (IBM) and Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), is common practice among higher education institutions, and doing so can help brand identification (Zaichkowsky 2010, 553).

Although familiarity with a logo helps brand recognition, familiarity can also lead to boredom for the consumer. Kohli, Suri, and Thakor (2002, 61) argue that changing a logo design incrementally can be novel, but if a logo design is changed too much (and considering consumers generally do not like change), then it is seen as entirely new, in which case, the old version is nearly always preferred.

A paradox arises with the design logistics of creating a logo. The average consumer is subjective and prefers familiar subjects; however, the graphic designers who create logos are trained to be more objective and often enjoy an elevated understanding of art. When
designers inappropriately impose their personal (perhaps more sophisticated) design aesthetics on their commercial creations, the mistake can be costly for the organization or corporation to correct if it does not translate sufficiently to the public (Kohli, Suri, and Thakor 2002, 61).

2.3.2 Typefaces

As Childers and Jass (2002, 93) explain it, marketing communications - such as those appearing on television or in online advertising - “usually consist of a visual image, a verbal message, and a voice used to convey the verbal message”. With written communication – such as that found in print advertising, product packaging, and in-store displays - the verbal message is replaced by text, and the voice is conveyed using a typeface (or a font⁴), which is the design and shape of alphabetic characters. Traditionally, typefaces concerned mainly publishers and marketers, but they have lately become increasingly interesting and available to the public or anyone with access to a computer. The semantic effects concerning the visual characteristics of written material (as they are described below), are unfortunately less widely known among the general population, and consequently, inappropriate use of fonts can be seen every day on amateur productions of brochures, store signs, and displays. When skillfully created, however, a typeface can be so distinctive that it can appear in complete isolation, for example, without the pictogram (Baker 1997, 371).

Early research determined that associations exist between fonts and assumptions made about a product’s quality. For example, a 1923 study reports that emboldened, simple, and easy-to-read fonts (such as Century Bold) connote cheapness, economy, and strength, while italicized, scripted, and ornate fonts (such as Garamond Itlaics) suggest luxury and dignity (Zaichkowsky 2010, 552 and Doyle and Bottomley 2004, 873). Later studies found that font styles can also offer peripheral cues and add descriptive value; for instance, italics are associated with activity, whereas bold is associated with potency (Doyle and Bottomley

⁴ A font is a variation of a typeface in specific styles and sizes. Today, it is the digital representation of a typeface, but originally a font referred to the single point size of a complete set of characters used when setting blocks of metal and wood for printing. [http://fontfeed.com/archives(font-or-typeface/](http://fontfeed.com/archives/font-or-typeface/) [http://www.inspirationbit.com/when-is-it-wrong-to-call-a-typeface-font/](http://www.inspirationbit.com/when-is-it-wrong-to-call-a-typeface-font/)
The aforementioned associations reveal that typefaces and fonts possess semantic qualities, thereby conjuring “their own connotative meaning, which is processed independently of the meaning generated by the word” itself (Doyle and Bottomley 2004, 879). Because the appearance of a word (ie, its font) and the word itself offer parallel routes to the same meaning, it has become vitally important for marketers to ensure that there is congruence between chosen font-word pairings, so that the font reinforces whatever message the text is meant to convey. When a typeface is coupled with a word of inherently different meaning (for example, the word “modern” written in an Old English font [modern]), the consumer endures a longer reaction time and processes the message more slowly, an effect which entirely defeats the purpose of using logos at all (Doyle and Bottomley 2004, 874; Bottomley and Doyle 2006, 66; and Childers and Jass 2002, 94). Choosing appropriate fonts increases a brand’s perceptual fluency (the ease with which a stimulus is processed), which results in increased perceptions of truthfulness, famousness, and likability (Bottomley and Doyle 2006, 66). Organizations and corporations benefit when the font design is congruent with the brand’s image and product category (Zaichkowsky 2010, 557).

2.3.3 Color

The significance of color has been a subject of inquiry throughout history. The Ancient Egyptians used color therapy, as new age practitioners do, to cure the ailing (Singh 2006). Ancient Greeks, including Aristotle and Hippocrates, developed basic color theory, while scholars during the middle ages and Renaissance advanced ideas of color symbolism, particularly as colors relate to Christian virtues. Their beliefs are revealed in contemporaneous paintings, with the Mary in her Queen of the Heavens role, often draped in expensive blue pigments and with white garments (such as those appearing on Mary in Annunciation scenes) reserved for the innocent and chaste. Scientists during the Enlightenment, such as Isaac Newton, began to observe that color is a function of light and exists in a spectrum, and the color wheel was developed. More recently, the discussion has been picked up by psychologists and individuals (especially marketing researchers) interested in studying the impact of color on emotions, personality, and purchasing.
behavior (Aslam 2006, 17 and Labrecque and Milne 2012, 724), as color has been found to exert persuasive power at a subliminal level (Hynes 2009) 545).

Zaichkowsky (2010, 554), interestingly, equates modern logos with the historic concept of heraldry, in which colored emblems (or coats of arms, rather) were used to identify a specific individual, family, or community - particularly on a battlefield or in tournaments. The bright, contrasting colors were capable of being seen from a distance (Zaichkowsky 2010, 554), and - as with colors on a modern logo - they are seen first and are remembered better than the shapes and pictographs which they accompany (555).

In marketing, “color makes the brand” (Aslam 2006, 25). Color can provide inherent meaning to a brand’s identity, convey a desired image, and increase brand recognition and recall (Labrecque and Milne 2012, 712 and Hynes 2008, 546). Brands such as Heineken, Coca-Cola, Cadbury, and Shell have built corporate empires on the ability of consumers to associate green, red, purple, and yellow with the respective brand. But more important than a tool for brand differentiation, colors can elicit emotional responses. As Singh (2006, 786) and Aslam (2006, 22) note, companies like Coca-Cola and Cadbury acknowledge the emotional impact of color and understand its ability to generate interest and influence consumer choice. The relationship between products and colors is so powerful in fact, in the United States it can be protected under trademark law (Aslam 2006, 22).

Color associations are created and reinforced in consumers’ memories by the careful and continued use of colors in marketing. Marketing is most effective when a brand’s logo, packaging, or display activates color associations which contribute to the desired brand’s personality (Labrecque and Milne 2012, 713) and the consumers’ perceptions regarding its quality (Aslam 2006, 22). For example, purple, which is often associated with nobility, was wisely selected by Crown Royal whiskey, whereas orange, which is associated with cheapness, was an appropriate choice for the low-cost Dutch bank ING, especially since the color simultaneously pays tribute to the Netherlands’ royal House of Orange (as does the lion pictograph [Zaichkowsky 2010, 556]). Color is often an afterthought in logo design – subject to the whims of designers or corporate managers. Owing to the mass of evidence which underlines the significance of color on consumers’ responses and behavior, however,
it is advised that designers make their color choices responsibly, after considering their psychological and strategic uses (Hynes 2008, 546). Furthermore, as the service sector continues to become more globalized, a cross-cultural view of the use of color in the retail environment is essential; Aslam (2006, 19 and 26) emphasizes, however, that color associations vary by culture, and marketers ought to carefully consider their target audience before marketing pan-cultural products. For instance, although blue represents high quality in many cultures, in Malaysia it connotes evil. Similarly, whereas green connotes envy in Anglo-Saxon and Latin cultures, it means love and happiness among the Japanese.

Lastly, the effects of color on a brand’s identity are maximized when it is used consistently across all marketing variables. Zaichkowsky (2010) offers the jeweler Tiffany & Co. as an example. Tiffany’s distinctive aqua blue persists on products, packages, advertising, web pages, and other promotional material and garners attention even at a distance (Zaichkowsky 2010, 556 and 558). While it is ultimately the product’s quality that determines consumer satisfaction, it is the imagery and colors which serve to generate the initial interest (Aslam 2006 22).

### 2.4 Logos in Higher Education

Although the technical background information provided in the previous section was not sourced from the higher education literature, it is not to say that information concerning logos does not exist there at all (despite the resistance shown from the higher education sector to embrace branding [Chapleo 2005, 57]). In fact, articles, particularly those emanating from the United States, describe countless product applications for university logos (Cole 2002), including the following nontraditional uses: wallpaper, credit cards, temporary tattoos, contact lenses, and even coffins. For American students, a university’s logo serves a form of identity, and products bearing institutional logos accounted for $724 million (10 percent of the $10.1 billion college store market) during the 1999-2000 school year (Cole 2002). As is the case with the University of Kansas, many schools utilize the extra income to fund student opportunities such as scholarships, athletics, and programs. As Cole (2002) states, when schools began heavily merchandising themselves in the mid-1980s, it became imperative to protect the ownership of their trademarks and images with federal registration. Fortunately for the administrators assigned to manage university
profiles, a helpful and substantial body of literature has materialized which recounts the various trials and crusades involved with logo reform. A few of them are summarized below.

Aronauer (2005) describes the frustrating position of the University of Kansas when both it and Kutztown University (in Pennsylvania) revealed nearly identical “KU” logos, designed by different consulting firms – but at widely differing expense (approximately $90,000 versus $20,000, respectively).

Anderson (2013) summarizes the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse’s efforts to involve marketing students in the school’s rebranding process by surveying students and alumni and asking about their perceptions of the university. Using the results of the students’ data collection, a new logo was devised which aims to distinguish it better from other UW campuses and to improve recognition.

Elmer’s (2001) report details Marshall University’s history of logos: from the inception of the “lamp of learning” icon (in 1906) to the present day, at which time a “family of logos” – featuring 10 different marks and more than 40 variations – has been unveiled. Similarly, Northwest Missouri State recently revealed 11 new logos and a new bearcat mascot. Whether intended or not, Thorn’s (2013) implication is that university athletics drives institutional branding (in the United States).

IUPUI, the Indianapolis school resulting from the 1969 merger of Indiana University and Purdue University’s extension campuses, decided to change its nickname (and the accompanying logo) from “the Metros” – which had proven confusing and unprofitable – to “the Jaguars”, a more consumer/product-driven image said to exude noble characteristics such as pride, determination, power, and vibrancy (Schoettle 1998). The change has reportedly led to greater exposure and interest.

Connolly (2000) chronicles the controversial formulation and evolution of Native American symbolism within three universities’ brand identities. Although the practice of using Native Americans as nicknames or as icons for logos was widespread among American educational institutions and professional sports teams during the twentieth century, it has lately kindled endless, passionate debate among tribal authorities, university administrators,
students and alumni, and policy-makers – with members of each group disagreeing about the appropriateness of Native American imagery in the university and sports team context. Some individuals argue that Native Americans are objectified and demeaned as their likenesses are reduced to (and then glorified as) caricatures and offensive stereotypes. Dissenters contend that Native American mascots and logos are a source of pride and affection, and using them honors tribes that have nearly vanished (or already been obliterated) and would otherwise be forgotten. Furthermore, individuals moved by nostalgia argue in favor of tradition and the importance of maintaining the campus culture - which the Native American icons helped to construct. Notable institutions which have found themselves embroiled in the debate include the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth College, and Stanford University.

The works of Holloway and Holloway (2005), Potts (2003), Lund (2005), Hunsinger (2003), and Kerber and Miller (2013) specifically focus on university logos, examining and describing the history, development, and evolution of logos and various other forms of university imagery. While Holloway and Holloway (2005) and Potts (2003) mostly restrict their research to the Australian and Anglo context – the former investigating the emergence of corporate-style logos and the latter exploring the reliance of universities on visual imagery to establish and perpetuate ideas relating to their mission and identity - Lund (2005) identifies the occurrence of global iconographical themes found on seals and logos. Hunsinger (2003) also addresses the design influences of university logos, but unlike the other authors, his editorial criticizes contemporary designs, arguing they symbolize the deplorable commoditization of education. Kerber and Miller (2013) utilize the research of the aforementioned authors to analyze stylistic choices differentiating university and polytechnic logos in Finland. The works of these authors, and more, were presented in the first chapter.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter provides the methodology by first describing the theoretical then conceptual framework. It concludes by offering some limitations of the study.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

Signs, which can be “any physical form that has been imagined or made externally to stand for an object, event, feeling, etc.”, allow a species to “signal its existence, communicate messages within the species, and model incoming information from the external world” (Sebeok 2001, 3). Semiotics analyzes these structures, whether verbal or nonverbal, in order to understand the inherent rules which govern the production and interpretation of signs within a society (Mick 1986, 197). The origin of semiotics dates to Hippocrates (460-377 BC), the founder of western medicine, who first identified symptoms among the ailing as signs of an internal state or condition. According to Sebeok (2001), Aristotle (384-322 BC) further defined signs outside of the medical context, establishing that there are three components of a sign: (1) the physical part of the sign itself (visual or audible, as in linguistics), (2) the object to which it refers, and (3) the meaning it conjures.

While six types of signs have been investigated, the only two that are relevant to the context of this work include icons, which are signs made to “resemble, simulate, or reproduce [their] referent in some way” (as photographs or an actor dressed as Benjamin Franklin do) and symbols, which are signs “that stand for their referents in an arbitrary, conventional way” (Sebeok 2001, 11), such as emblems or allegories. Symbolic signs (such as Mick’s [1986, 199] example of a wine display depicting a couple lounging by a fireplace representing “the good life” or the Star of David representing Judaism) require a level of interpretation (aided by the negotiation and construction of general social agreement) in order to achieve the signifying connection. Logos (which, for the purposes of this paper, are defined as the “graphic design that a company uses, with or without its name, to identify itself or its products” [Henderson and Cote 1998, 14]) feature icons and symbols in their designs, and they therefore fall within the domain of semiotics, since they are seen as one of many means by which companies communicate with their internal or external audiences.
Researching signs (such as logos) as they relate to the acquisition of, consumption of, and disposition towards consumer goods and services is to engage in applied semiotics, examples of which include advertising-information consumption and cultural anthropology research (Mick 1986, 201). The present study is based in semiotics, but – as with other research in this field (a field, which has been criticized for lacking a core of systematized theorems [Mick 1986, 209]) – it commingles with others such as consumer science, sociology, and anthropology.

In his study in semiotics of professional sports logos, Bishop (2001) argues that the changing relationship between professional sports franchises and their fans - a relationship which until recently was based on unconditional allegiance to a [home] team - has recently felt the intrusive impact of capitalism and aggressive merchandising. He contends that new sports logos and uniforms are designed primarily to sell goods and reach consumers in other markets, not to strengthen connections with their original fan base (2001, 27); furthermore, he claims that if a connection is made with a distant fan through the use of logos (which - by their very nature - nurture long-distance relationships), this connection is “without origin or reality” (2001, 27) – as if it were conceived under a false pretense or owing to the subordination of the consumer to “manipulative communication practices” (2001, 38). According to Bishop, the evolution of the sports team logo over the last century - from the glory days when it represented wholesome ideals such as loyalty and community to the present day in which it stands for corruption and greed - provides graphic proof of and signifies the commodification of spectator sports in general. The present research aims to illustrate the occurrence of a similar phenomenon (namely, the commodification of higher education) by examining the evolution of graphic symbols in the university.

3.2 Conceptual framework

This research was exploratory in nature, seeking to examine and interpret a phenomenon of the social world (Chapleo 2010, 169) already identified tangentially by conclusions from the author’s previous research. The sample was limited to the six universities in Finland which did not adhere to the aesthetic criteria presented in the “Predict-A-Poly” game (Kerber and Miller 2013). The sample does not include the two Finnish universities of technology nor the National Defense University, as they have special mandates which
understandably excuse them from providing very extensive insight for this particular study. It was decided that the six universities, the subjects of this case study, would be presented in two categories – those which changed their logos due to a merger and those which changed their logos in order to update their aesthetic profiles. This grouping permits a content analysis more considerate of each school’s context.

This qualitative research study’s analysis, which relies on the author’s art history credentials, is mainly descriptive (as is common in semiotics [Gunter 1999, 83]) and rhetorical, meaning that it focuses on the stylistic aspects of each logo, such as its composition, form, [and] use of metaphor (Gunter 1999, 89). Furthermore, it offers a brief history of each institution and a description of the previous logo for the sake of comparison. The conclusions are explanatory and seek to link the obvious (and also nuanced) aspects of the universities’ imagery evolutions with the effects of social progress in the field of higher education.

The seals and logos themselves, and information concerning the history and design of the seals and logos, were collected largely from the respective university websites. In addition, institution personnel were contacted via email and, in some cases, they were able to provide explanations and documentation that, although not seen as confidential or secret, was not publicly available, such as internal memos, archival documents, and visual identity guidelines. Because the design of some new logos attracted attention from the international graphic design community, supplementary information, such as comments from the designer and critical reviews, is provided from these sources as well.

3.3 Limitations

As this study is based on the author’s own observations, it must be borne in mind that the conclusions are derived from her own interpretations of the evidence and are entirely western themed. Qualitative content analysis has definite disadvantages to be considered; in fact, Gunter (1999, 82) reminds that individuals may produce multiple meanings entirely dependent on the receiver.

Additionally, as the study concerned institutions in Finland, publicly accessible information in English was not always available, especially in the cases of the defunct, merged
universities, which - in some cases - had nearly nothing to offer. The study draws conclusions which may apply globally, but the reader should remember that the universities mentioned herein are Finnish and not necessarily representative of all universities everywhere.

Lastly, the study involves the analysis of university logos, despite evidence from Bennett and Ali-Choudhury (2009, 97) that they do not effectively convey meaningful messages, a finding which is controversial considering claims presented in Chapter 1 (Stensaker 2007, 15 and Melewar and Akel 2005, 52).
Chapter 4: The Study

Van den Bosch, Elving, and de Jong (2006), whose work involves organizational change and corporate visual identities (CVI), propose two reasons (which will serve as a framework for this study) why organizations change their logos and other visual aspects of their identities: (1) because of modernization and changing design trends and (2) due to mergers, take-overs, and acquisitions. Although the authors make no reference to higher education institutions, their argument is appropriate in the context of this paper, which asserts the University of Helsinki, Åbo Akademi, and the University of Vaasa fall into the former category, while Aalto University, the University of Eastern Finland, and the University of Arts Helsinki meet the requirements of the latter.

The research will be presented accordingly, following a discussion of the circumstances which contribute to the educational environment in Finland.

4.1 Background of Finnish Higher Education

The history of Finnish higher education dates back to 1640, when Finland was under Swedish rule. In an effort to strengthen the intellectual capacity of the kingdom by training civil servants for the king and clergymen for the Lutheran Church, existing universities were improved and new ones established in Sweden, Estonia, and Finland (Välimaa 2004, 31). Among these, was Åbo Kungliga Akademi (the Royal Academy of Turku), which was established by Queen Christina along Finland’s southwestern coast. It contained four faculties: theology, philosophy, law, and medicine (Välimaa 2004,32). As national institutions, Sweden’s Royal Academy of Turku and other contemporaneous universities are historically significant, as their establishment reflect a departure from medieval, church-centered universities of the past. In 1809, Sweden surrendered Finland to Russia, and the flagship university was renamed the Imperial Academy of Turku. Following the destructive fire of 1827, Emperor Alexander I moved the capital of the Grand Duchy of Finland and the university to Helsinki, a city geographically closer to Russia and with decidedly less Swedish sentimentality. The school was renamed the University of Helsinki after Finland won its independence from Russia in 1917. The early twentieth century saw the establishment of other institutions as well: the Technical
University of Helsinki in 1905, and two universities in Turku, one for Swedish speakers (Åbo Akademi, in 1918) and another for speakers of Finnish (University of Turku, in 1922) (Aarrevaara, Dobson, and Pekkola 2011, 243).

The Finnish higher education system continued to expand throughout the first half of the twentieth century when it experienced a particular boom during the 1960s and 1970s. Finland’s regional policies prompted a growth of localized multidisciplinary universities to encourage access at more points within the country and to curb the relocation trend of students moving to the capital region for school (Aarrevaara, Dobson, and Pekkola 2011, 244; Aarrevaara et al. 2009, 1; and Aarrevaara 2010, 104).

Finland did not enjoy true massification of its system until the consolidation of its many small vocational institutions allowed for the establishment of the polytechnic sector during the 1990s (Bentley et al. 2013, 104; Aarrevaara 2009, 1; Skodvin 1999, 67). The Polytechnics Act formalized the Finnish binary system, allowing polytechnics to grant bachelor’s and master’s level degrees in primarily work-related fields, while practicing applied research (Bentley et al. 2013, 104). Core funding comes from the national government (about 1.4 billion euros annually [Kekäle 2010, 10]) and is based on unit costs per student, project funding (related to developmental targets), and performance-based funding.

4.1.1 Finnish Policy Changes

Finland chose to address feedback from national reports and OECD reviews by undertaking a structural reorganization of its higher education system (Saarti 2012, 132), developing the Universities Act in 2009, which outlined changes regarding the “financial, administrative, and legal status of universities” (Tirronen and Nokkola 2009, 220). Following the publication of an official Inquiry Report in 2007 (Aula and Tienari 2011, 15), which expressed the government’s dissatisfaction with Finland’s international performance and an urgent desire for increased innovation, economic efficiency, productivity, flexibility, and quality among universities, the Universities Act (558/2009) was submitted in February 2009 and passed (with modifications) by Parliament in June 2009 (Tirronen and Nokkola 2009, 220 and Aula and Tienari 2011, 15). The legislative
reforms, which came into effect at the beginning of 2010 (Kekäle 2010, 8), promoted improved efficiency and effectiveness (Aula and Tienari 2011, 15), within the university sector only, and not among the polytechnics (Aarrevaara et al. 2009, 2).

The document confirms the complementary, binary structure of Finnish higher education: polytechnics – which were created in the 90s to “raise the standard of higher vocational studies and to rationalize the structure of the education system (Aarrevaara et al. 2009, 3)” - and traditional universities – which seek to “promote free research and scientific and artistic education, provide higher education based on research, and educate students to serve their country and humanity (University Education in Finland).” Additionally, Parliament granted greater financial and contractual autonomy to universities by declaring they shall be “independent corporations under public law or foundations under private law” (University Education in Finland and Kekäle 2010, 8). In doing so, the government hopes institutions will respond more quickly and be more flexible with a less bureaucratized, in-house system of management (Kekäle 2010, 8). Schools still receive a majority of their funding from the government (according to Kohtamaki (2011), money from the Ministry accounts for 2.5 times as much as privately raised funds), but the delivery method has changed, allowing universities to manage their money themselves (Aarrevaara et al. 2009, 2 and Kekäle 2010, 6) – careful to avoid possible bankruptcy (Saarti 2012, 133) - and to diversify their funding base through competitive project-funding, donations, and tuition fees from non-EU students (Aarrevaara, Dobson, and Elander 2009, 105 and Kekäle 2010, 8). The Finnish government also relinquished ownership and management of university buildings (Aarrevaara, Dobson, and Elander 2009, 5 and Aarrevaara et al. 2009, 2) and stripped university employees of their civil servant status, as they are now employees of the universities. Additionally, governance models were adjusted, requiring external members on university boards, so that they would function more like strategic corporate boards and less like the traditional forms of collegial academic governance (Saarti 2012, 133 and Aarrevaara et al. 2009, 2).

In addition to these policy-driven reforms, Finland’s Ministry of Education has begun the less formal process of pressuring schools to consolidate in an increased effort to “generate (inter)nationally a more competitive network of higher education institutions, enhance the
quality of research and education, as well as identify and recognize strategic areas in research and education” (Ursin et al. 2010, 328).

4.1.2 Mergers Background

Mergers in higher education have been popular since World War II (Skodvin 1999, 65), often occurring under involuntary conditions and forced either by educational authorities or circumstances in which change is required (Skodvin 1999, 66). For example, mergers have been sought in order to: increase efficiency and effectiveness, resolve problems associated with non-viable institutions and institutional fragmentation, widen student access, differentiate course offerings thereby improving the quality of graduates, increase government control of higher education systems so that they are more responsive to national and regional social and economic needs (Harman and Meek 2002, 1), and increase the position of institutions within the higher education market (Skodvin 1999, 68). As Harman and Meek (2002, 2) note, “The dominant trend has been to move from relatively small and often highly-specialized institutions towards fewer, larger and more comprehensive institutions and from single site and single campus to multi-site and multi-campus institutions”, as demonstrated later in this study with the schools in Finland. In any case, it is always assumed that mergers will provide long-term benefits that will outweigh the short-term costs brought by the upheaval and disruption commonly associated with the merging process (Skodvin 1999, 68).

Higher education mergers are the subject of a considerable amount of recent research. Pritchard and Williamson’s (2008) retrospective study records the short term responses and long-term reactions of employees involved in an Irish merger in 1984. Responses confirm the critical opinions of faculty towards mergers, especially that “mergers tend to enthuse management at the top of the institution more than academics, because [they have] fewer obvious advantages for the latter, and some definable disadvantages for those working in departments” (Pritchard and Williamson 2008, 51). Additionally, they discuss the problems associated with integration and the creation of a unifying culture, challenges which must be addressed by strong management personnel equipped with appropriate techniques, and communication skills for implementing an efficient transition.
Locke’s (2007) study of an English merger emphasizes the importance of maintaining a positive organizational culture (and subcultures) during a merger process, in order to reduce cultural conflict and stimulate creativity, synergy, and collaboration. Additionally, he states, “the most tangible expression of the values of an organization… will be the symbols, rituals, public exchanges, and physical infrastructure that it creates for itself” (86).

Skodvin and Stensaker (1998) analyze three different types of networks (infrastructural, organizational, and social) affected during a merger in Norway in 1994. The consolidation process proved to be particularly ambitious owing to the large geographical distances among the many campuses. The authors criticize the administration’s ability to prioritize its objectives, indicating that increased innovation – although a worthy goal – will not likely occur if increased effectiveness is simultaneously pursued.

The merger literature allows Ursin et al. (2010) to conclude that the planning phase is the most important of the entire process, as it requires the leadership to develop a vision and communications scheme that retains the strengths of the merged institutions while remaining responsive to external constraints. Open communication to staff and students on the aims and progress of the merger and providing opportunities for those stakeholders to offer feedback and contribute to the decision-making process is vital, as doing so reduces uncertainty.

4.2 Merged Unis

Aalto University, the University of Eastern Finland, and the University of Arts Helsinki are three universities in Finland which have new logo designs resulting from recent mergers.

4.2.1 Aalto University

During a speech at the beginning of the school year in 2005, the Rector of the University of Art and Design Helsinki (TaiK) – Professor Yrio Sotamaa – initiated a merger discussion by publicly expressing the idea for three schools, each with critical ties to the Finnish society and economy (his own, Helsinki University of Technology [TKK], and Helsinki School of Economics [HSE], to combine (Aula and Tienari, 2011). With encouragement from the Finnish business community (and after much public debate), the political
decisions were made with the arrival of the new government in 2007 to actualize Sotamaa’s idea, utilizing the Sailas report (one of several reports investigating system reform presented to the Ministry) as a framework for Aalto’s planning (Heimonen 2011).

“Innovation University” – as it was called during the planning phase – became the single-most important (and controversial) project during the university reform phase (Aarrevaara, Dobson, and Pekkola 2011). Its aim was to become a “world-class” university, controlled by a private foundation, and distinguishing itself from its domestic counterparts by manufacturing a fiercely persistent reputation of excellence driven by the marriage of design, technology, and business (Aula and Tienari 2011 and Aarrevaara, Dobson, and Pekkola 2011).

In mid-2008, the name Aalto University (named for the revered Finnish architect and designer, and appropriately meaning “wave” [Aula and Tienari 2011]), was introduced, and later that year, the Board (composed of corporate executives, academics, and policy-makers from entirely outside the university [Aula and Tienari 2011]) were chosen. By December, the Board had selected the new Rector, Professor Tuula Teeri, a former administrator with a background in biotechnology (Aula and Tienari 2011). In 2009, the bylaws were introduced, and the Aalto Transformation Organization, a body of 400 stakeholders (including 70 students), worked together in fifty groups to plan and prepare the university (Sjoberg and Nyman). The new university officially began operating on January 1, 2010 (Aula and Tienari, 2011). In the spring of 2010, the first Finnish university tenure track was introduced at Aalto, a strategic move to position itself more closely to top British and American universities (Aula and Tienari, 2011).

Aalto’s reputation did not emerge from the process outlined above entirely unscathed from criticism. Many universities voiced their annoyance with Aalto’s promotional rhetoric. Newspapers and other media outlets were quick to find “mediocre” performance of merged institutions within the international ranking indices, reasoning that “you do not become a ‘world-class’ university simply by calling yourself one” (Aula and Tienari 2011, 22). Representatives from the University of Helsinki, the long-established and respectably performing institution, and other regional institutions, voiced grievances regarding the clearly favored financial position of Aalto, metaphorically referring to it as the “envied
prodigal son” (Aula and Tienari 2011, 21). Additionally, the so-called ingenuity of Aalto was questioned when a newspaper advertisement critically reminded everyone that the concept of combining technical and business knowledge within a single institution was not new and had indeed been done already – by Lappeenranta University of Technology - decades earlier (Aula and Tienari 2011).

Despite the criticisms, Aalto’s supporters insist that in order for Finland’s higher education system to compete internationally – as is every university’s present objective - it must become more stratified. In a letter to the editor of Helsingin Sanomat, the president of EK (the Confederation of Finnish Industries) writes:

A few Finnish universities must be provided with opportunities to compete successfully with such world-class top universities as the American Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Chinese Tsinghua University. This is far more important than providing equal resources for all Finnish universities so that they can compete amongst themselves. It is time for Finland to make an effort to leap to the top of the university world (Aula and Tienari 2011, 20).

A Brief History of the Merged Institutions

The Helsinki University of Technology (TKK) was established as the Technical School of Helsinki in 1849 by Russian Emperor Nicholas I. Vocational training in engineering, mechanical engineering, architecture, chemical technology, and surveying began in 1858. The institution changed its name to the Technological University of Finland in 1908 when it was granted university status. In 1948, the university agreed to relocate from Helsinki to Otaniemi, Espoo, as it had outgrown its location next to the Hietalahti Market in Helsinki. The new campus was designed by Finnish architect Alvar Aalto, and other contributions were made by Reiman Pietilä, Ralli Paatelainen, Kaija Siren, and Servin Mökki (Aalto University Campuses, Heimonen 2011).

The Helsinki School of Economics’ (HSE) earliest roots are traced to Helsinki Business College, an institution providing vocational education since 1881 (Helsinki Business College). After a reorganization of its upper secondary departments in 1911, the School of Economics emerged with university status as the first business school in Finland, initially offering two-year degrees in Business and Industry or Business and Banking. Throughout
the early twentieth century, the degree programs expanded, and in 1950, the school moved into its present facilities in the Töölö neighborhood of Helsinki. It operated privately until 1974, when it was absorbed into the state system and was renamed the Helsinki School of Economics (Aalto University 2013, Heimonen 2011).

The University of Art and Design Helsinki (TaiK) was founded in 1871 as the Craft School. Housed for 100 years in the Ateneum (the building in the Helsinki city center currently used for the Finnish National Gallery), the school provided education in the industrial arts (historically this meant product and environmental design but recently has been expanded to include new media, film, and television). Their motto – for 139 years – was “Pro Arte Utili - for useful art (Heimonen 2011, 19). TaiK received university status in 1973 (Heimonen 2011). In 1986, the school relocated to the Arabia (porcelain) factory premises, where it has continued to operate as the largest in its field among the Nordic countries (Aalto University School of Arts and Design).

The logos for each of the merged institutions (Helsinki University of Technology, Helsinki School of Economics, and the University of Art and Design, respectively) are displayed below in Figure 4. The negligible amount of information about the origin and subjects of the logos leaves much to conjecture. The only logo with a definite correspondence to classical design elements is the Helsinki School of Economics, which utilizes Hermes’ caduceus, the symbol for trade and business (as was mentioned previously during the discussion of the Hanken School of Economics).

![Figure 4](image-url)
The merged institution

From March 2, 2009, to April 17, 2009, a design contest was organized to produce the basic “elements for the visual identity of Aalto University” (Knuutinen 2009). A panel of judges reviewed 117 entries from students, staff, and alumni of the three universities, and selected “Kutsu-Invitation” by graphic designer and former student of the University of Art and Design Helsinki, Rasmus Snabb, as the winner. His design entry is the last appearing below in Figure 5. Three similar alternatives were provided (in Finnish, Swedish, and English) and included varied use of punctuation (the parenthesis, question mark, and exclamation mark) and the three primary colors (said to represent “all colors” [Armin 2009]). The typeface Helvetica was chosen for its neutrality. Snabb explains,

The logo stands for a university that is open for discussion, critique, and change. The logo is an invitation to discuss and evaluate, to participate in creating the new university. The logo doesn’t have a static visual form; it can be endlessly rearranged and changed (Knuutinen 2009).

The actual applications of Snabb’s design (which won a €10,000 prize) also appear below in Figure 5 (the first, second, and third images). The language, punctuation marks, colors (although limited to blue, yellow, and red), and subscripts vary depending on the context, while the bold, black “A” remains in constant use. It should be noted that the logo often appears without any subscript or further identification of the school and/or program. This simplified “shorthand” alternative communicates Aalto’s confidence despite its short history (Melewar and Akel 2005, 47).

Figure 5 (Aalto University Communication and Knuutinen 2009)

While Snabb intended for his design to be interactive and changeable, many in the design community have expressed concern that the punctuation marks are misused, perhaps suggestive of expletives or - in the case of the question mark – evoking of doubt, a state of
mind that should not be associated with the identity of an institution of learning. Others argue that the logo, given its variability, will not appropriately solidify the institution’s brand and the school’s ability to define itself. Still others praise the logo for its energy and ability to stimulate dialogue (Armin 2009). While the logo experts previously mentioned in this thesis agree that changing logos over time communicates insecurity and inconsistency, does a single, changeable logo motif like Aalto’s communicate the same distasteful ideas (Melewar and Aken 2005, 55)? Is it a fresh idea in line with its mission to be pioneers and trendsetters in the art and design industries (Aalto University Avaintieto 2011), or does it represent a level of insecurity that might be natural for a new school with a big mandate? Because the effectiveness of logos cannot be measured based on initial exposure, this logo should be studied again after more time has lapsed.

It should be especially noted that, as the first image in Figure 5 illustrates, the Aalto logo is available with the school name provided in three different languages. While the official languages of Finland account for the presence of the Finnish and Swedish text, the presence of the English text alludes to a phenomena worthy of mention here. Just as Latin was the official language of academe of yesteryear, English – owing largely to the success of American and British institutions – has become the medium by which scientific knowledge is communicated worldwide (whether via the internet, research databases, or scholarly journals) (Altbach 2004). As the most widely studied foreign language in the world, English has even become the language of instruction in institutions of non-English speaking countries, finding itself particularly useful in cross-border degree arrangements and as an alternative for international students who do not know the local language. The worldwide prevalence of English in higher education is evidence of globalization, the broad economic, technological, and scientific trends that inevitably spread to all corners of the globe. According to Altbach, universities are wise to embrace this reality, for history has shown that those who refuse will gradually lose their relevance (2004, 6). By incorporating the English language in its visual identity, Aalto (as with the other universities in this study) is communicating its engagement with the academic community and its priority to internationalize.
4.3.2 University of Eastern Finland

In 2006, the University of Joensuu (which specialized in humanities, social sciences, and education) and the University of Kuopio (which specialized in the natural and health sciences) –founded in the 1969 and 1972, respectively - decided to enjoy the benefits of mutual cooperation and formally merged on January 1, 2010 (Saarti 2012 and Kekälä 2010). The merger process, which began in 2007, was funded by the Ministry of Education. It involved working groups responsible for planning and designing operations within five phases: initiation phase, development phase, project phase, implementation phase, and stabilization phase (Saarti 2012).

The new institution, called the University of Eastern Finland (UEF), is now one of the largest in the country, with 15,000 students and 2,800 staff members (University of Eastern Finland 2012) and four faculties (down from eight): Philosophical Faculty, Faculty of Science and Forestry, Faculty of Health Sciences, and the Faculty of Social Sciences and Business Studies (Saarti 2012). The multidisciplinary university specializes in Forests and the Environment, Health and Well-Being, and New Technologies and Materials (University of Eastern Finland 2012). The Administration Center is located on the main campuses of each of the former universities, and offers some services in Savonlinna. The University of Eastern Finland aims to enhance its domestic and international standing. Obtaining bilateral agreements with nearly 100 universities abroad, the UEF hopes to become one of the top three most important universities in Finland and among the top 200 internationally (University of Eastern Finland 2012 and Kekälä 2010).

The logos for the two merged institutions are provided below in Figure 6. Insufficient information is available about the iconography present in the logos, so little can be surmised about the existence of any classical elements within them. The modern-looking designs are not unexpected, since the institutions are relatively young and were still developing their programs until very recently.
Figure 6

The University of Eastern Finland’s logo (featured below, in Figure 7) consists of a diamond with colored facets representative of the four faculties: blue (Social Sciences and Business Studies), red (Philosophy), green (Science and Forestry), and turquoise (Health Sciences). The logo uniquely reflects the multidisciplinary structure of the university, a consideration which would likely receive approval from Becher, a proponent for the acknowledgement of disciplinary cultures, who argues that disciplinary groups, or academic tribes, each harbor unique sets of intellectual values and their own patches of cognitive territory (1994, 153). The harmony displayed symbolically among the faculties in the logo signifies a value placed on the multidisciplinary and unified structure of the university.

Figure 7

As with the other logos presented in this research, the University of Eastern Finland provides vertical (in which the text appears below the pictograph) and horizontal (in which the text appears to the right of the image) options for the display of its logo. As with the Aalto logo, the University of Eastern Finland has chosen a modern typeface, opting for one
which excludes serifs (the small lines attached to the end of a stroke in a letter). Lastly, a rather remarkable point deserves to be appreciated: the University of Eastern Finland, which has blatantly admitted its ambitions to better distinguish itself domestically and internationally, only offers its logo in the English language. While it is understandable that Swedish is not represented (since only five percent of the Finnish population speak Swedish as their mother tongue), it is a bit alarming that a Finnish university should embrace English so entirely.

Developed by Hahmo Design Oy, the logo was presented to the media in Helsinki and to the students and staff in Joensuu and Kuopio on September 8, 2008 (Hynynen, 2013). The University of Eastern Finland’s logo has drawn the least interest among critics and commenters of the three merged institutions discussed in this study.

4.3.3 University of Arts Helsinki

The University of Arts Helsinki is the result of a 2013 merger among three arts schools within the city of Helsinki – Sibelius Academy, the Academy of Fine Arts, and Theater Academy.

*Sibelius Academy*

Sibelius Academy originated as the Helsinki Music Institute in 1882, a private establishment credited with educating many world-famous musicians, including Finnish composer and violinist Jean Sibelius, for whom it was later renamed in 1939 (after 15 years of expansion as the Conservatory of Music) (Sibelius Academy and University of the Arts Helsinki). In 1966, the Finnish government agreed to support most of the academy’s expenses. Shortly thereafter, a new degree system was adopted, and Academy degrees became considered equal to Finnish university degrees. In 1980, Sibelius became a public body, and in 1998, it became a university. In 2011, the Helsinki Music Center opened, revealing a facility encompassing 38,600 gross square meters (250,000 cubic meters) which cost 189 million Euros with equipment. The music center initiative was first introduced by Sibelius Academy in 1992 and turned into a collaboration with the center’s two other main actors, the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra and the Radio Symphony Orchestra, when they joined the project in 1994. The instruction of many programs, including music technology,
jazz, music education, orchestral instruments, folk music, composition, and music theory were moved to the Helsinki Music Center, while the smaller Sibelius Academy concert halls remain in use by fewer programs (Sibelius Academy).

The Sibelius Academy logo consists of a swan against a navy blue background (Pirkkanen, Raitio, and Sjoblom 2012). The typography was changed in 2011, and its most recent evolution is presented below in Figure 8. The swan symbol dates to antiquity. While some attribute the swan to Apollo (the Greek god of music who transformed into a swan), others argue that the swan symbolizes the Muses. It is also a common belief that swans sing beautiful, sweet songs while dying, an idea credited to Socrates and the origin of the phrase “swan song” – meaning a final, crowning achievement. Swans appear in the Romantic works of Wagner (in his 1848 opera Lohengrin) and in Tchaikovsky’s 1876 ballet Swan Lake (Werness 2004). The use of the swan, however, in the particular case of Sibelius Academy, is likely influenced by The Swan of Tuonela, an 1895 symphonic poem by Jean Sibelius, based on tales from the Kalevala epic of Finnish folklore, a 19th-century work by Elias Lönnrot that is credited with playing an instrumental role in the development of the Finnish national identity and in its fight for independence from Russia (Venta 1992 and Wilson 1975).

Figure 8

The Academy of Fine Arts

Helsinki’s Drawing School was established in 1848 and was financed by the Finnish Art Society (an organization which also funded the education of Drawing School students when

4 Although the Sibelius Academy strictly refers to their logo as a ‘swan symbol’ it is interesting to note the presence of a five stringed musical instrument, perhaps an allusion to Jean Sibelius and his violin.
they moved abroad to continue their studies) (Finnish Academy of Fine Arts). Proud of its role in the history of Finnish art and its ability to produce internationally relevant artists, the Drawing School acquired new financial benefactors and became known as the School of the Fine Arts Academy of Finland in 1939. In 1985, after becoming state-owned, the name changed once again to the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts, securing its position as the “highest institution providing education in the arts in Finland”, offering instruction in moving image, painting, photography, printmaking, site and situation specific art, and sculpture (Finnish Academy of Fine Arts). In 1993, the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts became officially recognized as a higher education institution, and like Sibelius Academy, it achieved university status in 1998.

The Finnish Academy of Fine Arts logo consists of an orange tree with three roots, each terminating upon a shield (seen below, in Figure 9). While the meaning of the tree is ambiguous and open to a wide range of possible interpretations, the roots suggest a noteworthy reverence for the past and traditions, as do the shields which are reminiscent of the heraldic medieval escutcheon. Perhaps the presence of the shields alludes to the three values structuring the school’s activities – openness, dialogue, and living arts (Korhonen 2011, 5). Although fine arts in contemporary society has broadened to include forms which, relatively speaking, have only recently emerged (such as photography and printmaking), the presence of the medieval shields is supported by the school’s own admission as to the importance of conventional practices in art. The values of the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts, as expressed in their 2010 yearbook, rely on traditional aspects of the fine arts and of art history. The trends associated with the work and research produced by the academy are “cultivated in an open, interactive relationship with the past” (Korhonen, 2011, 5).
The early twentieth century saw several theater schools founded in Finland, among them The Swedish Theater School in 1908 and the Finnish Theater School in 1943, each offering instruction in their respective language. In 1979, the two schools combined into a national, bilingual university-level institution of performing arts called the Theater Academy (TeaK). In 1983, the dance department was founded, and within a few short years, the programs had grown to include sound and lighting and pedagogy (Manninen 2008). As of 2012, TeaK was the biggest education institution in the field of performing arts in the Nordic-Batic area, despite the diminutive size of its student body (374 individuals in 2007) (Theater Academy Strategy 2012).

The Theater Academy logo (Figure 10) consists of a red rectangle with a white figure left of center holding an arm outstretched derived from the negative space. The image appears to be a literal rendering of the acting activities performed by the students and faculty of the school.
A merger discussion began in the 1980s when the Pasila project conceived an idea to relocate the Sibelius Academy, the University of Industrial Arts\(^5\), and the Theater Academy to a shared location in one of many efforts designed to bring greater prominence to the recently urbanized neighborhood north of Helsinki’s city center. Discussions of a merger continued into the twenty-first century, and the merger was recommended on three occasions by the Ministry of Education. Encouraged by a government committee seeking to “strengthen the quality, impact and international competitiveness of the arts and culture” (University of the Arts Helsinki), the boards of the Sibelius Academy, the Academy of Fine Arts, and the Theater Academy approved the merger and signed a founding agreement on November 15, 2011. The University of Arts Helsinki opened in January 2013 and comprises the three academies, each equally contributing to the school’s academic and cultural influence (Aalto 2012).

The visual identity reform for the new University of the Arts Helsinki began during 2012 and was contracted to Bond, a Helsinki-based creative agency specializing in branding. The collaboration was an open process and included input from students and faculty. A conscious decision was made to discontinue the old logos and create an entirely new image, since the “good reputations of the academies were not based on visual identities” (internal bulletin received via personal correspondence from Manninen, 2013). The shared symbol of the university is a bold “X”, seen in various styles (including those of different colors

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\(^5\) The University of Industrial Arts (in one of its manifestations as the University of Art and Design Helsinki) later joined the merger that would become Aalto University.
and with photographs contained inside the figure) in the second row of Figure 11. Personalized logotypes representing the three academies (seen in the first row of Figure 11) and the university itself are used in conjunction with the “X”, thereby unifying the different design applications to create a single visual identity (University of the Arts Helsinki and University of Arts Helsinki Communication). According to an internal bulletin, the “X” symbol, like art itself, is rich with meaning and can be seen as a starting point and a destination, a meeting place, a location for buried treasure, a signature, an unknown force, a warning, a question, and a solution (University of the Arts Helsinki, and Internal Bulletin received via personal correspondence from Manninen, 2013).

![Logotypes](image)

*Figure 11, (University of Arts Helsinki, 2013 and Armin, 2012)*

Opinions regarding the outcome of the design process vary from incredulous to supportive, a favorable result considering the design team’s ambition to create something bold and unpretentious that would engage the imagination lest anyone feel indifferent (Internal Bulletin received via personal correspondence from Manninen, 2013). Thepetitionsite.com acquired at least 192 votes in protest of the new logo scheme, but not all are from people affiliated with the school. In many cases, people indicate their concern with the poisonous and forbidding connotations of the “X”. Some indicate their dissatisfaction with the logo, calling it unimaginative and not suitable for the prestigious academies it represents. Others see a copycat aesthetic derived from originals such as the Amsterdam coat of arms (on the left in Figure 12), the album art for the English indie pop band *The xx* (top-middle of Figure 12), and Kazemir Malevich’s early twentieth-century Suprematist painting “Black Cross” (bottom-middle of Figure 12). On a design-centered website, industry-sensitive commenters largely approve the logo, even though they see still more parallels. One commenter finds similarities between the university logotype and the 2011 London Design
Festival artwork by Pentagram (right, Figure 12). Additionally, one commenter, Tony L’Ombroso, laments over the T-shirt design, arguing that an art school ought not to be mistaken for a snowboarding brand (Armin 2012). While many of the arguments appear well-supported, the university has continued with the design concept, and the old logos are nearly entirely phased out.

Figure 12

It should be understood, however, that although the use of the former schools’ individual logos may aid the merger transition, for as long as they remain in use, they will reflect a decentralized university (Melewar and Akel 2005, 44).

5.4 The Use of Logos by Modernized Finnish Universities

Åbo Akademi, the University of Helsinki, and the University of Vaasa are three universities in Finland which have new logo resulting from plans to modernize..

5.4.1 Åbo Akademi University

Åbo Akademi University was founded by a group of wealthy, private patrons in 1918 in the city of Turku (called Åbo among Swedish-speaking Finns), along Finland’s southwestern coast, near the archipelago. It was intended to be a Swedish-speaking, multi-disciplinary university that would help strengthen the Swedish-Finn culture in Finland. Åbo Akademi received its first government grant in 1951 to alleviate the financial burden associated with the post-war economy. In 1963, the funding became permanent, and the school was incorporated as part of the national higher education system in 1981 (Roimola 2012).
The Åbo Akademi seal (displayed below, in Figure 13) consists of an oval field and the Turku coat of arms within it. The oval field containing the pictura is bordered by two cornucopias, (which, since antiquity have been a symbol of abundance and nourishment) and is crowned by two laurel branches. The text Åbo Akademis Sigill (“the seal of Åbo Akademi”, in Swedish), in a font which includes serifs, encircles the cornucopias. The seal was designed by a renowned and locally-based Finnish painter, Axel Haartman, in 1919 (personal communication from Anne Gustafsson, 2013). Haartman’s design is absolutely typical of the time period, as it retains classical graphic elements rooted in antiquity and a verbal counterpart (Lund 2005).

![Figure 13](image)

The Åbo Akademi logo was devised in the 1980s by Professor of Art History, Sixten Ringbom (personal communication from Thurid Eriksson, 2013). Slightly altered in 1999 and again in September 2007, the latest Åbo Akademi logo is the result of a modification (Mattinen, 2010 and personal communication from Thurid Eriksson, 2013) which sought to create an altered graphic identity complemented by an improved and more maneuverable website layout. A guide for using the logo was provided to Åbo Akademi faculty and staff, with strict attention paid to details such as colors, typefaces, paper, and appropriate use. The guide explains that a consistent visual identity - acknowledged elsewhere on the university’s pages as an important branding element (Niskanen, 2013) - provides a professional and credible image, thereby enhancing the attraction of the university within the education market (Eriksson 2012). The logo, which simply depicts the two leading letters of the school’s name (without serifs), is available in red or black, with the school’s

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6 The coat of arms (featured in Figure 13) depicts a gothic, golden letter A – which stands for Aboa, the Latin name for the city – surrounded by four silver lilies, all on a blue shield (Hippophae, 2006).
name (in either Swedish or English) printed in black lettering either below (for vertical formats) or to the right (for horizontal formats) of the image. Within the graphics guide, three scenarios are provided which allow for the use of the old school seal: as a detail on a border, on the edge of a document (such as a bleed, as seen in Figure 14), or individually (but this is reserved for more official purposes). Lund asserts that school seals, such as Åbo Akademi’s, persist as page bleeds and homepage wallpapers, because their associations with “tradition, experience and solidity” are valued, despite the increasing need for modern reforms (2005, 252).

5.4.2 The University of Helsinki

Finland’s flagship university, the University of Helsinki, has a history spanning nearly 400 years. Its history is presented on its website in three phases.

The Royal Academy of Turku (1640 – 1808)

The present University of Helsinki was founded by Queen Christina of Sweden on the 26th of March 1640, in Turku, Finland. It was a Swedish national university - called The Royal Academy of Turku - that was part of the European university system. Four faculties existed, providing initial instruction for all students in Philosophy and then specialized studies thereafter in Theology, Law, or Medicine. The 250 undergraduates pursued studies to train for careers as clergymen, civil servants, physicians, and officers. The Academy’s community of scholars participated in research and publishing activities. They also traveled to continental Europe in order to engage with other scholars and keep apprised of the latest scientific developments (University of Helsinki History).
The Imperial Alexander University of Finland (1809-1917)

When Finland passed into Russian rule, Tsar Alexander I expanded the university, allocating considerable funds to support it. After the fire of Turku in 1827, the school was relocated to Helsinki, the new administrative capital of Finland. In 1828, the school was renamed the Imperial Alexander University of Finland and new statutes were passed in order to ensure compliance with the new Humboldtian ideals of science and culture and to prepare the youth for Russian service. The university’s research efforts focused on experimentation, empiricism, and analysis. Many great Finnish thinkers, such as Johan Vilhelm Snellman and Johan Ludvig Runeberg, were educated according to this system (University of Helsinki History).

The University of Helsinki (1917 – present)

When Finland received its independence in 1917, the school was renamed The University of Helsinki. The university realized its opportunity to help build the new nation-state, and members of the academic community promoted international relations. After World War II, scholars contributed to the development of the welfare society, and international recognition was achieved in the areas of mathematics, chemistry, and medicine (University of Helsinki History). Today, the university employs 500 professors and educates 40,000 students. Its international ranking performance is strong, scoring 73rd on the 2012 Shanghai list and 109th on the 2012 Times Higher Education list (University of Helsinki, 2013).

The university’s seal, when it was the Royal Academy of Turku, consisted of an oval field framed by two cornucopias and a crown. The Latin text circumscribing the seal indicates that it is the seal of the Royal Academy of Turku. Within the center of the oval field is a mention of Queen Christina and the year the school was founded. Additionally, there is a reference to the Biblical text Zechariah 6:8, which mentions the “north country” and the “land of the north” (New International version of the Bible). Additionally, above that script is the tetragrammaton (יהוה) for Yahweh, the Hebrew God of the Old Testament (The Divine Name). The seal, as it appears today (seen on the right of Figure 15), shares many similarities with its ancestor. Sigillium Academia Regia Aboensis was replaced with the Latin translation of the school’s name (with serifs), and the Bible verse is omitted. The
date has been changed from Arabic to Roman numerals, and the tetragrammaton, interestingly, remains. The seal was modified in 1940 to include the Cross of Liberty (seen at the bottom middle of the seal), which was awarded to the school that year. From 1752 until the 1990s, the University of Helsinki’s graphic identity was represented by the seal (in one variation or another), until it was replaced with the logo (personal communication from Tegelberg, 2013).

![Seal and Logo Comparison](image)

*Figure 15*

**Helsinki’s New Logo**

In early 1992, the University of Helsinki rector, Päiviö Tommila, outlined the procedures and restrictions for a logo design contest (archive document), as the seal was seen as too restrictive, old-fashioned, and impractical for properly transmitting the essence of such a dynamic and modern institution (personal communication from Tegelberg, 2013). Designed by Esko Ranki, the winner of the competition, the logo depicts an abstract flame (or “beacon of knowledge [Visual Identity 2011]”) – a highly contemporary image that was on trend with the emerging university design aesthetic of the 1990s (City University 2008).

The logo serves as the center of the university’s visual identity. The central administration, campuses, cross-disciplinary and other projects and networks operating within the University of Helsinki utilize the silver logo (seen on the left in Figure 16), while the various faculties and independent institutes use their own unique, respective colors (exemplified by the Faculty of Pharmacy, Faculty of Social Sciences, and the Faculty of Behavioral Sciences in Figure 16). The use of color in this manner is, again, reminiscent of
Becher’s disciplinary cultures (1994, 153). The logos are available for faculty and staff from a web-based materials bank, which offers alternate versions of the logo (such as those available in the Swedish and Finnish languages or landscape orientation) - depending on the application - and numerous templates (for PowerPoint presentations, posters, cover letters, etc.). According to the visual identity guidelines manual, systematic use of the university logo “promotes unity… and represent(s) the promise of consistent services and activities (2)” , a point of view which has been corroborated by Celly and Knepper (2010).

![Image of University Logos](image)

Figure 16

5.4.3 The University of Vaasa

The University of Vaasa was established in 1966 by the Finnish Council of State as the Vaasa School of Economics and Business Administration. Originally conceived in order to provide instruction in those fields, the university has since expanded to three faculties for researching and teaching (including the Faculty of Philosophy, the Faculty of Business Studies and the Faculty of Technology). The school was renamed the University of Vaasa in 1980 (University of Vaasa Verkkotoimitus).

The original logo for the University of Vaasa included the sheaf symbol for the Swedish House of Wasa, in honor of the Swedish king, Charles IX, who established the city on Finland’s western coast (along the Gulf of Bothnia) in 1606. The same sheaf is reproduced on the city of Vaasa’s coat of arms (middle, Figure 17). Within the university’s logo, the sheaf appears on top of a red and white-checkered maritime signal flag\(^7\) and has a yellow flame (already established as a symbol for knowledge) above it (seen on the left in Figure 16).

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\(^7\) The signal flag used in this case represents the letter “U” and, interestingly, is also used to signal danger to others.
Although the University of Vaasa is a relatively new institution (which explains the presence of the modern typefaces, without serifs), its original logo includes several very traditional and appropriate allusions.

Figure 17

In 2013, the University of Vaasa unveiled its latest logo (left, Figure 18), the result of a four-year long rebranding scheme. The logo, which was designed by Dynamo Advertising Ltd. (an agency which helped with the entire visual renewal for the university), consists of small yellow triangles, “the basic shape for the whole brand” (personal communication from Mäkelä, 2013) arranged in a V-shape with the name of the school appearing in Finnish and English text. The triangles are said to represent the school’s three faculties and can be seen elsewhere, such as on top of the main campus building. The bright color is representative of brilliance and intelligence, while the connecting effect of the triangles denotes the institution’s sense of community and supports the idea that the school is greater than the sum of its parts (personal communication from Mäkelä, 2013).

Figure 18

According to Maria Mäkelä, the Head of Communications for the University of Vaasa, the school’s new logo and visual identity were conceived over four years in order to improve the school’s visibility and popularity. While the old logo is incontestably saturated with a
historical and romantic essence, the new logo is less complicated. In fact, it would be simpler to compare the University of Vaasa’s new logo with that of the polytechnic (Vaasa University of Applied Sciences, on the right of Figure 18) geographically adjacent to it, rather than its former logo (which is now only used for the most formal occasions). Both of the logos are abstract and geometric with an uncomplicated color scheme, and both could very easily be mistaken for corporate petrol or consultancy logos.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Synthesis

The previous examinations demonstrate that – when given an opportunity to create a new logo, whether due to a merger or a modernization agenda – all six universities in the study preferred logos which are void of the traditional iconography (granted, this was the reason behind their selection for the study). Moreover, it was learned that the new logos not only lack traditional, classically inspired imagery, but they lack identifiable, figurative imagery altogether. The logos – even when supposedly representing objects such as a flame (as in the case of the University of Helsinki) or a diamond (as in the case of the University of Eastern Finland) – appear entirely abstract or without a pictorial element entirely (as with Aalto University, the University of the Arts Helsinki, Åbo Akademi, and the University of Vaasa).

The new logos are colorful (consisting of primary and secondary colors – a daring departure from the mostly blue logos utilized by the other Finnish universities) and provide novel color variations for either diversity (as with Aalto University, the University of the Arts Helsinki) or for the purposes of conveying a message (as with the University of Helsinki’s ability to distinguish faculties).

The text contained in the new logos are scribed in a modern typeface, always excluding serifs and always containing English translations of the school’s name (sometimes at the expense of the national language, as with the University of Eastern Finland).

Some of the logos were accepted peacefully (or there is no evidence to indicate otherwise, as with the University of Eastern Finland, the University of Helsinki, Åbo Akademi, and the University of Vaasa), while others were received rather critically (as with Aalto University and the University of the Arts Helsinki).

Some aspects of the logos reflect changing values in higher education - most notably internationalization by the presence of English text (and perhaps the varied use of color). The mere existence of the new logos in the cases of the University of Helsinki, Åbo Akademi, and the University of Vaasa represent a desire to be more marketable and more
commercial, while the creation of a single, streamlined logo in the cases of the merged universities represent the presence of a strong, managerial core.

5.2 Recommendations for future study

This thesis aims to provide evidence to claims made by earlier researchers who have identified a trend in branding in which higher education institutions embrace a more corporate-inspired visual identity complete with abstract logo. While this study was limited to Finland, this trend could be examined elsewhere and even quantified. Furthermore, although there is no substantial evidence that branding in higher education works, it could be worthwhile to investigate whether there are changes in number of applications, enrollments, etc. for schools like the University of Vaasa, which develop new visual identity programs in order to become more relevant.
Web Resources


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