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[Company name]  [Company address]

SPSS sample 1

# Executive Summary

THE UNIVERSITY provides one of the most comprehensive high quality undergraduate programs in Australia. The institution is now planning for a marketing strategy to position, brand and market its services. Marketing is planned to improve its appeal to the students, faculty and other resources in both domestic and international market. Any marketing strategy is incomplete without a marketing research. This research proposal aims at solving the marketing research problem, which is 'to understand stakeholder perceptions and expectations about THE UNIVERSITY’.

The research questions undertaken are

* To identify stakeholder perceptions about THE UNIVERSITY and other institutions
* To identify the expectations of various market segments from THE UNIVERSITY
* To identify information access points concerning universities and tertiary education
* To compare THE UNIVERSITY to other universities and tertiary education providers

On completion of this research, THE UNIVERSITY will have viable information required to make strategic decisions on market positioning, branding and marketing.

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# PART A

# Introduction

‘THE UNIVERSITY’ provides one of the most comprehensive high quality undergraduate programs in Australia. Students have provisions to attain a dual degree and also ‘mix and match’ a chosen program, there by gaining a competitive edge at the workplace. This research proposal aims at gathering indispensable information through interviews, focus groups and questionnaires with respect to perception about THE UNIVERSITY and what would differentiate THE UNIVERSITY on terms of competitive edge. Information thus collected can be used for branding, positioning and marketing of THE UNIVERSITY.

# Research Problem

## Management Decision Problem (MDP)

What should be the positioning, branding and marketing strategy adopted by THE UNIVERSITY to maintain and increase its market share alongside expansion to attract international students?

## Marketing Research Problem (MRP)

To understand stakeholder perceptions and expectations about THE UNIVERSITY

## Research Questions (RO)

The following research objectives address the stakeholder perceptions and expectations

### RO 1

To identify stakeholder perceptions about THE UNIVERSITY and other institutions

### RO 2

To identify the expectations of various market segments from THE UNIVERSITY

### RO 3

To identify information access points concerning universities and tertiary education

### RO 4

To compare THE UNIVERSITY to other universities and tertiary education providers

## Rationale of the research

Competition is not new among universities. Ranks are allotted to schools and universities on the basis of their resources and faculties. These ranks are ratings directive of competitive positioning of the universities worldwide. (Lindblad, 2008). Australian universities started to use marketing strategies in the beginning of the 21st century to create competitive advantage not only for protecting the ‘consumer’ base from competition, but also to secure a market share and position (Raciti, 2010). Higher education in Australia is now a system for mass education and has shifted from the elitist system and hence there is a perception of uniformity in institutional quality across the sector (Nelson, 2002). Hence there is an increased competition for resources, including faculties, student, and research facilities.

Every year primary school students make decisions about joining an undergraduate school. This is a crucial decision and they require information regarding their ability, the quality of university and the returns to a degree. Students should have a conviction and option to chose a university that fits them adequately to minimize dropouts and maximise the production of human capital. University rankings and indicators of excellence provide valuable information for decision making for students (Horstschraer, 2012).

There is a gap between dissemination of information and perceived data about the services provided by educational institutions. The mismatch or inadequacy of information provided leads students to chose better-marketed institutions (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006). This information gap can be addressed through this research proposal that identifies stakeholder perceptions and expectations about THE UNIVERSITY, understand the major access points to information about educational institutions and compare the performance of THE UNIVERSITY with other institutions and tertiary education providers. This further helps in developing the positioning, branding and marketing strategy of THE UNIVERSITY.

Marketing efforts should be developed and directed towards long term vision and mission of THE UNIVERSITY to which marketing and development plan make an integral component (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006). Surveying and finding information relevant for the students will help THE UNIVERSITY market and publish information optimal to receive response and reduce on marketing expenses that may not be fruitful. This research is focused on gathering information that can be relied on to design further market strategies.

# Research Design

This research uses a mixed methods approach and analyses data both quantitative and qualitative in nature. It applies the methods of focus groups and questionnaire to gather data and convert it to meaningful information. Primary research will be conducted after the secondary research that is literature review, which will throw light on existing researches and theories about the chosen subject.

## PART A: Exploratory phase: Focus group

In the exploratory research information collected are subjective in nature and hence gives a broader perceptive to the issue and thereby helping the researcher to account for any gaps in the research.

### Focus group

Focus group is a special type of group that can be used for gathering information from clearly defined target audience. The interviews and discussions are in-depth in nature ( Rennekamp & Nall, n.d) and hence provide valid insights on the research objectives. It helps in illuminating the differences in perspectives of people participating in the focus group discussion. Data can therefore be developed on the synergy of the group’s interaction (Rabiee, 2004).

### Appropriateness

Focus group will be most optimal for data collection in ‘THE UNIVERSITY’ case because of its applicability and easy availability of the target population. Also, when interviewer makes them comfortable the chances are high for increased flow of information. Data collection with out having to conduct anthropological investigation is one of the major advantages of focus group. It gives insights on behaviour, feeling, motivation and attitudes and this cannot be easy collected through survey. Stimulation of memories, feelings and the chance to clarify their outlook eliminates issues that may occur due to miscommunication (khan et.al, 1991)

### Limitations

THE UNIVERSITY serves a larger population and hence making generalisations from a 3 focus group of 10 members each cannot be seen fair. Also, there are chances of bias and subjectivity to the findings. Hence the reliability on focus group cannot be assured because it paves way for quick and easy claims and hence the validity of research depends on its assurance by using quantitative methods (Khan et.al, 1991).

## Part B: Descriptive phase: Questionnaire

Descriptive research in this case helps to build on the exploratory research and helps in describing and measuring customers, competitors, market segments and performance. Descriptive phase resorts to segmentation and inclusion of various target population with similar needs and ants and retrieved data on the basis of their feedback (Saestedt & Mooi, 2014)

### Questionnaire

Questionnaires are one of the major instruments used in primary market research. A questionnaire is to be decided on the basis of the nature and goal set for the survey. Questionnaire differs from each other on the basis of their scale and method of administration (Saestedt & Mooi, 2009).

### Appropriateness

In the case of THE UNIVERSITY, questionnaire will help in seeking objective response from the target population belonging to different segments. Hence inclusiveness of large target population and their overview on objective questions helps in narrowing down a wide variety of options that would otherwise arise confusion during decision-making (Saestedt & Mooi, 2009).

### Limitation

There is equal reliance on the tool (questionnaire) for its success based on the number of samples taken. A questionnaire should be designed to gather information and minimalize miscommunication. The analysis of the questionnaire and the tools engaged for the purpose also plays a pivotal role. So the success of a questionnaire is dependent on multiple factors to derive the best of results.

## Application to Research objectives

The qualitative and the quantitative data collected can be converted to valuable information required for meeting the research objectives.

RO 1: THE UNIVERSITY will be able to identify how it is perceived among the stakeholders and simultaneously take decisions that are required for to change negative perception if they exist. Any doubts can be referred with the results of focus group discussion and thereby allowing the UNIVERSITY to design the required strategy

RO 2: THE UNIVERSITY can recognize stakeholder expectations through focus group and survey. The UNIVERSITY can make changes in the curriculum or public relations strategy to make their attempts visible to the stakeholder.

RO 3: Questionnaire and focus group can easily identify where stakeholders access information about THE UNIVERSITY and hence make required changes to make sure that correct information is delivered to those mediums.

RO 4: Questionnaire derives an objective and focus group derives a subjective perspective on the competitive positioning of THE UNIVERSITY there by fulfilling the research objective.

# Data Collection

## Questionnaire

The questionnaire will have close ended questions and will have leading questions, rating questions, likert questions, and dichotomous questions and buying propensity questions. The questionnaire will be divided in to five sections assigned for particular research objectives and will have minimal chances of miscommunication.

Following is a sample of the questions present in the questionnaire

|  |
| --- |
| How will you rate you experience with THE UNIVERSITY  0. Excellent 1. Good 2. Fair 3. Poor 4. Very poor |
| Rate the impact of these marketing mediums on selecting THE UNIVERSITY  Low impact 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 High Impact (Tick in the box)   1. Television 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 2. Social media 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 3. Magazines 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 4. Browsers 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 5. Newspaper 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| Given an option which university will you go for the chosen services   1. Faculty 1.UN1 2.UN2 3.UN3 4.UN4 2. Library 1.UN1 2.UN2 3.UN3 4.UN4 3. Lab 1.UN1 2.UN2 3.UN3 4.UN4 4. Courses provided 1.UN1 2.UN2 3.UN3 4.UN4 |
| Are you an international student 1.yes 2. No |

## Focus group

The administrator of the focus group only has a set of questions to guide the interview or discussion. He/she picks up discussions and follows the lead generated. The following is a sample of the main lead points used in the interview

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Introduction 2. Association with University 3. General perception 4. A case narration 5. Expectations and what university lacks 6. What leads to perceptions 7. Access points of information 8. Comparison of experiences with other educational institutions |

# Sampling Plan

## Focus Group

**Target population:** there are many stakeholders when it comes to a university. The target population includes students, faculty, potential students, staff, parents, donors, alumni, visitors, the News media, general administration and the state legislature.

**Sample:** The sample population selected will be volunteers who respond to request for focus group.

**Sample frame**: Stakeholder database and contact details provided by the university

**Sampling method:** the sampling method will be random sampling chosen from the volunteers to focus group discussion.

**Sample size:** 5 groups of 10 participants, selected according to the response.

**Sampling procedure:** the respondents of the mails will be selected for focus group discussion. The initial focus group discussion will be based on random sampling. Depending on the effectiveness of discussion further demographics of further focus group discussion will be decided.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

And administrator will oversee and lead the discussion making record of all the points discussed. The points will be then summarised on the basis of priority allotted on the basis of repetition and viability of the points put across. Data collected will then go undergo an analytical process that are interconnected through five stages including familiarization, identification of a thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping and interpretation (Rabiee, 2004).

## Questionnaire

**Target population:** the target population is the same as focus group. The target population includes students, faculty, potential students, staff, parents, donors, alumni, visitors, the News media, general administration and the state legislature.

**Sampling frame:** identified stakeholders of THE UNIVERSITY

Sampling methods: questionnaire will be sent to the stakeholders identified through random sampling.

**Sample size:** 500 completed surveys.

**Sampling procedure:** Questionnaires will be screened on its reliability and completion. Other wise there are increased chances for non-response error.

**Data collection and analysis**

A mail will be sent to the target population, collecting information from the database of THE UNIVERSITY. Depending on the response to the survey questionnaire, questionnaires will be selected depending on its completion. The data from completed questionnaires will be fed in SPSS software for further analysis. Some of the major tests conducted will include the Independent samples test, ANOVA, basic statistics grouping and correlation Matrix

# Limitations

## Focus Group

The success of focus group is dependent on the nature and willingness of people participating in discussion, as it is dependent on the administrator to lead them in the direction. Though focus group gives ready information with case studies, analysing it and converting it into viable information requires effort and dedication from the analyst. There is a risk of not getting volunteers for discussion and paying members for focus group. In that scenario, there are chances that the number of focus group discussions should be cut short. Impact of focus group is unpredictable and hence the success of focus group cannot be predetermined irrespective of the chances for its success (Imms & Ereaut, 2004).

## Questionnaire

Though collection of questionnaires from target audience is comparatively easy in the case of survey, data analysis requires immense effort from the analyst, who should feed data to SPSS software. There is room for typing mistake and hence slight variations in the final output. One of the major issues with questionnaire is incompletion, which brings a variation to the final analysis. There are chances for new problems to arise while running the research and hence is unpredictable.

**PART B**

1. **Independent-samples t-test to determine any significant statistical differences between international students and domestic students for Question 5 items: 1 to 20.**

Independent sample t test is normally used to determine the mean difference between two groups (Horstschraer, J, 2012). For example, here independent sample t test is used to determine the mean unit materials – learning score between our international student and domestic student.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t test for equality of means | | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|  | F | Sig | t | df | sig (2 tailed) | Mean Difference | Standard Error | Lower Limit | Upper Limit |
| Unit materials - Learning | Equal variance assumed | 18.137 | 0.000 | -3.078 | 214 | 0.002 | -1.24702 | 0.40612 | -2.04667 | -0.44948 |
|  | Equal variance not assumed |  |  | -3.493 | 93.72 | 0.001 | -1.24702 | -35698 | -1.95585 | -0.5382 |
| Unit materials - Knowledge and skills | Equal variance assumed | 31.578 | 0.000 | -3.021 | 214 | 0.003 | -1.17857 | 0.39015 | -1.97929 | -0.46714 |
|  | Equal variance not assumed |  |  | -3.658 | 95.25 | 0 | -1.22321 | 0.33517 | -1.88859 | -0.55704 |
| Teaching methods - help to learn | Equal variance assumed | 15.439 | 0.000 | -3.021 | 214 | 0.003 | -1.17857 | 0.39015 | -1.94761 | -0.41953 |
|  | Equal variance not assumed |  |  | -3.37 | 90.773 | 0.001 | -1.17857 | 0.3497 | -1.87323 | -0.48391 |
| Topics and content | Equal variance assumed | 14.795 | 0.000 | -2.422 | 214 | 0.016 | -1.02976 | 0.42522 | -1.86792 | -0.19161 |
|  | Equal variance not assumed |  |  | -2.658 | 88.123 | 0.009 | -1.02976 | 0.38743 | -1.79967 | -0.25985 |
| Assessment tasks | Equal variance assumed | 10.145 | 0.002 | -2.551 | 214 | 0.011 | -1.08631 | 0.42584 | -1.92568 | -0.24694 |
|  | Equal variance not assumed |  |  | -2.778 | 86.912 | 0.007 | -1.08631 | 0.39105 | -1.86358 | -0.30904 |
| Feedback Form - Students used | Equal variance assumed | 15.075 | 0.000 | -2.82 | 214 | 0.005 | -0.79464 | 0.28179 | -1.35008 | -0.23921 |
|  | Equal variance not assumed |  |  | -4.335 | 193.1 | 0.005 | -0.79464 | 0.18333 | -1.15622 | -0.43306 |
| Teaching Staff - Class Atmosphere | Equal variance assumed | 1.854 | 0.175 | -2.035 | 214 | 0.043 | -0.53274 | 0.26181 | -1.04879 | -0.01668 |
|  | Equal variance not assumed |  |  | -2.608 | 122.113 | 0.01 | -0.53274 | 0.20427 | -0.9371 | -0.12837 |
| Teaching Staff - Feedback | Equal variance assumed | 0 | 0.983 | -1.995 | 214 | 0.047 | -0.28274 | 0.14174 | -0.56211 | -0.00336 |
|  | Equal variance not assumed |  |  | -2.214 | 89.899 | 0.029 | -0.28274 | 0.12771 | -0.53646 | -0.02901 |
| Teaching Staff - developing Knowledge, Understandable Skills | Equal variance assumed | 0.24 | 0.625 | -2.377 | 214 | 0.018 | -0.4256 | 0.17905 | -0.77852 | -0.07267 |
|  | Equal variance not assumed |  |  | -2.783 | 99.683 | 0.006 | -0.4256 | 0.15293 | -0.72901 | -0.12218 |
| Use of students feedback to improve teaching | Equal variance assumed | 7.888 | 0.005 | -2.648 | 214 | 0.009 | -0.43155 | 0.163 | -0.75284 | -0.11026 |
|  | Equal variance not assumed |  |  | -3.203 | 106.829 | 0.002 | -0.43155 | 0.13474 | -0.69866 | 0.05309 |

There is a statistical significant difference between the international students and the domestic students in the Unit materials – Learning (t test statistic = -3.078p - value = 0.002 < 0.05). Domestic student feels more importance of unit materials for learning when compared with international students

There is a statistical significant difference between the international students and the domestic students in the Unit materials - Knowledge and skills (t test statistic = -3.021p - value = 0.003). Domestic student feels more importance of unit materials for Knowledge and skills when compared with international students

There is a statistical significant difference between the international students and the domestic students in the Teaching methods - help to learn (t test statistic = -3.021p - value = 0.003). Domestic student feels more importance of Teaching methods - help to learn when compared with international students

There is a statistical significant difference between the international students and the domestic students in the Topics and content (t test statistic = -2.422p - value = 0.016). Domestic student feels more importance of Topics and content when compared with international students

There is a statistical significant difference between the international students and the domestic students in the Assessment tasks (t test statistic = -2.551p - value = 0.011 < 0.05). Domestic student feels more importance of Assessment tasks when compared with international students

There is a statistical significant difference between the international students and the domestic students in the Feedback Form - Students used (t test statistic = -2.82p - value = 0.005 < 0.05). Domestic student feels more importance of Feedback Form - Students used when compared with international students

There is a statistical significant difference between the international students and the domestic students in the Teaching Staff - Class Atmosphere (t test statistic = -2.035p - value = 0.043 < 0.05). Domestic student feels more importance of Teaching Staff - Class Atmosphere when compared with international students

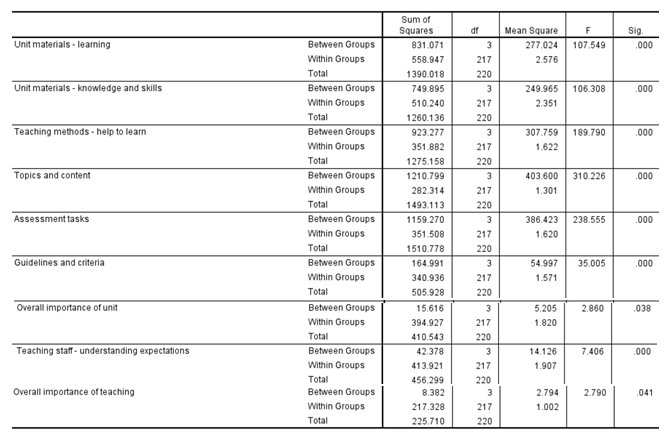
There is a statistical significant difference between the international students and the domestic students in the Teaching Staff – Feedback (t test statistic = -1.995p - value = 0.047 < 0.05). Domestic student feels more importance of Teaching Staff – Feedback when compared with international students

There is a statistical significant difference between the international students and the domestic students in the Teaching Staff - developing Knowledge, Understandable Skills (t test statistic = -2.377p - value = 0.018 < 0.05). Domestic student feels more importance of Teaching Staff - developing Knowledge, Understandable Skills when compared with international students

There is a statistical significant difference between the international students and the domestic students in the Use of students feedback to improve teaching (t test statistic = -2.648p - value = 0.009 < 0.05). Domestic student feels more importance of Use of students feedback to improve teaching when compared with international students

**b. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine any significant statistical differences by YEAR STARTED DEGREE for Question 5 items: 1 to 20.**

One way ANOVA is used to determine whether there is a significant difference in the mean among three or more groups (Rabiee, 2004). One way ANOVA is an extension of independent sample t test where more than two groups are compared to determine the significant difference in the treatment means.



There is a statistically significant mean difference in unit material learning scores for those who started the degree in 2003 and 2007 (f test statistic = 107.549, p – value = 0.000 < 0.05)

There is a significant mean difference in unit material knowledge and skill scores for those who started the degree in 2003 and 2007 (f test statistic = 106.308, p – value = 0.000 < 0.05)

There is a statistically significant mean difference in teaching methods – help to learn scores for those who started the degree in 2003 and 2007 (f test statistic = 189.79, p – value = 0.000 < 0.05)

There is a statistically significant mean difference in Topics and content scores for those who started the degree in 2003 and 2007 (f test statistic = 310.226, p – value = 0.000 < 0.05)

There is a statistically significant mean difference in Assessment tasks scores for those who started the degree in 2003 and 2007 (f test statistic = 238.555, p – value = 0.000 < 0.05)

There is a statistically significant mean difference in Guidelines and Criteria scores for those who started the degree in 2003 and 2007 (f test statistic = 35.005, p – value = 0.000 < 0.05)

There is a statistically significant mean difference in Overall importance of unit scores for those who started the degree in 2003 and 2007 (f test statistic = 2.860, p – value = 0.038 < 0.05)

There is a statistically significant mean difference in teaching staff – understanding expectations scores for those who started the degree in 2003 and 2007 (f test statistic = 7.406, p – value = 0.000 < 0.05)

There is a statistically significant mean difference in scores for overall importance of teaching for those who started the degree in 2003 and 2007 (f test statistic = 2.790, p – value = 0.041 < 0.05)

**c. Bivariate correlation coefficient matrix to identify any STRONG and significant associations between item 20 and items 1 to 19.**

Bivariate correlation is used to assess the relationship between two variables taken in the study. It also helps us to determine the strength and also the direction of the relationship between two variables (Sarstedt, 2014).

The Pearson Correlation coefficient is used to perform the Bivariate correlation coefficient and it is normally used to determine the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable. This will say that there is a relationship between two variables and it does not mean that one variable influences the other (Lindblad, 2008)

The correlation coefficient falls between – 1 and + 1 and it is usually denoted by the symbol ρ. When the correlation coefficient falls close to 1, then we can say that there exists a very strong positive linear relationship between two variables. When the correlation coefficient falls close to 0, then we can say that there exists no linear relationship between two variables. When the correlation coefficient falls close to – 1, then we can say that there exists a very strong negative linear relationship between two variables.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Correlations** | | | |
|  | | **Q20. Overall importance of teaching** |
| **Q1. Unit materials - learning** | Pearson Correlation | 0.326\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 221 |
| **Q2. Unit materials - knowledge and skills** | Pearson Correlation | .273\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 221 |
| **Q3. Teaching methods - help to learn** | Pearson Correlation | .201\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 |
| N | 221 |
| **Q4. Topics and content** | Pearson Correlation | .165\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .014 |
| N | 221 |
| **Q5. Assessment tasks** | Pearson Correlation | .086 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .205 |
| N | 221 |
| **Q6. Guidelines and criteria** | Pearson Correlation | .436\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 220 |
| **Q7. Requirement of overall assessment program** | Pearson Correlation | .246\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 221 |
| **Q8. Resources - help to learn** | Pearson Correlation | .538\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 221 |
| **Q9.Feedback from students used** | Pearson Correlation | .475\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 221 |
| **Q10. Overall importance of unit** | Pearson Correlation | .084 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .212 |
| N | 221 |
| **Q11. Teaching staff - understanding expectations** | Pearson Correlation | .362\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 221 |
| **Q12. Teaching staff - class atmosphere** | Pearson Correlation | .658\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 221 |
| **Q13. Teaching staff - friendly, enthusiastic, helpful** | Pearson Correlation | .581\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 221 |
| **Q14. Teaching staff - genuine interest** | Pearson Correlation | .557\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 221 |
| **Q15. Teaching staff - feedback** | Pearson Correlation | .647\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 221 |
| **Q16. Teaching staff - developing knowledge, understanding and skills** | Pearson Correlation | .465\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 221 |
| **Q17. Use of T&L resources and aids** | Pearson Correlation | .172\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 221 |
| **Q18. Use of student feedback to improve teaching** | Pearson Correlation | .709\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 221 |
| **Q19. Teaching, learning and assessment tasks used to help students learn** | Pearson Correlation | .709\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 221 |

There is a **strong significance** correlation (\*\*) between Q20 with Q1, Q2, Q4, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18 and Q19at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between Q20 with Q3, Q5 and Q6 is **insignificant** because the sig. (2-tailed) level is above the recommended level of 0.05 (Wilson, 2010).

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