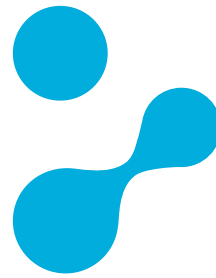


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# **Culture House Lumo: Orientation material for international students**

DEGREE PROGRAMME IN NURSING  
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## ABSTRACT

Biambe Njua Celestin: Culture House Lumo: Orientation material for international students

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Increasing globalisation in education has led to more international students seeking opportunities in diverse environments. These students often encounter significant challenges in understanding, adapting to, and integrating into the unfamiliar environment. Such difficulties may lead to feelings of fear, anxiety, reduced productivity, and lack of commitment to their responsibilities.

The project was carried out in collaboration with SAMK and Culture House Lumo. The aim of the project was to develop a digital orientation guide in English for international students. The guide provides essential information and practical guidance on enhancing well-being through the services and activities offered by Culture House Lumo. Its objectives include assisting international students to effectively navigate their new environment and establishing meaningful relationships within the community, encouraging participation of international students in community engagement opportunities to foster diversity and empowering them to prioritise their physical and mental wellbeing throughout their academic journey.

The project was conducted using the Waterfall model of project management which is a systematic and well-structured approach. This process consisted of five stages: identifying the needs of the client or user, designing the guide, implementing the content, gathering feedback from the client or stakeholders, and publishing the final product. The outcome is an interactive and comprehensive digital orientation guide in English, which is compatible with all electronic devices and user friendly. The guide covers key aspects of Culture House Lumo, which include its mission and values, background, programmes, activities, benefits, cultural adaptation, mental well-being resources, and practical steps of engaging with the community.

The project highlights the importance of accessible and inclusive orientation materials in supporting internationalisation efforts and promoting diversity within cultural organisations. Recommendations to gain visibility and enhance usage of the guide include using university channels, international student associations and local community platforms.

Keywords: Orientation, international students, orientation material and cultural workshop.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ICN: International Council of Nurses

MS WORD: Microsoft Word

OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

PDF: Portable Document Format

SAMK: Satakunta University of Applied Sciences

STEa: The Social and Health Organizations Assistance Centre

SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

TENK: National Board on Research Integrity

UNESCO: United Nation Emergency, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Increased globalisation has decreased barriers between countries thus, leading to many movements across the globe. This has also encouraged international students to be eager to study abroad to gain new experiences and culture. International students making this transition need guidance and support to adapt and integrate into the new environment (Guvendir, 2018). One of the ways to enable international students to adapt and integrate smoothly is effective orientation to their new environment (Senarath, 2021). To achieve this many organisations or institutions have produced orientation material for international students in different formats which include orientation handbook, online orientation guide (electronic guides), orientation cards, workshops/seminars, and others (Senarath, 2021).

International students face several challenges in understanding, adapting, and adjusting in an environment (work setting, school, practice placement or community) different from theirs. This causes fear, anxiety, low productivity, and non-commitment to responsibilities (Guvendir, 2018). For instance, some studies have shown that lack of orientation counselling and guidance at Turkish universities and some universities in the United State of America has led to struggle with international students to adjust and adapt to new systems leading to interpersonal problems, and decrease in performance among international students (Guvendir, 2016). International students in a new environment have limited experience and knowledge in interpreting, analysing, solving problems, and integrating into the community (Guvendir, 2016). Hence, they need guidance and reassurance at the beginning to ease adaptation and social engagement. Orientation equally plays a crucial role in transiting from being a student to a full-time worker and in the retention of workers in a new work environment (ICN, 2021). Also, orientation to new employees is a relevant part of every organisation's operation as it reduces the risk of workplace hazards (Alazzi &

Al-Jarrah, 2016). Thus, an effective orientation has a key position in helping students to integrate in a new environment more smoothly.

In addition to the significance of orientation for the new employee and the organisation, it is equally a legal obligation. For instance, The Finnish Occupational Safety and Health Act outlines that orientation is mandatory in all work settings to prevent accidents and enhancing the health and safety of workers. When an employee starts a new job, they are faced with unfamiliar work duties or situations, the employer has a responsibility to give them appropriate orientation based on their skills and responsibilities (Occupational Safety Act 738/2002 1:1§).

Culture house Lumo in Pori is an organisation that offers young adults (aged 18-35) with creative group activities the opportunity to meet new people and mental health support. Their activities include art, craft, game, band, and sports workshop. Such activities give young adults the opportunity to realise their potentials and preferences free of charge (Kulttuuripaja Lumo, 2018). Currently, the information on their webpage gives an overview of the organisation, overall activities, and weekly programs in Finnish language. Nonetheless, international students do not explore these services adequately. Hence, a detailed orientation guide that provides information on the mission, objectives, values, activities and benefits in English will provide international students the opportunity to explore and make use of the services to enhance their wellbeing while living and studying in Pori or in Finland as a whole. This thesis focuses on producing an electronic/digital orientation guide in English language to enhance international students' understanding of the services of Culture house Lumo.

## 2 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE THESIS

### Purpose

To create a digital orientation guide in English for Culture House Lumo. The guide would provide relevant information to international students about the services and activities provided by Culture House Lumo.

### Objectives

1. To develop an orientation guide for Culture House Lumo.
2. To support international students in effectively navigating and building meaningful relationships in the community through the activities of Lumo.
3. To encourage international students to participate in community engagement opportunities thus promoting diversity.
4. To empower international students to prioritise their physical and mental well-being throughout their academic journey.

### 2.1 Description of the target organisation/client

This thesis pivots on international students of various background using English as a medium of instruction during their studies or stay in Pori and the Satakunta region. As international students, they have an immense burden of transitioning from their different backgrounds and cultures to the social, cultural, and educational situation of their host society. These challenges can lead to less productivity or withdrawal from their primary intention. Thus, exploring the services of Culture House Lumo will enhance their physical and mental wellbeing while pursuing their goal.

Culture house Lumo was the main stakeholder for this project. The staff is made up of peer tutors, coaching instructors and employees with diverse backgrounds who come together to coordinate the activities of the institution (Kulttuuripaja Lumo, 2018). Culture house Lumo was established in 2016, and it is part of the Tukirankary organisation. It provides a space for young adults (18-35 years) facing challenging situations, who need content and meaningful activities in everyday life as well as those who require acquaintances or mental health support. The mission of Culture house Lumo is to promote creativity, encourage cultural participation and collaboration, provide a welcoming space for individuals from diverse backgrounds to explore different forms of art. Its vision is to enhance a sense of community and belonging through shared artistic experience and allowing individuals to connect with each other. The culture house is built on multiple stories, perspectives, needs, and goals. Lumo combines many realities and concepts to act as a neutral platform for a variety of participants, where the content is shaped by its users (Kulttuuripaja Lumo, 2018).

### 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Theoretical Background

International students are all around the globe pursuing education or other ventures according to their needs. Orientation in different forms is a way of providing adequate information and services to enhance international students' integration into the new environment (Alazzi & Al-Jarrah, 2016). Several studies or research have been done focusing on the necessity of orientation for international students.

The process of adapting and integrating new students from diverse backgrounds into an academic environment is essential. Thus, evaluating the effectiveness of new students' orientation programs in facilitating their

integration and adaptation process in a new environment is essential. Findings showed that orientation for new students has a positive impact on the adaptation process, and further analysis revealed that students who participated in the orientation programs performed better academically. In addition, factors such as social integration, psychological support, mental wellbeing, physical wellness and academic knowledge played significant roles in successful adaptation (Mohzana, 2024).

In addition, perceived discrimination, orientation to mainstream culture and life satisfaction were used to explain destination loyalty of international students. The results revealed that orientation to mainstream culture positively influenced destination loyalty intention and mediates the relationship between perceived discrimination and destination loyalty. Therefore, building a support system that promotes cross cultural adjustment among international students is vital for institutions (Jamaludin, et al., 2015).

International students upon arrival in a new environment encounter many difficulties. An inquiry into how orientation programs can meet these needs is essential. In an online survey international students' abilities to handle acculturative stress or the disorientation that comes with cross cultural transition in the United States were tested. The results showed that different personal and multicultural strength could contribute to international students' ability to adjust better in a new environment. Hence, orientation workshops and seminars that address systems, life in the new environment, and providing opportunities for international students to interact with domestic students outside the classroom were essential (Schneidmiller, 2016).

Literature has established that it is natural for international students to feel alienated from the new environment in the beginning of their stay and to feel anxious (Şahin & Göksoy, 2023). Reducing this feeling of anxiety and foreignness will enable students adapt in a new environment. Results from a study to reveal whether orientation training contributes to social, academic and personal development of international students, showed that orientation training strengthened social ties between students, creates overall satisfaction and

provides benefits in various field such as getting to know the institutions, the city, social amenities, the culture of the host country, adaptation procedures enabled international students to make a positive difference in their stay. The authors concluded that the content, duration and methods of orientation should be tailored toward the students' needs and should be evaluated continuously. In this way it will help students have a more positive and successful experience in their new environment (Şahin & Göksoy, 2023).

Furthermore, it has been revealed that international students were comfortable in approaching pharmacies to fill prescriptions, feel comfortable in approaching the pharmacist and asking questions, students were able to understand medication types. This highlights the effectiveness of orientation program in improving the confidence and understanding of international students in relations to medication access and use (Shen, et al., 2020).

An interactive online orientation to academic practices for international students also showed that the online orientation module with clear and understandable videos, materials and interactive features has been useful and interesting to international students thus, enhancing their integration in a new academic environment (Surtee and Yamamoto, 2021).

Correlational survey research to determine the relation of orientation training sessions with integration in the new environment and the achievement of international students reveal that: orientation training for international students help them to solve problems they may encounter and accelerate their integration process. International students were able to improve on their academic achievement with the help from orientation (Güvendir, 2018). Proper orientation provides time for international students to practice a second language, time to learn their way around the local area and time to establish relationships with others. It helps to relieve the burden of miscommunication and misunderstanding, as it gives a positive first impression of the environment while also motivating international students. Students are informed about the various roles and responsibilities in the new environment. Lastly, orientation sessions contribute to the overall success and social experiences of international

students (Güvendir, 2018). Additionally, the findings deduced three focus areas for international students' orientation which include culture, cultural interaction experiences and acculturation.

Describing the cultural environment and services available for students through orientation, support international students to familiarise themselves with the culture of the new area. When international students interact with the new culture, they can experience cultural shock which can foster feelings of loneliness, unhappiness or disappointment for them. Orientation sessions can provide students with ways of coping with such situations (Güvendir, 2018).

Lastly, examining how orientation training is performed in the international student center revealed that the students' opinions about the orientation process were mostly positive. The students' attachment to the school was also unequivocally affected by the orientation as they gathered information about the university through this process. In addition, the students considered the online orientation offered by the center as a beneficial service that provided constant access to information they need (Guvendir, 2016).

Social and academic integration play a key role in the success and retention of international students' success. A student's sense of belonging to an organization or institution is often shaped during orientation. Orientation gives international students many chances to meet and interact with others, helping them start the process of social and academic integration (Mullendore, 2010).

### 3.2 Description of key concepts

The key concepts in this project are orientation, orientation material and international students.

**Orientation:** Orientation is defined from different perspectives. For international students, orientation is a structured program designed to welcome, support, and inform students as they transition to a new environment with different culture and social norms (Şahin & Göksoy, 2023). This is to enable them to feel

comfortable, adapt and integrate in their new environment. As such, the orientation include introduction to the institutions or organisations' mission and purpose, rules and regulations, cultural acclimations, networking, social integration, accessing health services, commuting, counselling services and maintaining wellbeing (Glass & Westmont, 2014). This is relevant as it reduces cultural shock and anxiety, support students' mental and social wellbeing and promoting overall success and retention rates among international students (Glass & Westmont, 2014).

Moreover, orientation is the process of introducing new employees to the organisation's setting, policies, use of technology, job responsibilities, workplace culture and values, working team, the vision and mission of the organisation (Lalithabai, et al., 2021). It also increases the interest of the new employees, their engagement in the work setting, reduces errors and creates a solid foundation for employment relationship (Brown, 2019).

Orientation is a process which begins even before the arrival of a new employee/student into an organisation. Thus, it is the organization's duty to illustrate the organization's practices, policies, and values as well as, how the organization orientate its employees. In summary, orientation consist of all the processes that help a new employee to know and understand the workplace/new environment, its mission, activities, practices, customers, colleagues and other operators, work expectations and specific areas of responsibilities of every employee. (Brown, 2019). The aim of orientation is to let the newcomer understand what the institution believes in, what steers the everyday life of the institution, reinforcing the impression of belonging as well as giving a positive outlook on the institution (Kujala, 2017.) Orientation can be done in different ways which include, verbal, literal, audiovisual material, online orientation programs, seminars, or workshops (Lee, 2015).

Additionally, orientation is one of the most significant factors in the retention process, whether in a new environment or at work. The relevance of orientation programs for international students is critical, not only in welcoming and introducing them, but also prior to their actual arrival, and in providing a continuous

support system to fully integrate them socially, mentally, physically, psychologically, and academically (Tas, 2013.) A comprehensive framework which includes identifying common needs of these students, cross cultural adjustment, adjusting to new systems, establishing interpersonal relationships and social support groups, maintaining physical, mental and psychological wellbeing is relevant for both short term and long-term orientation programs (Tas, 2013).

**Orientation material:** This is a compilation of information about an organisation's goal, objectives, activities, policies, philosophy, culture, product/services, structure, employees' responsibilities, organisation's responsibilities, opportunities, and regulations (Kujala, 2017). This material can be produced in any form which include, orientation handbook, orientation kit, electronic guide, interactive guidebook, videos, CDs, brochures, and others. The design of orientation material affects the outcome and success of socialisation and familiarisation of newcomers. For instance, some companies or institutions design their orientation processes with a focus on the skills and traits of newcomers, learning styles, professional needs, social and psychological needs (Kujala, 2017.) This can be achieved by creating a familiarisation plan, time schedule, and checklist without causing boredom to the newcomers.

**International students:** These are individuals who have physically left their country, territory of origin and crossed international borders with the aim of participating in educational activities in the country of destination (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2024). These individuals come from different background as such international students significantly contribute to cultural diversity, economic impact, academic exchanges, diversities in perspectives, and social diversity in the host country (OECD, 2021).

**Cultural workshop/house:** Cultural workshops have been conceptualised differently which include, Cultural workshop is a designed program or activity with the aim of promoting cultural engagement, creativity, social interaction, and personal development. It focuses on enhancing cultural diversity, skills, perspectives and providing a platform for self-expression and community building.

Activities in the workshop may include music, art and crafts, cultural dialogues, and language exchange (Kulttuuripaja, 2018). “It is also referred to as a team culture that uses the principles and practices of workshops and facilities to encourage productivity, creativity, development and build an environment of effective collaboration.” (Coward, 2024). Furthermore, cultural workshops bring collaboration, inclusion, motivation, and creativity which are elements of engagement, positive, and productive culture (Radu, 2023). Workshops emphasis on hand-on-experiences to foster a deep appreciation and understanding of the heritage of a particular culture. For instance, participants may engage in instrument making, music, designing, dance and others which allows them to connect personally with the cultural practices in a community.

#### 4 THE METHODS USED IN THE THESIS

The project adopted the Waterfall model of project management. This method was considered appropriate for this project because of its clear and logical structure. It is highly methodical, focuses on clear set of defined steps with simple structure and using the model does not require training. The Waterfall model is a linear approach to project management in which requirements from customers and stakeholders are first collected at the start of the project and a sequential project plan is then developed to meet those needs (Senarath, 2021). The waterfall model got its name because every stage of the project flows into the next and descends gradually much like a waterfall (Projectmanager, 2024; Senarath, 2021). This method does not generally ensure quick changes, and it is suitable for projects with stable requirements over a long period or until the end of the project (Aroral, 2021). The model consists of five to seven phases that are sequentially ordered and cannot start until the preceding phase is completed. Although the themes are different, the author Winston Royce originally describes the model in five phases as follows:

## 4.1 Requirements

The primary focus here is setting up well-defined criteria and gathering all requirements needed by the customer at the beginning of the project, allowing other phases to be planned without correspondence with the customer until the product is complete (Projectmanager, 2024). The requirements can be functional or non-functional. The functional requirements include the purpose, scope, objectives, users' characteristics and database requirements while the non-functional requirements include limitations to the project, reliability, performance, quality, standards and requirements on the design (Aroral, 202; Senarath, 2021). This thesis used functional materials which include, stating the purpose and objectives, using scientific databases and weblinks from the client to obtain relevant material for the guidebook and others.

## 4.2 Design

This is divided into logical and physical design. Logical design is, when possible solutions are raised and brainstorm whereas physical design entails the theoretical ideas and schemes to be developed into concrete specifications (Projectmanager, 2024). In this case a physical design was employed where the author used MS Word to design the guidebook, converted it to PDF and further to a digital form using FlipHTML5® software.

## 4.3 Implementation

Here the programmers assimilate the requirements and specifications and produce the actual code (Projectmanager, 2024). This requires understanding the requirements and using them to execute and produce a service or a product. In a nutshell, converting the process phase into production phase (Aroral, 2021).

#### 4.4 Verification

This is also referred to as the testing or validation phase. The customer reviews the product and ensures it meets the requirements laid out at the beginning of the project (Projectmanager, 2024). It includes the process of checking if the expectations meet the original performance, specifications and intended purpose. Evaluating the product or service during and at the end of the development process to determine if it satisfies the requirements or the users. The bugs and glitches are identified and corrected or redefined (Aroral, 2021).

#### 4.5 Maintenance

This involves modifying the service or product after delivery and deployment to refine the output, correct errors and improve quality and performance (Aroral, 2021). The customer is using the product regularly, identifying bugs, inadequate features and other gaps that occur during production. The production team applies these fixes as necessary until the customer's satisfaction is met (Projectmanager, 2024). This can also lead to adaptation of the service or product to its environment, accommodating new user requirement and enhancing reliability (Aroral, 2021).

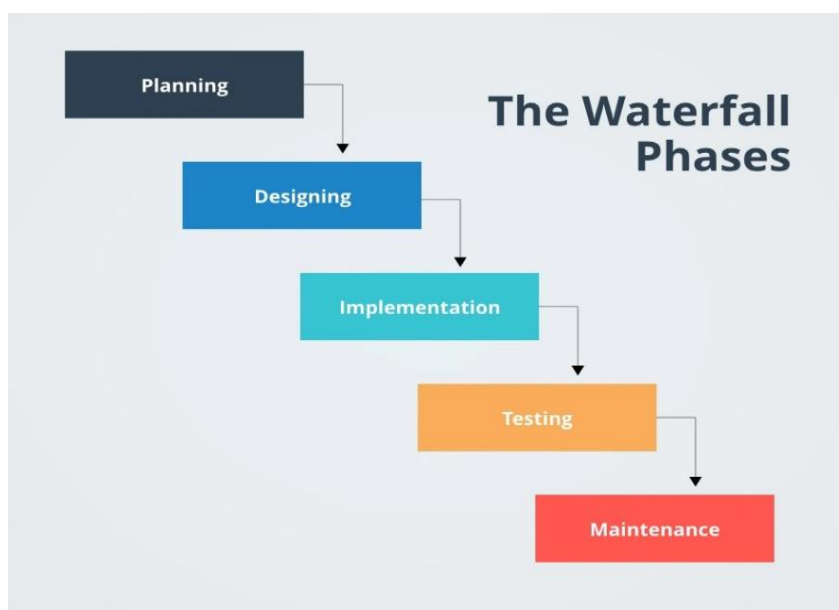


Figure 1: Waterfall model of project management (Clearpoint strategy, 2024).

#### 4.6 Stages of the project

The project employed five stages adapted from the Waterfall model which include,

Stage I: Planning: The need for the product was identified by the client. Several contacts were made with the client both online meetings and emails to discuss about the content of the guidebook. From this thorough research was done about the subject matter using scientific databases. A project plan was made to set the foundation for the project.

Stage II: Designing the product. Microsoft Word was used to build the content and design for the electronic orientation material. Sources used for creating the content of the material were provided by the client.

Stage III: Implementing the design. Developing the orientation guidebook, editing, and formatting. The orientation material was converted to pdf format and a software used to convert it to an electronic format.

Stage IV: Evaluation of the product: After production, the orientation guidebook was sent to the client in a word document with a feedback form. The feedback gotten from client was used to make modifications in the guidebook.

Stage V: Final product and completion of project. After modifications, the guidebook was converted to PDF then to an electronic or digital form using FlipHTML5® software and the link sent to the client.

#### 4.7 Timeline of the project

Table 1: Project timeline

Stage	Activity	Date
Requirements	Identifying, analysing, and researching about the subject matter. Holding meetings with the client and creating a project plan	March – May 2024
Design	Gathering information on the content of the guide and creating a design for the guide.	May – June 2024
Implementation	Developing the orientation guidebook, editing, and formatting.	July – August 2024
Testing	Getting feedback from the client and users.	September 2024
Maintenance	Revision from client, preparation of final report, submission of product.	November 2024- March 2025

## 5 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THESIS

### 5.1 Resources

Projects needs resources for it to be carried out such as human resources, financial, technological, time and material. Human resources are the various team members who will be participating in the project, usually allocated according to their skills and specialties (Planview, 2024.) The cash or financing facilities that can be used to carry through the project constitute the financial resources. The technological aspects are the available software applications, or data processing tools that the project can utilize. Whereas the equipment is the physical equipment that will be used such as laptops, cell phones, tablets, projectors, writing materials (notebooks, pens, highlighter) and internet connection (Planview, 2024.)

In this project, the author and stakeholders were the human resources needed. Time was a major resource. Databases include CINAHL, Theseus, SAMK Finna, Google Scholar, webpages. Financial resources include purchasing an internet connection and money spent on making calls with contact persons. Material and equipment included notebooks, pens, highlighter, laptops and cell phones.

## 5.2 Risks

The potential risks in the project include time, inadequate information from the contact persons, and the unavailability of the contact persons. However, these risks were managed using the SWOT analysis risk management tool. SWOT is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. (FME, 2013). Where Strengths refers to the internal factors that are favourable for achieving the objectives of the project. Weaknesses refers to internal factors that are unfavourable in achieving the objectives of the project. Opportunities are the external factors that are favourable in achieving the objectives of the project. Threats are the external factors that are unfavourable in achieving the objectives of the project (FME, 2013.)

## 5.3 Description of the electronic orientation guide

The orientation guide in English language was created initially using Microsoft Word 365 as it was easy to navigate and make amendments throughout the process. After approval from the client, the Word document was converted to PDF and further to a digital format using FlipHTML5® software. A link to the digital guidebook was sent to the client upon completion. This software was chosen as it helps users to easily navigate the different sections of the guidebook. The content of the orientation guide was gotten from an electronic book-*Minun Kulttuuripajani (My culture)*, and some weblinks sent by the client. The structure of the orientation guide was developed by the author and include:

Welcome to Culture House Lumo  
Brief description of Finland and Pori  
Who We Are  
Evolution of Culture houses  
Lumo a place to be  
Benefits of belonging to Lumo  
Lumo's Safer Space Principles  
Key programs and activities  
Joining Culture house Lumo and Communication  
Lumo's team  
Address of Lumo's space  
Amazing stories from some Culture house members  
References  
Appendix

With the structure obtained, DeepL translation tool version 24.1 was used to translate the book "Minun Kulttuuripajani" by Raivio et al. (2016). "Minun Kulttuuripajani" means "My Culture". The book gives a reflective exploration of cultural identity, personal experiences and values shaped by individuals from diverse background. It gives narratives of how culture houses have influenced hobbies, interactions, daily activities, traditions and personal development of individuals. In addition, it is piece of blended memories and cultural commentary which illustrate how communal identities and personal identities blend in shaping one's cultural view.

This book was used to obtain relevant information about the background of Culture house Lumo. The webpages of Lumo Pori (the client) and Sosped were also used to get relevant content for the orientation guide. The font size for the content is 13, in Calibri font, with 1.15 line spacing. Font size 16 and font type Aptos Display was used for the headings. These were chosen to enhance visibility and clarity. The orientation guide also contains some images gotten from the webpage of Lumo. The final product had 14 pages with cover page and appendix inclusive (the family tree of culture houses). The digital guidebook is

compatible with many electronic devices such as android phones, laptops, computers, iphones and iPads.

### 5.3.1 Evaluation of the product

This project thesis focused on producing an electronic orientation guide in English to support international students explore the services of Culture house Lumo. The purpose and objectives of the thesis were clearly defined. The thesis made use of scientific databases to get relevant literature. The waterfall methodology is appropriate, clearly explained and well implemented in the project. The limitations/risks of the project were identified and SWOT analysis used to manage the risks. All sources used in obtaining relevant literature were properly cited and referenced according to the referencing guide of SAMK. The orientation material produced for this thesis is comprehensive, interactive, engaging, can be use on any electronic device and meet the needs of the client and the target audience. It provides key insights about Culture House Lumo and its benefits; thus, it is a resource that the institution can readily implement.

To evaluate the digital orientation guide, a feedback form was created by the author. The form constituted three questions. Two closed ended questions with response options: Not satisfied, satisfied and extremely satisfied. One open ended question to get comments and suggestions from the client. The feedback form helped to ensure validity and correctness of the information on the orientation guide. The word document of the orientation guide and the feedback form were sent to the client via email.

The client responded to the feedback and expressed their satisfaction with the product and made some suggestions. The author discussed the suggestions with the client and modified the orientation guide accordingly. The suggestions helped the author to learn more ways of presenting information to engage the user.

#### 5.4 Ethical viewpoints of the project

In Finland, research is guided by the National Board on Research Integrity (TENK), the National Advisory Board on Social Welfare and Health care ethics (ETENE), the National committee on Medical Research Ethics-Tukija (TENK, 2023). This project was guided by the research ethical guidelines of TENK and SAMK as follows: A research permit was obtained from SAMK after approval of the thesis plan, where the concern parties signed before the author proceeded with the project. The author also underwent appropriate training from Samk thesis courses obtaining adequate skills necessary for the project. The project was done with quality which reflected in the design, methodology and the resources used (TENK, 2023). The thesis adopted a consistent and well-designed methodology, the Waterfall model of project management. This ensured a systematic and transparent process, and appropriate sources were used to obtain relevant information for the thesis thereby ensuring reliability and accountability of the project.

The author was mindful of cultural sensitivity to avoid misunderstanding when interacting with the client. Communication with the stakeholder (client) was conducted with openness and a feedback mechanism to validate the product was used, thereby ensuring fairness and neutrality as well as honesty and transparency in developing, communicating, implementing, reporting and reviewing the product (TENK, 2023). This thesis clearly outlined its purpose, objectives, methods and data sources.

Research requires respecting colleagues, research participants, the society, cooperation partners and the environment (TENK, 2023, p.12). All partners concerned with this project were respected. For instance, project permits were obtained from SAMK, the need of the cooperation partner was respected by producing a quality digital orientation guide in English which is interactive, comprehensive, accessible and compatible with all electronic devices and user friendly. Consent was obtained from the client before collecting their feedback on the product. Gender neutral language was used all through the guide.

Lastly, research should ensure authorship, publication, and dissemination (TENK, 2023). The author appropriately acknowledged the works of other authors used in the project by maintaining proper citation and referencing. Thus, respecting the guidelines of thesis reporting and publishing in SAMK (TENK, 2023, p.14; SAMK, 2024).

## 6 DISCUSSION

The focus of this thesis was to produce an electronic orientation material in English for Culture house Lumo Pori. The thesis highlights relevant, well structured, accessible and interactive orientation guide which is facilitating cultural and social integration for international students. By using the waterfall model of project management, the thesis ensured a systematic and methodical approach to identify the needs of the user and client and to deliver a polished product to meet the needs. The product addresses several gaps, specifically the lack of adequate information in English for non-Finnish speaking students. Its content spans community engagement opportunities, cultural acclimation and mental wellbeing resources tailored to the context of Lumo.

Research has established the relevance of orientation to international students in a new environment. International students encounter challenges which include cultural shock, social isolation and difficulty navigating unfamiliar systems (Shen et al., 2020; Şahin & Göksoy, 2023). In addition, orientation plays a pivotal role in reducing anxiety, fostering mental wellbeing, and promoting social integration (Tas, 2013). The orientation material for Culture house Lumo would enable international students to adapt easily to the Finnish cultural and social environment while addressing their academic and personal needs.

The process of cultural adjustment is essential for international students. Research has shown that orientation programs on cultural interaction experiences help students cope with cultural shock and reduces feelings of disappointment and unhappiness (Güvendir (2018). Thus, Lumo's orientation

material would expose international students to services where they will learn more about Finnish customs, social norms, and traditions, provide guidelines for interacting with the local community and serve as a resource to help students navigate cultural differences and foster cross cultural relationships.

Furthermore, international students would have the opportunity to engage in interactive activities such as music, arts, craft, and others which will enhance their social interaction skills, collaboration, and overall wellbeing. This aligns with one of the relevance of orientation for international students which is to provide opportunities for networking and social integration (Mohzana, 2024).

The project also raises broader implication for future orientation programs. It demonstrates how cultural workshops like Lumo can play a central role in enhancing inclusivity and supporting international students living in Finland. It also emphasises the need for continuous evaluation and updates to orientation material to keep them effective and relevant in a dynamic environment.

## 7 CONCLUSION

This thesis achieved its purpose successfully to create an electronic orientation guide in English to support international students explore the services and opportunities offered by Culture house Lumo. The final product is a comprehensive, user-friendly, interactive digital guidebook that meet the needs of the client and its target audience. The potential transformative nature of the project is enhancing the mental wellbeing and social integration of international students. Additionally, the guide empowers users to navigate their unfamiliar environment with ease and confidence.

The following recommendations could be considered. The orientation guide can be reviewed periodically and updated to reflect changes in Lumo's programs and activities and the evolving needs of international students.

Lumo could establish a feedback mechanism to regularly collect feedback from users to enhance the content, usability, and relevance of the orientation guide. The orientation guide could gain further visibility through university channels, international students' associations, and local community platforms to enhance its usability and impact.

Lumo can engage with other organisations and educational institutions to share resources and strategies for enhancing international students' support.

Doing this thesis and designing the electronic orientation guide has empowered the author with skills such as communication, writing, teamwork as well as learning more Finnish vocabulary.

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## APPENDICES

**Appendix 1: Project Feedback Form**

**Title of project:** Orientation guidebook for international students

**Client:** Culture House Lumo Pori

*Instruction: Please rate your satisfaction with the guidebook by marking an "X" with the option that suits you.*

a) Content of the guidebook:

Not Satisfied

Satisfied

Extremely Satisfied

b) The layout of the guidebook:

Not Satisfied

Satisfied

Extremely Satisfied

What can be improved?-----

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***Thank you for the feedback!***