

Enhancing the Collaboration between Finnish and
International UASs Students
Finnish Student's Perspective

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Abstract

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<p>Name of Degree</p> <p>Bachelor of Business Administration</p>		
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Nowadays, internationalization at home is the developmental trend in higher education institutions. As a matter of fact, it is important for a UAS in Finland to develop itself as a high-quality international education environment for students. The aim of the thesis is to determine the expectation and experience of Finnish students in regards to their international classmates and from that, locate the existing gaps between local students' expectations and reality. Solutions would be discussed to fulfill the gaps based on Finnish students' perspective.</p> <p>The thesis applies inductive approach and uses both quantitative and qualitative research methods for gathering data. The research employs both primary and secondary data. Primary data came from survey that was distributed to Finnish students, secondary data come from published sources such as books, documents, records. The theoretical part of the thesis covers international students in Finland, international of higher education and the internationalization at home. It also defines the concepts of student satisfaction as the customer focus.</p> <p>Research outcomes show several expectations and experiences of Finnish students on their international classmates. For instance, the expectation to improve language skills and the experience of cultural diversity. The findings of this research also show several gaps between the local students' expectation and reality such as the gap of cultural difference. Through the above findings, the research suggests UASs ideas to improve and enhance the collaboration between Finnish and international students which base on Finnish students' perspective. For example, UASs can provide compulsory cultural courses to reduce the cultural shock for local students.</p>		
<p>Keywords: Expectation, experience, internationalization at home, customer satisfaction, services quality, Finnish students</p>		

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1 INTRODUCTION

Finland is well-known for its educational background as the heart of the Finnish welfare society. The system with the equal educational opportunities structure, is highly ranked in several international organizations. It provides numerous suitable education levels for people from different ages, genders and nationalities. The teaching language is not only in Finnish and Swedish but also in English and Russian. According to Higher Education in 2016-2017, there were 450 English programmes for students to choose. Scholarships with different standards were also available for non-EU/EEA students who follow English-taught programmes both in Bachelor's and Master's programmes. (Study in Finland 2017.)

The Finnish higher education system has two main sectors: universities (14 schools) and universities of applied sciences (UASs) (23 schools). The educational purpose of these sectors are diverse. Universities are the true academical institutions to study, the basic purpose of it is to enhance the highest level of education for students based on scientific research. UASs, on the other hand, is the combination between education and working life. One of the main missions of UASs is to prepare degrees to meet the requirements of both local and the global labor market as well as support the development of societies. Therefore, during the studying period, students have different opportunities to participate in several real-life projects in line with companies and institutions to gain experiences from real life cases. Using these learning methods, UASs are already well-known as one of the top educational systems in the world. UASs also bring the practice of internationalization home for Finns. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2018.)

Every year, hundred of international students start their study in Finland 's UASs. The huge number of newcomers coming from different cultures bring the "internationalization at home" atmosphere to UASs. (Irma 2016.) It gives both Finnish and international students the chance to study, work and live among different nationalities. However, " internationalization at home" might cause some effects on Finnish students since they need to cope with the cultural diversity. The thesis, based on Finnish student's perspective, aims to improve the collaboration between Finnish and international students within UASs in Finland.

1.1 Background of the Research

The internationalization of higher education is a worldwide phenomenon. In Finland, since the 2000s, the total number of international students who follow their study paths in both universities and UASs has increased significantly. After 2005, the growth percentage has increased around 10% every year. Figure 1 demonstrates the total number of international students as well as the number of students in each type of university. (Irma 2016.)

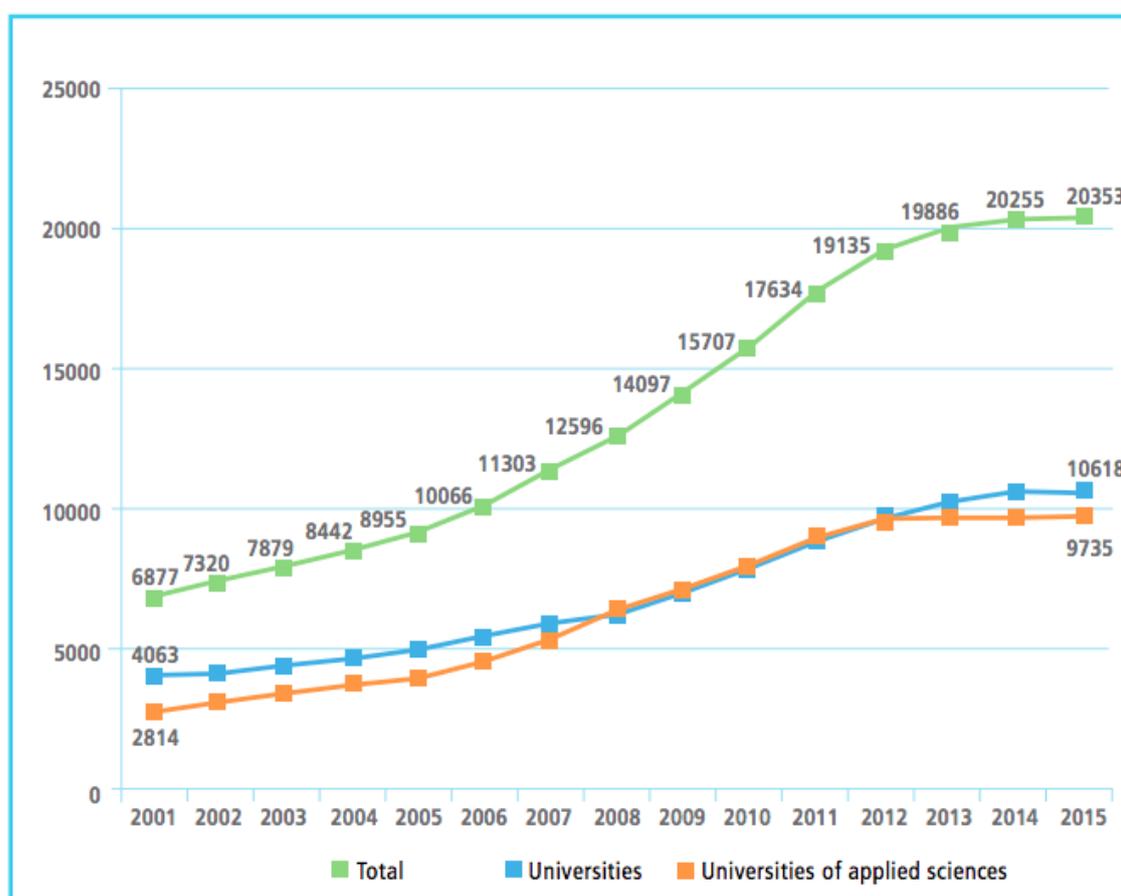


Figure 1 Number of International students in Finland from 2001 to 2015 (Irma 2016)

It can be seen from Figure 1 that the total number of international students has increased dramatically to 20,353 individuals in 2015 - the highest number within 15 years - for both types of universities in Finland. The number of people who choose UASs in 2015 also present half of total – 9,735 students.

The huge amount of international students in the recent year has brought out the cultural diversify for Finland's education since the students come from numerous different nations. Table 1 shows the top most common countries of origin of students who choose Finland as their next studying place.

Table 1 The common countries of origin of international students in 2005 and 2015 (Irma 2016)

Universities				UAS's			
2015		2005		2015		2005	
China	1215	China	696	Russia	2112	China	748
Russia	933	Russia	556	Vietnam	1495	Russia	558
India	625	Estonia	352	Nepal	896	Estonia	277
Pakistan	574	Sweden	314	China	591	Sweden	253
Iran	548	Germany	241	Estonia	418	Kenya	252
Vietnam	418	India	146	Nigeria	307	Nigeria	119
Germany	392	United States	146	Kenya	279	Ghana	110
Estonia	316	United Kingdom	135	Germany	253	Germany	82
Nepal	308	Spain	108	Sweden	217	Vietnam	79
Bangladesh	307	Italy	107	Bangladesh	205	Ethiopia	77

It can be seen from Table 1 that international students coming to Finland for their higher education come from destinations such as Asia and Africa. These students, with different mother tongues, background, cultural, and social behaviors, together create a multicultural society within the university classrooms.

Cultural diversity tends to have both positive and negative effects on students, even for the Finnish students. Not much research has been done relating to Finns' experiences about cultural diversity within UASs. The thesis, therefore, concentrates on identifying the experiences as well as the expectations of Finnish students. This topic should be studied to help UASs improve the experiences of the Finns so to be more successful.

1.2 Objectives of the Research & Research Questions

The thesis aims to bring out a deeper understanding of the effect of cultural diversity on Finnish students. The main objective of the thesis is to analyze the current experiences as well as expectations of the Finnish students in UASs while studying with international classmates. From these expectations and experiences aspects, the gaps in between are determined and the suggestions to enhance or improve it would be provided.

Classifying research questions is a significant step for any research project. Identifying the right question provides both researcher and reader the specific inquiry that would be investigated and answered (Collins & Hussey 2014, 105). The main research question of the thesis is:

- What are the Finnish students' experiences and expectations when studying with international classmates?

In order to help the author answer the main research question, several sub-questions are developed, such as:

- What experiences do Finnish students have about international students?
- What are the expectations Finnish students have about their international classmates while studying together?
- What are the gaps between expectations and reality?
- What should be done in order to meet Finnish student expectations?

As a result, answering these questions helps the author attain a deeper understanding of the Finnish student's experiences as well as realize the expectations. Then by comparing these aspects, the gap in reality would be determined and filled to meet the targeted customer's demand.

1.3 Research Limitations

Research papers always have their own limitations. Since this study focuses on expectations and experiences of Finnish students with classmates of other nationalities within UASs, the author choose Finnish students as the research targeted's group. This group includes both students who are studying and students

who have already graduated from English studying programmes. The scope of this research is within two UASs: Lahti University of Applied Sciences (Lamk) and Haaga-Helia of Applied Sciences (Haaga-Helia).

1.4 Research Approach and Research Methodology

Research Approach

Research approach is an important step to form the theories. There are two main types of research approaches: deductive and inductive. Choosing different approaches gives the author different ways to complete the thesis. Deductive approach is used mostly to prove the scientific principles, it starts by examining different theories of the research topic, then the hypothesis created and tested to demonstrate the theories. Beside, the approach is usually attached to quantitative research method to collect data. In contrast, inductive approach aims for a deeper understanding of the meanings humans attach to events. The approach begins by collecting all necessary data and based on that, new theories are formed. Inductive approach is usually used in qualitative research methods to gather data. (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill 2009, 124-127.)

Figure 2 demonstrates the basic difference of deductive and inductive approach.

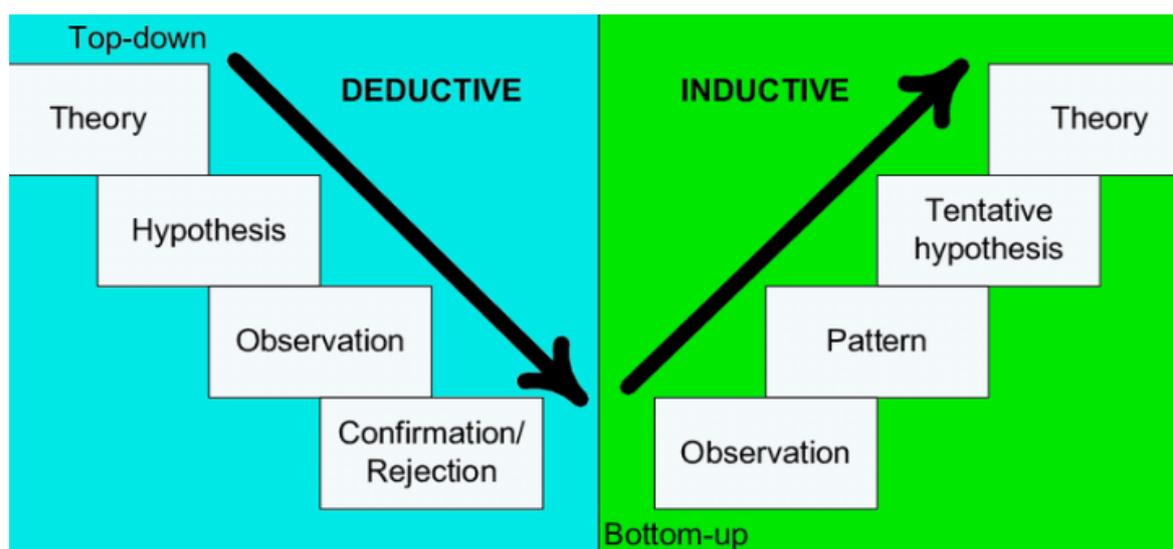


Figure 2 The difference between deductive and inductive approach (Gabriel 2013)

It can be seen from Figure 2 the difference between deductive or so-called top-down approach and Inductive or so-called bottom-up approach. The aim of inductive approach is to create new theories emerging from collected data. In contrast, deductive approach aims to test the theories. Whether using deductive or inductive approach, it is based on the main goal of the research. The methods are suited perfectly to sum up a new theory, test a new hypothesis or solve the research questions should be chosen. (Gabriel 2013.)

The research begins by observing new theory from the gathered data which are the experiences and expectations of the targeted customers. Thus, inductive approach is the best choice to reach the goal of the thesis.

Research Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative methods are two common types of research methods. Qualitative research method is developed mainly to study the nature of phenomena, it can be described as a method that use the numerical data to present or to demonstrate the theories. In contrast, qualitative research method is developed to study cultural and social phenomena. This method collects non-numerical data for analysis. (Myers 2013, 8.)

Quantitative method focuses on survey, numerical methods, laboratory experiments, simulation and uses deductive approach to test the hypothesis. The collected data in using this method emphasizes numbers more than words. On the other hand, qualitative method collects its data using interview, case study research, text, action research and uses the inductive approach to conclude the theories. What, Why, How and When are four typical questions which qualitative researcher might ask for the main research question. (Myers 2013, 6-8.)

Since the thesis aims to fulfill the gap between the experiences and expectations of Finnish students about their international classmates, the author applied both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

1.5 Data Collection

Collecting data has two basic types: Primary and Secondary. Primary sources use data which is gathered directly by the researcher and that data is unpublished. In contrast, secondary sources are existing data (such as histories, documents) and

visual materials (such as records, movies). Secondary data are collected by other researchers for their purpose and have been published. There are numerous ways to collect primary data: interviews, fieldwork, surveys, questionnaires, meetings. The collection of secondary data comes from newspapers articles, books or report, etc. (Kovalainen, & Eriksson, 82-122.)

This study involves both primary and secondary sources. For the primary source, data would be collected by surveying Finnish students. Secondary data are selected from trustworthy sources such as reports, published books, electronic sources which relate to the thesis topic. Figure 3 shows the research methods which the author used to collect data.

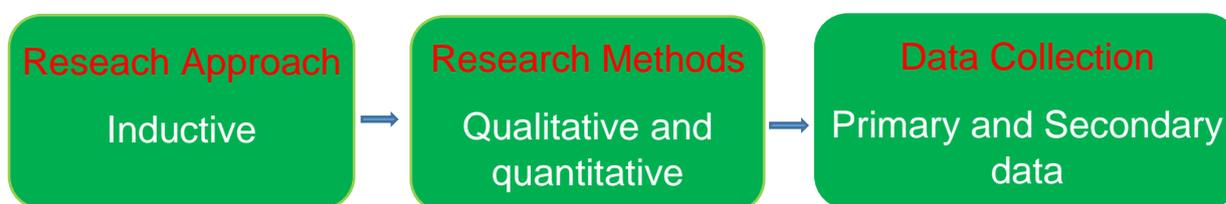


Figure 3 Research approach, research methodology and data collection methods of the research

It can be seen from Figure 3 that the method approach of the thesis is based on the inductive approach, empirical data is gathered by survey and the author uses both primary and secondary methods to collect data. Quantitative research methods is applied because the collected data is sent out using electronic devices, qualitative research methods is also used since the survey's questions are open-end questions.

1.6 Thesis Structure

The below figure illustrates the thesis structure with each chapter described briefly.

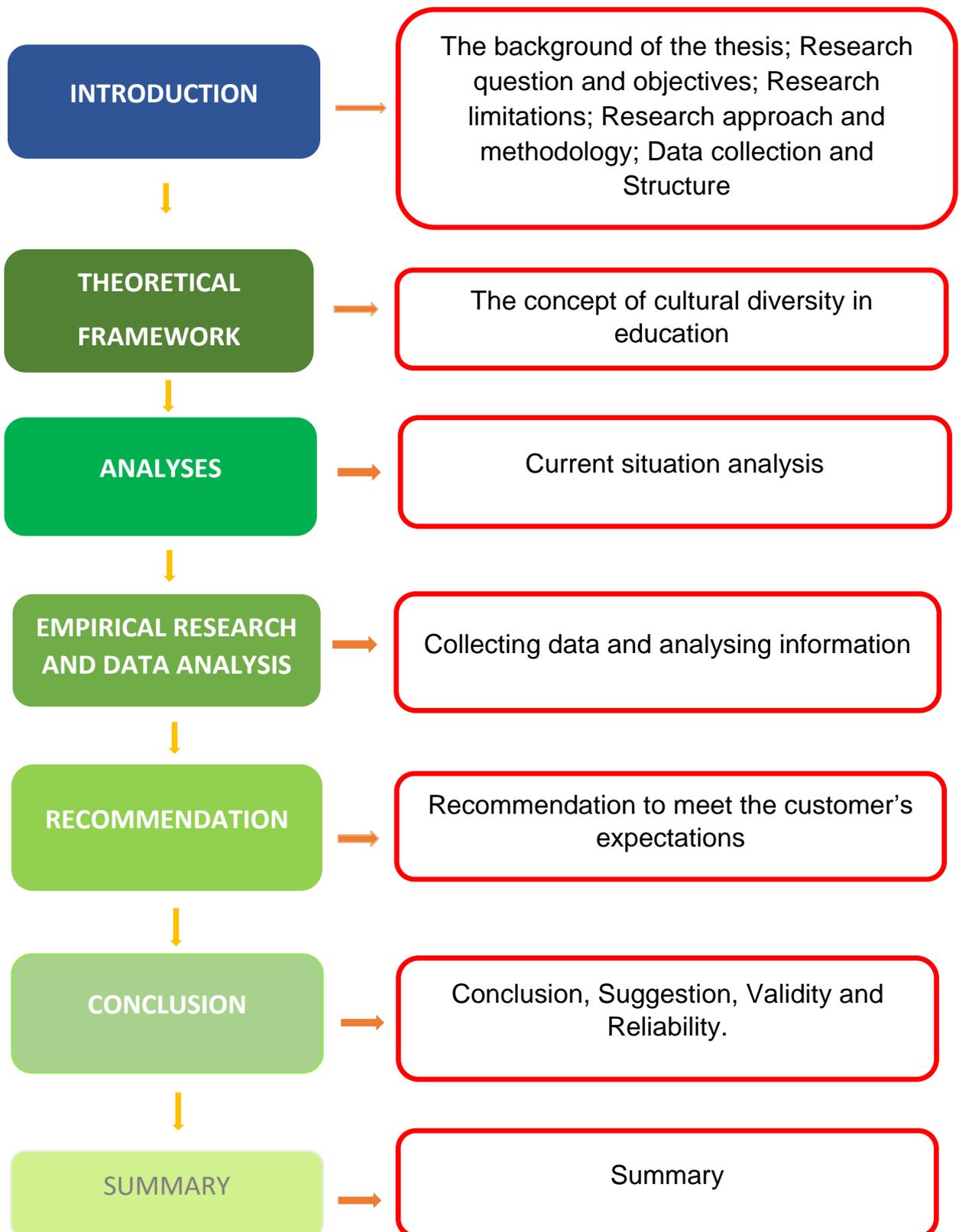


Figure 4 Thesis structure of the reseach

Chapter 1: This is the introduction chapter. It introduces the background of the thesis, the objectives and the thesis main question with some sub-questions. It also includes the limitations of the research. The research approach, methodology and data collecting methods are also presented.

Chapter 2: This chapter is the theoretical framework of the thesis. It describes the definition of international student in Finland, internationalization in higher education as well as the internationalization at home program.

Chapter 3: This chapter focuses on analyzing the current situation of student satisfaction as the customer focus as well as the service quality, experience and expectation of customer.

Chapter 4: This empirical research and data analysis chapter determines how the research data was collected and analyzed.

Chapter 5: Based on Chapter 4, this part brings out the recommendations for UASs to improve or enhance the collaboration between Finnish and international students.

Chapter 6: This chapter answers the thesis question and sub-question of the research, the validity and reliability of the writing are evaluated and recommendations for further research are also mentioned.

Chapter 7: The final chapter of the research summaries the whole thesis.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 International Student in Finland

Every year numerous international students choose Finland to continue their higher education paths in various institutions such as traditional universities or UASs. According to Statistics Finland, in 2017 20,362 international students came to this country to study, with 9,601 choosing to study at UASs. These students come from different countries from around the world. Many international students choose Finland due to the high quality in education and living standards. Moreover, Finland supplies various programmes taught in the English language in many majors such as international business, health and social field, information technology and other fields. (Statistics Finland, 2017a.)

As mentioned above, international students in Finland come from various countries with different cultures. Table below demonstrates the top most common nationalities of international degree students in Finland 2017.

Table 2 Top 15 common countries of nationalities of international degree student in Finland in 2017 (Statistics Finland, 2017b)

	universities	UAS	Total
Russia	846	1714	2560
Vietnam	616	1831	2447
China	1083	526	1609
Nepal	309	801	1110
India	666	104	770
Estonia	265	426	691
Pakistan	542	136	678
Bangladesh	424	193	617
Germany	373	244	617
Iran	491	73	564
Nigeria	235	272	507
Sweden	225	259	484
The United States	291	163	454
Italy	275	87	362
Great Britain	196	145	341

It can be seen from above table that students who come from Asia (Vietnam, China, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran) account for one third of the total international students. Europe (Russia, Germany, Sweden, Italy, Great Britain) stands for 1/5 of the total, the rest belong to Africa and other continents. (Statistics Finland, 2017b). The huge amount programmes taught in the English language are offered for students is also the reason that many international students choose Finland to study. Table 3 illustrates the main majors which are selected by international undergraduates.

Table 3 Field of education of international student in Finnish higher education institutions in 2017 (Statistic Finland, 2017a)

Universities	lkm	%
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	2210	21 %
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)	1775	16 %
Humanities	1688	16 %
Business, administration and law	1389	13 %
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	1268	12 %
Social sciences, journalism and information	897	8 %
Health and welfare	593	6 %
Education	572	5 %
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	273	3 %
Services	96	1 %
Total	10761	100 %

Universities of Applied Sciences	lkm	%
Business, administration and law	3647	38 %
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	1798	19 %
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)	1767	18 %
Health and welfare	1290	13 %
Services	817	9 %
Humanities	217	2 %
Education	34	0 %
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	19	0 %
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	11	0 %
Social sciences, journalism and information	1	0 %
Total	9601	100 %

The above table demonstrates the most common major which an international student chooses while studying in Finland. Students in universities mostly choose engineering, manufacturing and construction (21%), ICT and Humanities (16%). While in UASs, the mostly favored major is business, administration and law (38%), Engineering, manufacturing and construction; ICT and Health and welfare are the following interested fields (sequenced: 19%; 18% and 13%). (Statistic Finland, 2017a.)

The numerous number of international students in different fields within education institutions in Finland bring the “internationalization at home” environment to Finnish students. Therefore, they should take this advantage to prepare themselves as global citizens for their future career paths.

2.2 Internationalization of Higher Education

Internationalization of higher education is not a new phenomenon. It is a process that the institutions use in teaching, research and service functions to integrate the international and intercultural dimension into its activities. This is considered as one way for a country not only to respond to the globalization’s impact but also respects the individual ‘s identity of the nation at the same time. (Qiang 2003, 2.)

According to Qiang (2003, 1-2), there are several factors leading to the importance of internationalization in the higher education sector. The first priority of graduates is to meet the demand for the development of society, economy and high-skilled labor markets. Therefore, higher education needs to be adequately equipped and prepared for the future globalization. Besides, the scope and level of the different scientific research and the size of the investment in different majors need the effort of international collaboration. Secondly, international students who pay tuition fees and living costs aboard, have become one of the main revenue sources for institutions and national economies. Moreover, the involvement of private companies to deliver knowledge and new information in the education sector using modern communication technologies demonstrates the unclear function of the government.

It is clear that internationalization in higher education not only prepares students for their future paths, but it also brings potential benefits for the country. According to Carswell (2010), different countries take advantage of internalization in higher education for different purposes. For example, China promotes the development of technology, culture and science between the country and Western countries by attracting international students or exchange students. This also aims to tighten the friendship as well as assert national status with other nations. Australia achieves its economic goals and diplomatic relationships by providing numerous international education programmes for international students. Australians also believe that exchange students help Australia to introduce the country worldwide as well as link

it with other foreign nations. Germany draws international students to increase its university recognition, promote the economic, academic and democratic development of the country. (Carswell 2010, 8-9.)

The European Union (EU) also takes advantage of the internationalization of higher education which includes the promotion of intercultural understanding by the collaboration with other non-European countries. For United Kingdom (UK), the huge number of international students helps the country build a highly-skilled workforce, connects UK's citizen with other people worldwide, opens doors for trade and investment as well as increases the political influence. (Carswell 2010, 9-10.)

The above-mentioned statements demonstrate that internationalization in higher education is the effective part to cope with the globalization process, it gives students a chance to study abroad and helps them to prepare for their career paths as well as to meet the requirement of market labor. Internationalization in higher education, at the same time, also brings huge potential benefits for several countries such as economic, scientific, technical and culture. (Carswell 2010, 9-10.)

2.3 Internationalization at Home

Internationalization at home is the process in which the dimensions of intercultural, international and global are integrated purposely into the formal or informal teaching and learning systems for all students within a country. This means that students can have the international learning environment and cultural diversity experiences with different nationalities without going abroad to study. The programme aims to help all students enhance their own soft skills, attitudes, thinking, knowledge about the intercultural and international dimensions without joining the mobility programmes. Students can extend their study outside the normal learning context and home campus. This might be done by working and learning with local community of cultural, religious or ethnic. They also can apply the alternative learning system or other similar systems to attach local and international students and take advantage of the diversity within the classroom. (Beelen & Jones, 2015.)

The total number of international students of 2017 in Finnish higher education institutions, as mentioned above, was 20,362 while the total number of students was 297,179 (Cimo, 2017). This amount of international students only account for nearly

7% of total undergraduates. Figure 5 demonstrates the amount of exchange students of higher education level where from and to Finland from 2007 to 2017.

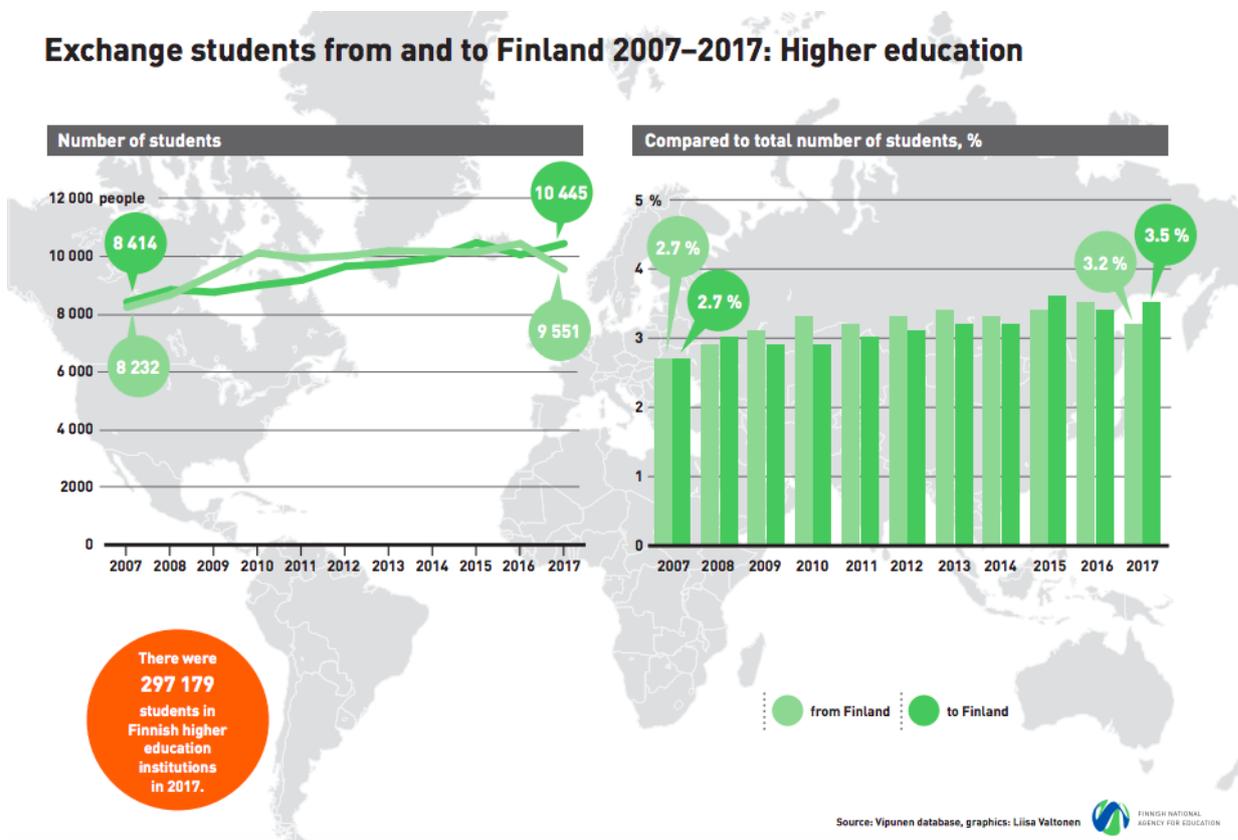


Figure 5 Total number of exchange student from and to Finland between 2007-2017 (Cimo, 2017)

It can be seen from Figure 5 that in 2017, that only 3.2% (account for 9,551 individuals) of Finland's students join the exchange period. And, around 3.5% of international students (stand for 10,445) choose Finland as an exchange destination. (Cimo, 2017.)

Comparing the total number of higher education students with the total number of international students, students who join the exchange period and the ones who choose Finland as a short-term study destination, there are still many students who do not choose to study abroad. Educational institutions therefore, need to apply the

“internationalization at home” in the appropriate ways, not only for international but also for Finnish students to fill the gaps, enhance the existing experiences as well as meet the expectations of students.

3 ANALYSES

This research considers Finnish students, who choose UASs as the destination of their higher education as customers. Therefore, this chapter discusses the idea of service quality, customer experiences and customer satisfaction. It also shows the reasons why it is important to enhance the level of customer's content as well as ways to manage and improve customer satisfaction.

3.1 Service Quality

3.1.1 Services

Payne (1993, 6) determines service as

An interaction with customers or with property in their possession, and does not result in a transfer of ownership. A change in condition may occur and production of the service may or may not be closely associated with a physical product .

Lehtinen (1983, 21) defines the concept of service as “ an activity or a series of activities which take place in interactions with a contact person or a physical machine and which provides consumer satisfaction.”

According to Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler (2009, 4), service is the act, process or performance which is created or provided by an individual or company to another individual or company. Kotler and Keller (2012, 356) characteries service as

An activity or benefit that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Its production may or may not be tied to a physical product.

There are several types of services which need to be distinguished. According to Johann (2015, 9), there are four basic characteristics of service which need to be differentiated: intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability. The below table demonstrates the service types as well as the marketing response suggestion of each characteristic.

Table 4 Services characteristics and suggested marketing responses (Johann 2015, 11)

Services characteristics	Implications	Responses
Intangibility	Difficulties with assessing quality Increased level of uncertainty Perceived high level of risk	Adding physical evidence Developing strong brands Facilitating recommendation Stressing tangible elements in advertising
Inseparability	Production process affects the service outcome Employees affect the service outcome Customers affect each other	Monitoring and controlling the service production process Management of consumer-producer interaction Precisely defining target market
Heterogeneity	Different levels of service quality Employees affect the service quality	Quality control procedures Selecting, training, motivating and controlling service personnel
Perishability	Services cannot be stored, resold, and returned	Management of demand Promotion and price policies

Intangibility: This characteristic refers to the non-physical nature of service. Since most of the provided services are the performance or action on intangible goods, they cannot be seen, tasted, felt or touched in the same way as customer usually has with tangible products. Therefore, customers sometime feel it is hard to test the service before actually purchasing it. The lack of this physical evidence brings an uncertain feeling for a customer in selecting the most suitable service among competing providers. In some circumstances such as treatment or diagnosis, customer might not deeply understand the provided service performance even after the delivery is over. (Johann 2015, 10.)

Inseparability: While most products are created first then sold and consumed by a customer, this characteristic of service emphasizes the companion between the production and consumption process. For instance, teaching or consulting require customers to pay for the services first, then services are only produced and provided when customers are present. These kinds of services also require the interaction between the buyer and provider during the consumption process. Therefore, providers' behavior plays an important role in enhancing the positive experience for customers. (Johann 2015, 10.)

Heterogeneity: In contrast with tangible goods heterogeneity services are very variable. These kinds of services such as babysitting or hairdressing are provided usually by different individuals, thus, the performed service will not be consistent. Therefore, the result of service quality might be at different levels for different customers. Moreover, customers are also taking part in the service production process, hence it is much harder for providers to control and monitor the consistency outcome of services. (Johann 2015, 10.)

Perishability: Unlike normal goods which can be stored, resold and returned once customers are dissatisfied, services cannot be saved, resold, returned or stored. For example, an airline cannot sell its seats on a plane that has already taken off. Therefore, providers must pay attention to their customer's demand and capacity utilization in order to avoid and minimize the absence of consumption. (Johann 2015, 10.)

3.1.2 Service Quality

Service quality is considered one of the essential elements of customer perceptions. Service quality is evaluated depending on the types of each service. For example, if there is the combination between physical products and customer services (vehicle services, electronic services, etc), service quality would be estimated by customer satisfaction; with pure service such as education, health care, etc, service quality is determined by customer's evaluation. (Zeithaml et al., 2009, 87.)

A customer usually judges the quality of service based on several elements which is suitable for their purposes. There are five dimensions of service quality that a customer uses to evaluate a service quality: Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy and Tangibles. (Zeithaml et al., 2009, 87.)

Reliability is considered as the most important element within five dimensions. It is determined as the ability to perform the promised service consistently and precisely. Customer always wants to co-operate with companies that are able to provide what they said such as the promises about price, delivery, service outcomes, etc. (Zeithaml et al., 2009, 89-90.)

Responsiveness is the readiness of company to help customer and to provide service quickly. Responsiveness focuses on the thoughtfulness and swiftness to

handling customer's problem such as questions or complaints. This dimension is evaluated depending on the time customer has to wait to get the response for their problems. Thus, it would be diminished when customer needs to wait on the telephone or cannot access the company's website. (Zeithaml et al., 2009, 90.)

Assurance is described as the ability which company and its employee have to transport the trust and confidence to customer through employee's knowledge and politeness. Assurance is important to some specific services sectors when customer cannot evaluate the results or realize the high level of riskiness such as insurance, banking or medical. Trust and confidence are usually formed through the connection of the employees who link the company and customers. Thus firm tries to build loyalty between individual customers and key contact employee. (Zeithaml et al., 2009, 90.)

Empathy is defined as the effort to care and to understand customer. Customer usually wants to feel understood as well as important to the service provider company. Through empathy, small service companies can realize customer's need and provide exactly what they want. In this way, small service companies can compete with big firms in the same industries. (Zeithaml et al., 2009, 91.)

Tangibles is known as physical evidence of the provided service such as personnel, physical equipment, etc. This dimension is important with company since it is used to evaluate the quality of service by new customers. Tangibles is also important to some specific service industries in which customer stop by to receive the service such as hotel, restaurant, movie theater, etc. (Zeithaml et al., 2009, 91.)

3.1.3 Perceived Service Quality

Perceiving the total service quality is one of the main factors that affect customer satisfaction. Service providers need to deeply understand how customers evaluate a product and service in order to manage these evaluations into the positive ways that bring benefit for a company (Grönroos, 2007, 76). The figure below demonstrates that the model of perceived service quality is complete only when the expectation of a customer is fulfilled by the experienced quality.

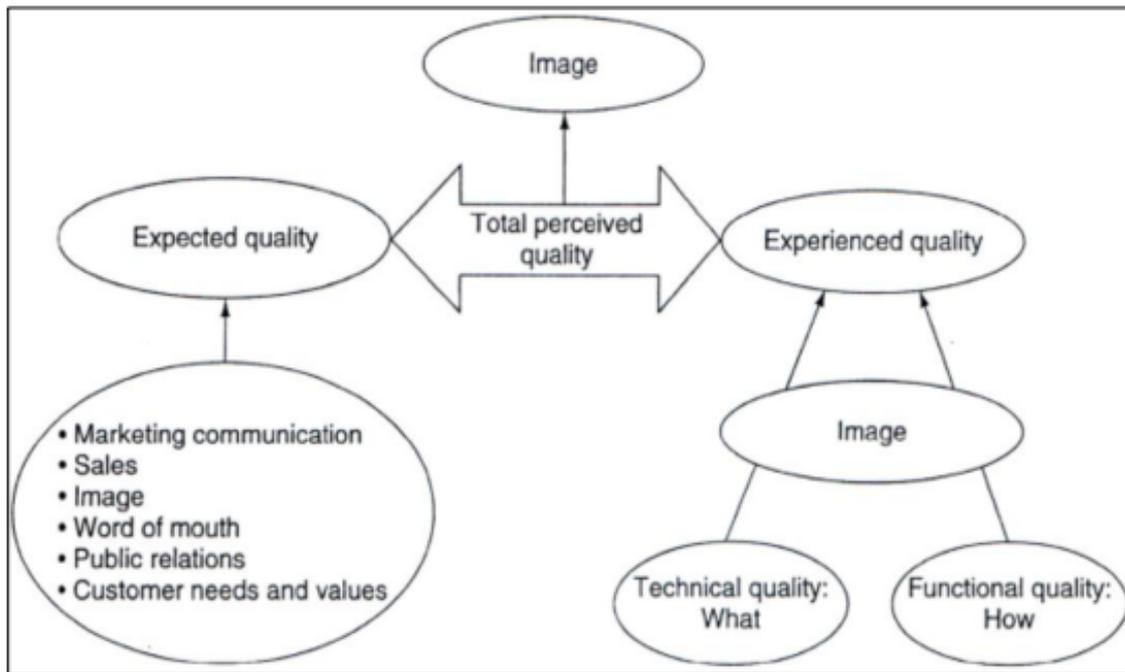


Figure 6 The model of the total perceived quality (Grönroos 2007, 77)

As seen in the above figure, the total perceived quality is formed when customers expectations are fulfilled by the quality of the experience of the service. If customer has some kind of expectations that is far from their actual experienced quality, the total perceived quality will be low even when the service has good quality. Therefore, the gap between experienced quality and expected quality need to be minimized in order to get a better result of total service quality later. (Grönroos, 2007, 76.)

Expected quality involves numerous factors such as marketing communication, sales, image, word of mouth, etc. Marketing communication is the factor that a company can officially control. It includes advertising through media, direct mail to potential customer, sale's promotion programs, word of mouth using the Internet and website. The image of company is the factor that is formed by a previous purchased experience. When a company promises too much or customer has many unrealistic expectations, customer needs and value factors can affect significantly to the total perceived quality. (Grönroos, 2007, 77.)

Experienced quality includes two dimensions: the technical quality and the functional quality. Technical quality often is the answer for the “what” or the outcome, what did customer get after the consumption happens. Functional quality is the answer for “how”, how do customer receive the service. These dimensions are both essential parts of the experienced quality. (Grönroos, 2007, 77.)

3.2 Customer Expectation

Customer expectations are the beliefs that customers have about some value or benefits that a product or services will deliver to the customer once they consume it. These expectations are the outcome of learning process, formed quickly and can play an important role when customers are making their decision and very hard to change (Customer expectation, 2018). Customer expectations in general are the wants, feelings and ideas that buyers have when they purchase a particular product and service (Anastasia, 2017). Basic assumptions that a customer has about a brand, product and service are the customer expectations (John, 2017).

Customer expectations have many types which companies need to understand in order to satisfy their customers. Implicit expectations are formed by current standard of performance such as the evaluation of the company’s products and service with its competitors. Explicit expectations belong to the psychological objective that customers have about relating to the product’s quality and service’s performance. Interpersonal expectations are created when product or service need to be regularly checked to ensure the property of functions. With this kind of expectations, customer often concentrates on the existing relationship between them and the seller. Dynamic performance expectations are shaped through purchased product and services that evolve over time. These changes happen to meet customer’s business targets, wants or needs, etc. (Anastasia, 2017.)

Zeithaml et al. (2009, 53) divide the types of customer expectation into two levels: desired service and adequate service. Desired service is the highest expectation. In this level customers always expect to get product and service which is close to the highest performance level. It reflects a customer’s thought about what product and services should have and can be. For instance, when a 4th year student who is ready to graduate and comes to the student office to ask for help to find a job in nearfuture, at this time, his/her expectations are likely a right job with the right major,

high salary and near his/her home. These expectations reflect the desire that this student believes that the student office will offer.

In contrary to the desired service, adequate service is the acceptable threshold level of service. This level shows the minimum level of services which customer can accept for the product and service without dissatisfaction. Adequate service level forms when customers realize that although they want to receive the highest level of service, it is impossible to receive that wished performance. Instead, they accept to get a minimum level of service. For example, although the above student is a skilled employee and he/she desires a good job in the future, he/she cannot have it due to the crisis of the world economy. In this case, he/she accepts to take a job as a waitress in the restaurant or a trainee without salary in a company. (Zeithaml et al., 2009, 53.)

As discussed above, desired service is the highest performance level of service which customers hope to receive while adequate service is just an acceptable level of service. The gap between desired service and adequate service is called "Zone of Tolerance". (Zeithaml et al., 2009, 56.) The below figure shows the different expectation levels of customer to product and service.

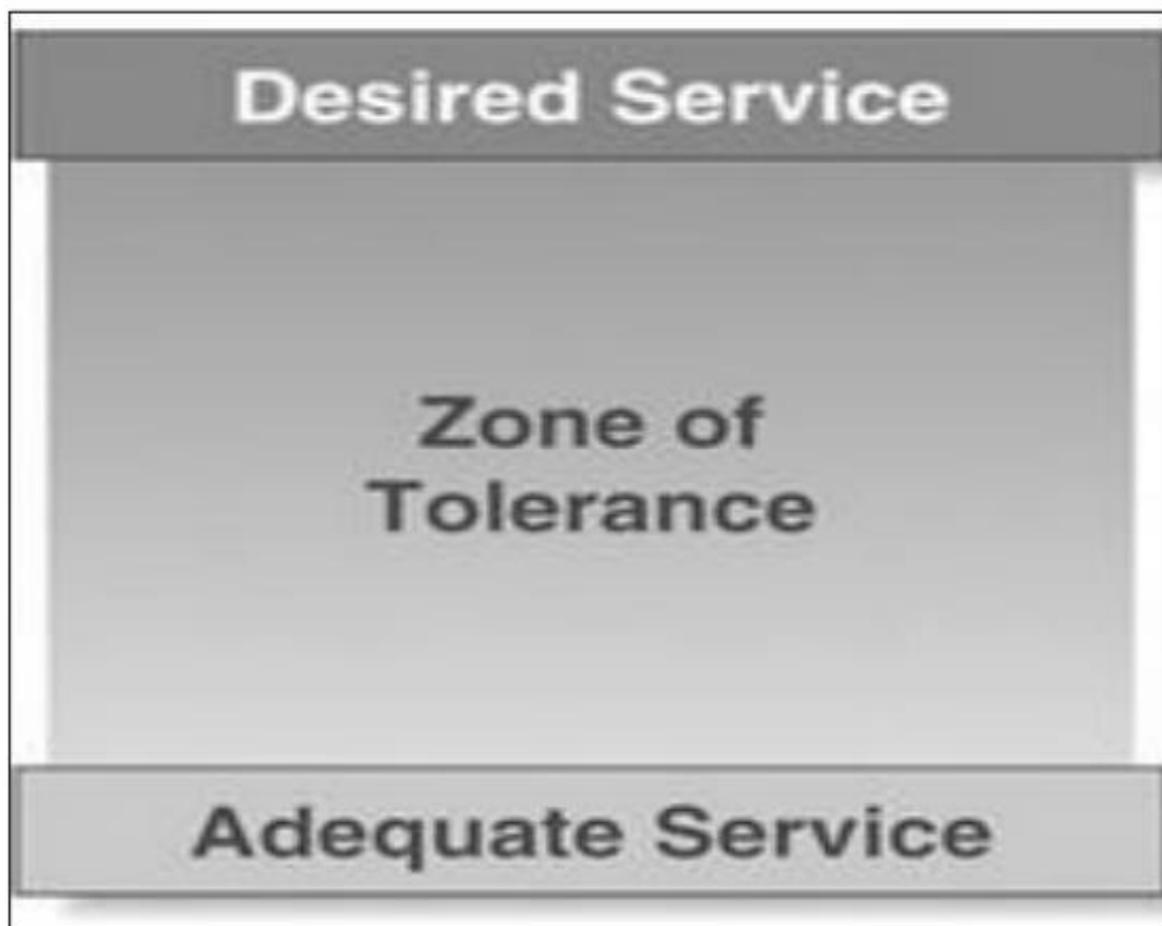


Figure 7 Different level of customer expectation (Zeithaml et al., 2009, 56)

As mentioned above, Zone of Tolerance shows the gap between adequate service and desired service. If a product or service meets or even exceeds customer's highest expectation, they will be very satisfied and happy. If customer receives the purchase which is between their adequate service and desired service, they consider it as normal. In case product and service drop below the customer adequate service level, they will be dissatisfied with the company. For example, customers who are waiting to check out at the supermarket tend to accept the waiting time around 10 minutes. If it only takes 4-5 minutes for the check out process, customer be will surprised and satisfied with the excellent service. If the checkout time is around 10 minutes, customers will not care about the service. In contrary, more than 10 minutes of waiting make customers angry and dissatisfied quickly. (Zeithaml et al., 2009, 55.)

3.3 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is defined by customer's evaluation of services or products which they receive, no matter whether these services or products have met their needs and expectations. If these kinds of goods fail to meet the customer's needs and expectations, it is defined as dissatisfaction with the services and products.

Satisfaction is the consumer's fulfillment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment. (Zeithaml et al., 2009, 80.)

Satisfaction simply is a customer's feeling of pleasure or dissatisfaction that come from the comparison of the first expectations to the experiences of a product or service (Kotler & Keller 2012, 128). Customer satisfaction is the evaluation of products or services which customer received after purchase compares with their previous expectation (Liu 2008, 40). According to Oliver, customer satisfaction is the feeling of pleasurable when the consumptions meet customer's need, goal desire, etc (Oliver 1990,34).

Satisfaction, depending on different types of service, also can be related to other types of feeling. For example, satisfaction might be seen as a delight if customers are really positively surprised by services. It can be viewed as the pleasure for services or products which give customer the feeling of happiness. Satisfaction can also be associated with the feeling of contentment with the services that they received passively day by day. The measurement of satisfaction tends to identify as a particular point in time, it might be changed over time and several different factors. (Zeithaml et al., 2009, 80-81.)

Customer satisfaction plays an important element to the success of company. It is considered as both a goal and a marketing tool of a company. With the development of the Internet, companies need to be concerned about their customer satisfaction as they can use the Internet as a tool to spread both good and bad comments about companies' product or services to the rest of the world. Customer satisfaction is the main key for customer retention. By maintaining the high level of satisfaction, customers tend to stay loyal longer, they confidentially purchase more new product or services as well as upgrades previous versions, loyal customers even spread

good by word-of-mouth about the received products or services to other. Moreover, loyal customers help companies to save a significant amount of serving cost rather than newcomers due to the routine of transaction, they also pay less attention to companies' competitors as well as less sensitive to similar products, services or lower price of competing brands. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 128-130.)

There are several factors which determine whether the products or services meet customer satisfaction. According to Zeithaml et al. (2009, 81-83), there are five main factors which help companies determine their customer satisfaction which are the specific features of product and services; the emotional of customer; the attributions for service success or failure; the sensitivity of fairness or equity and other people feeling.

Product and service influence directly to customer satisfaction through customer's evaluation of that product or services features. Companies often verify their customer's satisfaction by calculating the important features and attribute to the products or services, then determine it with the perception of these features and overall service satisfaction level. Customers also compare different features of the product or service such as the price level versus its quality versus the staff's helpfulness. These comparisons mostly depend on the different types of product or services and its importance to customers. Resort services for example, the important features to customers also include the comfort and privacy of the room, the quality of restaurant, pool area, the renting cost, etc. (Zeithaml et al., 2009, 81.)

Customer's feeling can be a factor that affects customer's perception of satisfaction with product and service. Customers with the feeling of happiness, positiveness or in a good mood state have affected the way they feel about the product and service. On the other hand, customers with the feeling of negativeness, anger or in bad mood state might respond negatively response to the unsatisfied product and service. With the high emotional services such as birth, marriage, death, the customer's emotion might be significantly influenced. Emotions which are created from the purchasing experiences also affect the satisfaction of customer. For example, a research was done in the river rafting activity determined that the emotions of the tour guides have a significant effect on their customer's feeling and later on the trip's satisfaction in general. Customer's satisfactions with the trip are significantly increased by the

positive attitude of the tour guide such as the contentment, delight, happiness. In the contrary, the satisfaction is dropped with the negative feeling of unhappiness, anger, trouble, etc. Employee's emotional, both positive and negative feeling, are directly affected to their customer emotion as well as the satisfaction with product or service. (Zeithaml et al., 2009, 81-82.)

The attribution is a factor that affects customer satisfaction. When customers have either positive or negative experiences after the purchasing, they tend to find some kind of reasons to explain for that experience. These evaluations might affect their satisfaction to product and service. For some services industries, customer share responsibility with the company. For example, once customer fails to lose weight, they might first find other reasons to explain for that outcome such as did they not follow the diet plan, the life situation did not allow them to stick with the routine, etc rather than pushing all responsibility to the weight loss company. Customer satisfaction is also affected by other kinds of attributions which they think that the reasons of outcome are due to some mistakes that are hard to predict or rarely happen. (Zeithaml et al., 2009, 82.)

The customer's perception of fairness and equality is also influenced to the customer satisfaction. Customer always ask themselves questions which relate to the act of impartiality and of company such as: Is another customer treated fairly compared to them, or did they have better service, lower price with same product or service? Did customer spend a deserved amount of money for the product and service? The concept of impartiality is also particularly important with the service recovery situation as it directly forms customer satisfaction about the fair treatment after a service failure. (Zeithaml et al. 2009, 82-83.)

Customer satisfaction is also influenced by other people around them, these people may include family members, colleagues or other customers who use the product and service before. For instance, in a company, the satisfaction of a new service is not only determined by the person who uses that service but also by what his/her colleagues discuss and think, how they feel and accept that service within company. (Zeithaml et al., 2009, 83.)

3.4 Gap Model of Service Quality

In order to determine the gap between customer satisfaction and service quality of company, help the company analyze the current situation of its quality service as well as improve or enhance its deficiency, Parasuraman, Zeithml and Berry (1985, 44 - 46) have built up a service quality model called Gap Model. There are five gaps in total in which four first gaps are identified to lead to the fifth gap. The below figure demonstrates the Gap Model of Parasuraman, Zeithml and Berry.

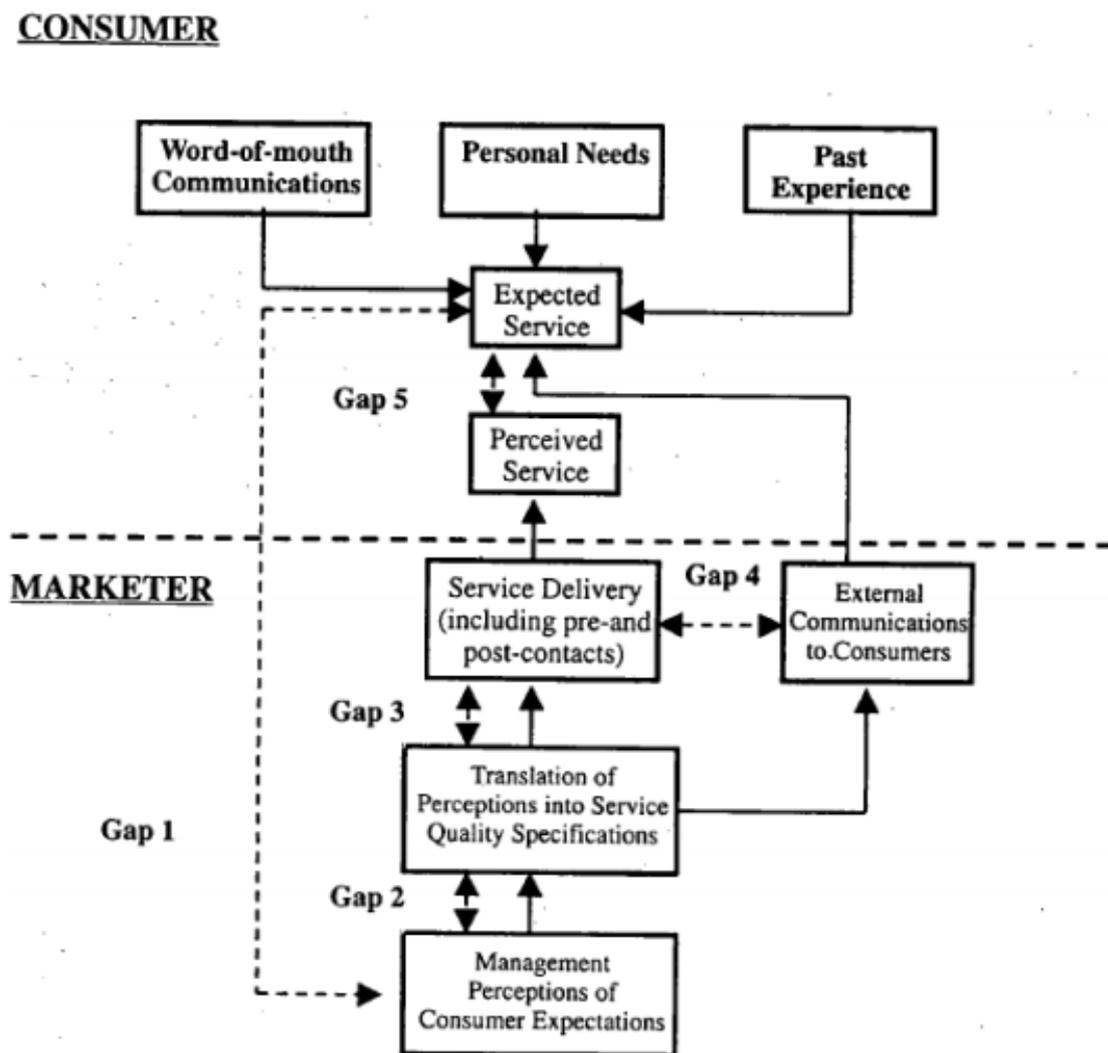


Figure 8 The service quality model gap (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 44)

- Gap 1: The gap between customer expectation and management perception. This gap occurs when service providers incorrectly determine customer expectation. They might not realize exactly which features of product and service are important to fulfill the needs of customer. They also might not know which way to bring out the highest performance of service quality to customer as well. (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 44.)
- Gap 2: The gap between management perception and the service quality specification. By this stage, the executives of companies fully understand and are aware of the level of customers expectation, however, they are not successful in providing quality service to adopt these customer's needs. The reasons leading to this situation are often due to the lack of company's resources, the indifference in management as well as market condition. (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 45.)
- Gap 3: The gap between service quality specifications and the delivering of service. The third gap happens when the high level of service qualities are not delivered properly to customer even though the guidelines and goals for service are clearly set. Employee aspect is the main reason for this gap. Service companies have several employees and the performance of these employees cannot be standardized. Employees' performance both in negative and positive ways are partly influent to the service quality, thus, influent to customer's perspective. (Parasuraman et al., 1985,45.)
- Gap 4: The gap between the delivery of service and external communications. Consumer expectation can be affected by media advertising and other external communications. Since customer expectation works as an essential role to determine the perception of customer about service quality, company must be honest in their announcements. This means that they cannot guarantee more than they can actually deliver . The more promises given, the more initial expectations will be created by customer and once these expectations are not fulfilled , the perception of service quality would be lower. (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 45-46.)
- Gap 5: The gap between the expected service and the perceived service. For company, the main key to guaranteeing good service quality is fulfilling or

even exceeding customer's expectations about the product and service. This gap happens when the low or high judgment about the service quality of customer based on how they perceive the performance of service in the circumstance of what they expected. (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 46.)

3.5 Higher Education Services Quality

Parri (2006) defined the concept of quality of higher education as.

Quality is a concept that lacks a common definition that could be applicable in all fields, for every phenomenon or any subject. The guiding principle is that the more complex, many-folded or abstract the object under quality measurement is, the more difficult it is to come up with a satisfactory definition. The reason why it is not possible to find the one and only definition for higher education in literature lies in the fact that higher education is one of these objects. (Parri, 2006.)

Higher education service quality by the definition of Turner (2011) was the complicated subject with several ways to describe quality such as many theories, indicators and models to identify and evaluate quality. However, there is one simple way to answer the question of quality which is to ask whether higher education institutions “ fit for purpose”. In order to ask that simple question, higher education institutions need to answer the question: Do they only have one simple purpose? Will this purpose remain over time? and Whose purpose is important to assess education quality?. (Turner, 2011.)

According to Parri, there are several elements to determine the quality of education of higher education institutions in order to measure the satisfaction of student as the direct customer. (Parri, 2011.)

Quality as exceptionality, excellence. This category locates a goal for higher education institutions to be always the best, be one of the leading institutes as well as having the best results. In fact, higher quality of input students can directly shape the quality of output. Thus universities usually want to accept the best students which are based on specific rankings. (Parri, 2011.)

Quality as zero errors. Unlike previous categories which focus on the better position, this method sets quality as the perfection or the flawless outcomes.

Although quality as zero errors is easy to apply within industry where detailed standards of product and outcome are fixed, it is impossible to apply within schools or universities since there are no standards to define the flawless outcomes or the perfection of graduate students. However, this category is still used by higher education institutions to improve the learning environment as well as quality. (Parri, 2011.)

Quality as fitness for purpose. This approach defines the level of service and product which meets the set goals of higher education. It allows universities to perform its quality by assessing and presenting through mission statements as well as goal achievement. The method also focuses on adopting the customer's needs. (Parri, 2011.)

Quality as transformation, reshaping. This definition points out that the main customer of higher education institutions is student, who participates on the whole study process to get knowledge, attitudes and necessary skills for their future career. Thus, higher education institutions only meet their goals when their graduated students apply what they have learned in school to future life, the more knowledge, skills and experience are applied, the more successful that the universities are. (Parri, 2011.)

Quality as threshold. This approach is set to help higher education institutions meets the quality standards. Although standards bring a more objective definition of quality, it is difficult to apply standards to universities due to the rapidly changing circumstances nowadays. (Parri, 2011.)

Quality as enhancement. This category focuses on the mission of academic personnel in order to increase the development and quality of higher education institutions. This concept brings a freedom environment as well as the autonomy for universities to ensure the educational quality. (Parri, 2011.)

Quality as value for money. This definition balances the educational quality and value for money, the importance of this approach stays in the responsibility aspect of quality assurance. (Parri, 2011.)

4 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter describes how the research project data was collected and analyzed. As mentioned in chapter one, the used data collection methods for the research are both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The chapter was divided into two sub-chapters, the first part explains the process of how primary data was gathered by surveys. The second part, Chapter 4.2, describes the analysis of the collected data.

4.1 Data Collection

The below figure demonstrates the timeline of the data collecting process of the thesis.

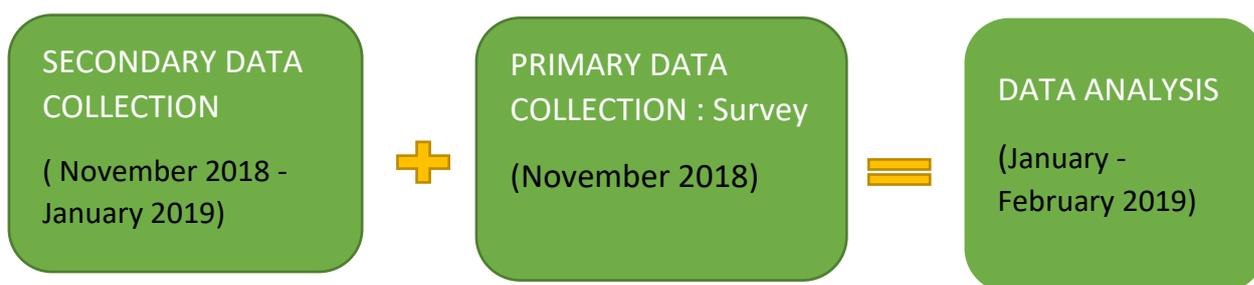


Figure 9 Data collecting process timeline

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the thesis has two types of data: secondary and primary. The secondary data was collected from November of 2018 to January of 2019. This data came from existing information such as documents and visual materials such as records, etc. Primary data was collected in November 2018 using survey method. Both secondary and primary collected data were used to analyse for the purpose of the thesis only.

Questionnaire

When making the survey questions, it is essential to make the questions clear and intelligible to be easy for respondents to understand (Saunders et al., 2009, 417). Therefore, the questionnaire of the research was made simple and short as well as

brief. It was also created with the purpose that it related to the topic so to reduce the discouragement of answering from the respondents.

The survey included 11 questions and was prepared in English only since the author does not know Finnish. The survey was made using Webropol and was launched officially from 15 to 25 of November 2018 using Facebook as the internal channel to spread out to the targeted group. There was eleven questions in the survey. The author does not know how many people actually got the message as the questionnaire was sent out via Facebook. Twenty-one people completed the questionnaire.

The survey questions consisted of four parts. The questionnaire started with the basic information of respondents. The second part was the nationalities which Finnish students work with as well as the (dis)advantages while studying. The next part mentioned the expectations before and experiences after working with foreign students and the last one was the recommendation for both international and Finnish students.

4.2 Data Analysis

Part 1

As mentioned above, the first three questions of the survey mentioned the basic information of respondents such as their gender, degree programme and place of study. Since the research focus groups are all Finnish students who study with international fellow students, the author did not ask the respondents about their academic status or year of admission. The first question in first part is the gender. The gender division is clearly divided with 38.1% of male and 61.9% of female. The second question mentions the place of study. There are only two universities where the respondents study: Lahti University of Applied Sciences (account for 66.67%) and Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (33.33%). The last question in the basic information questionnaire is about the degree programmes. Most of the respondents choose international business as their major (stand for 71.4%), some choose nursing, business international technology, vehicle-design, package and brand design and plastic technology.

Part 2

The second part of the survey asked respondents about the nationalities they are already in contact with while working together as well as the advantages and disadvantages of studying with these international students. Russian and Vietnamese students stay in the highest position since 100% of all respondents already study with them. Chinese students are in the second positions which accounts for 85.7%. German and Nigerian come next with 76% and 52%. Besides, many other nationalities are mentioned such as Japan, French, Czech, Estonian, Italian, Polish, etc. Overall, Finnish students are studying and working with many international students who come from different countries from around the world. The high intensity of interacting with international students bring both benefits and drawbacks to Finnish students.

Considering the advantages, Respondent 15 said,

Getting many different perspectives to a problem, eye-opening (because everyone has to try to understand the other person's perspective), more challenging so one can learn and grow more, also nowadays everything is global so when one gets to be in a multicultural environment before work it is an advantage.

The idea of getting the advantages and knowledge by studying in the multicultural environment matches with several other respondents such as Respondent 11 with the answer “Multicultural experience”, Respondent 14 “ More knowledge of different cultures”, Respondent 9 “ learning to work with other cultures” and Respondent 19 “the amount of things you learn about different culture”. Respondent 10 adds that “ Different point of views, insight to business and politics/law in other countries, adapting to understand different accents” is one advantage. The thought of different point of views is also agreed by mostly all of the respondents. They agree that one of the benefits of interacting with foreign students is having many different points of view for a problem. Besides, improving language skills is also a huge advantage for Finnish students as Respondents 3, 6, 7, and 18 agree that they can practice different languages with foreigners. Having new contact from around the world, making new friends, teamwork skills, learning from each other are also the benefits which international students bring to Finnish students.

Mentioning the disadvantages, language barrier seems to be the most restrictive fact for both international and Finnish students. Almost all respondents agreed that language barrier is a huge issue since it leads to the lack of collaboration as well as integration with Finnish and other international students while working together as Respondent 21 mentioned “ Struggling with knowing/understanding the vocabulary” and Respondent 8 supported that,

The biggest difficulty I think is if there's a language barrier or there's a lack of co-operation. Additionally, some students sometimes might keep with the people from same country and therefore keep conversing /telling their own country jokes and it's hard to get them share their ideas and really work with rest of the group.

Several ways to think, work and behave because of the cultural difference are also a big issue such as Respondent 19 shares “different ways to work act and think, communication and language barriers, work ethics etc. Very hard.” Besides, the different background of economy and geography bring a different mindset which is seen as a barrier as stated by Respondent 5 “different background economically and geographically”. Last but not least, the punctuality of time is a huge drawback while working with international students since Finnish people are really restricted of time while several foreigners do not consider it as an important issue. Respondent 18 said,

Difficulties with time schedules. Finnish people are usually very punctual and there are plenty of countries in the world where punctuality is not as valued and this can create some friction.

In addition to the advantages and disadvantages of studying (working) with international students, there is one respondent that said that there are no benefits or drawbacks at all. He/she believed that working with foreign students is just as similar as with Finnish students. He/she said ” No real (dis)advantages. It is like working with normal people.”

Part 3

The third part of the survey mentioned the expectation before and experience after studying (working) with international students as well as the gap between these factors.

Considering the expectations which Finnish students have before actually studying (working) with international students, there are three different ideas. The first group is respondents who do not have expectations. Respondents 6, 11, 14, 18 and 20 all have similar answers that “ I didn’t care so much” (Respondent 14) and “ No expectations” (Respondent 11) . Besides, Respondents 15 and 17 claimed that they did not have expectation since they are open-minded and do not think nationality is a factor that affects the professional working (studying) attitude, as Respondent 17 mentioned.

Worked with people my whole life. I don't think nationality has any impact that is greater or worse in a professional setting. Everyone is international and everyone is normal.

Contrary to the above idea, several respondents have plenty of expectations. For example, Respondent 19 said that one expectation is “ To make friends with people from different cultures and expand my network and knowledge about cultures”. The hope of learning new cultures is matched with Respondents 2,16 and 21. Language skill is also an expectation of Finnish students since Respondents 7 agreed that “ become better with my English skills”. In general, Finnish students are expecting that they would learn a lot from international students, practice different languages, have new contacts and knowledge of other cultures as well as have a chance to work in a multicultural group. In addition, they hope that international students have some needed skills, as Respondent 5 mentioned “ Thought they would have better knowledge background, better language skills, better understanding of time and deadline”. Respondent 4 expected that foreign students put more effort on the work as he/she does. The last group is the fear of language difficulties and conflict due to the different opinion as noted by Respondents 10 and 12.

Connecting this question with the theories of customer expectations in Chapter 3, the author divides the expectations of all respondents into two levels. The first level is the desired service which includes all respondents who have several expectations on their international classmates. In this level, Respondents want all of their

expectations to become real and their experiences with foreign students are also positive. The second level of the Finnish students' expectations is the adequate service. It includes the remaining students who do not have much expectations. This level represents the minimum level of expectations that local students want while studying/working with international students.

Regarding the experiences of Finnish students, the below table shows the answers of all respondents of the survey.

Table 5 Experiences Finnish students have while studying with international students

Respondent number	Describe the experiences you have had while studying with international students.
1.	Sometimes things have worked very well, sometimes it has been catastrophic. Some people are hardworking and trustworthy, some people are lazy liars. People are people everywhere. Made some good friends from the other side of the world and have learned new things from them.
2.	Learned how different cultures handle studying and working, and their ethics related to those
3.	Many different experiences, sometimes very rewarding and sometimes extremely frustrating.
4.	Very good experiences but also some bad, as some students that I've come to know, didn't participate at all and were "free riders" so to speak on the work at hand, getting credit from other peoples work.
5.	The time and deadline understanding is not good hence making the work harder. Also the motivation and commitment to work has not been good.

6.	I have had many great experiences and I'm happy that I've got a chance to learn from them. - Still sometimes it has felt more difficult to work with international students because the cultural & language issues. -The time view can be very different and being very precise Finnish it can be very exhausting to have to wait someone who are late and especially when they think its okay to be late.
7.	Sometimes it is hard to understand each others
8.	I've had good experiences with changing new ideas and hearing new insights of design from their country. In comparison some students I have worked with assumed that Finnish students will take the main responsibility over the course assignments and guide them through them making the hard decisions.
9.	Positive experiences mostly
10.	I don't feel like there is a big difference between international and local students other than language and some culture issues. But school is pretty much same for everyone. Well, one time I had group work with international student and that person had a really bad grammar, never came to any of the meetings, so basically rest of the group had to re-do that person's part.
11.	Fruitful. Great ideas. Sometimes annoying. Scheduling problems.
12.	Very good experiences. Everyone has been very smart and nice and reasonable.
13.	They have helped me to understand people better and myself
14.	I don't know
15.	Very nice experiences, also frustrating ones. Communication is mostly the problem: hard to sometimes understand what a person means if they do not say it directly.-Finns are so direct so hard to "read" a person if they are not direct. Also I think multicultural groups can be very motivated.

16.	Wish I could have more with people i like and prefer. Little disappointed
17.	The experiences I have with international students are very similar to that of any other experience I've had with anyone else.
18.	Meeting some really wonderful people.
19.	had high expectations in regards of learning more about different cultures and getting to know new people
20.	Fun times, exciting and interesting
21.	My expectations turned out to be quite true.

The above table demonstrates plenty of experiences that Finnish students have when they are working with foreign classmates. Considering the opinion which contains all positive experience, Respondent 12 said that “ Very good experiences. Everyone has been very smart and nice and reasonable”. This idea matches with Respondents 9, 18 and 20 replies as they claimed they mostly have positive experiences, having fun, exciting and interesting time as well as meet lovely people. There are also several answers with negative experiences such as Respondent 6 mentioned.

I have had many great experiences and I'm happy that I've got a chance to learn from them. Still sometimes it has felt more difficult to work with international students because the cultural & language issues. The time view can be very different and being very precise Finnish it can be very exhausting to have to wait someone who are late and especially when they think its okay to be late.

The thought of punctuality and difficulty in working of Respondent 6 matched with Respondents 1, 5 and 11. Besides, Respondents 4 and 10 mentioned that some international students do not participate in group work and only get another group member's credit. Problem in communicating, language and culture lead to negative

experience as well, such as the answers of Respondents 7, 8 and 15. Also, some answers do not mention the positive or negative opinion. The answers mentioned the action they already had with international students. For example, Respondent 2 said that he/she learned the effect of culture and ethic on working and studying. Respondent 13 believed that “ They have helped me to understand people better and myself “. Respondent 19 had higher expectations of having knowledge about different cultures and getting more friends.

In regard to the Chapter 3, the total perceived quality of Finnish students formed when their expectations are fulfilled by the quality of their experiences while studying/working with foreign classmates (Grönroos, 2007, 76). Although several Respondents believe that they have positive memories with international students, some people still have negative experiences. These negative experiences need to decrease in order to reduce the gap between expectation and reality of Finnish students.

The last question of this part mentions the gaps of the two above questions. Thirty eight percent (the highest percent) said that they reached their expectations. For instance, Respondent 7 who wants to improve his language skills states that he/she “ become better with my English skills”. Respondent 13 regarding the expectation of learning from foreign classmates says “ Yes, I feel like I learn everyday something new from international students”. Besides, Respondent 10 who was scared of a language barrier before finally found an easier way to get through the situation and meet his/her expectation as he/she claimed “ Yes, they were met. Language barrier goes both ways but it is easy to overcome with translation apps and other people having bigger vocabulary”. The number of students who did not have expectations and gave neutral answers account for 28.5%. These answers belong to Respondents 1, 11, 15, 17, 18 and 20. There are some reasons why they did not have expectations such as Respondent 17 mentioned “ I didn't have any expectations concerning the impact an individual's nationality would have towards the progress made in an assignment”. Respondent 1 believed that there is one way to not disappoint anyone “Do not have any expectations of people”. There are two respondents (stand for 9.5%) which state that only half of their expectations were met. Respondent 12 claimed his/her expectation of meeting nice people was met, however, the fears of conflict due to different opinions still existed. For Respondent

8, although he/she has really good experiences about international students, he/she gave an example of foreign students who choose *party* instead of group work to prove that his/her expectation was not met. Fourteen point three percent of respondents who believed that their expectation was not met at all. For example, Respondent 16 said that “ No, thought it would have been better and easier”. Finally, there are two respondent’s answers which do not give an answer to this question.

Relating to Chapter 2, the author believes that the gaps between expectations and reality of Finnish students with their international classmates are due to some of the following reasons. In regards to the service quality model gap (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 44), there are some gaps between customer satisfaction and service quality. The first difficulty is the language barrier which is due to the gap between customer expectation and management perception. Although both Finnish and international students do not have good English skills to communicate with each other, the author believes that the UASs does not know this gap. Thus, they do not have actions to improve or enhance the situation.

The second difficulty is the culture difference. Although studying/working among several nationalities brings a huge advantage for Finnish students it also causes some conflicts. From the author’s perspective, this difficulty is due to the gap between management perception and the service quality specification (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 45). Although the UASs are aware of the existing conflict and understand the local students' need, they do not have enough resources to fulfill the gap. A further solution for this gap is discussed more in Chapter 5.

Part 4

The very last part of the survey mentioned the advantages thought of Finnish students about the “ internationalization at home” and their suggestions related to the collaboration between local and international students.

As mentioned in Chapter 2 of the research, Internationalization at home is the process in which the dimensions of intercultural, international and global are integrated purposely into the formal or informal teaching and learning systems for all students within a country (Beelen & Jones, 2015). The advantages of this program in general are huge. Language skills of Finnish students are improved significantly, according to Respondent 10.

Learning language I think. I've expanded my vocabulary a lot after starting at my university and working with people from different countries makes me more confident in my own language skills.

The idea is similar with Respondent 6: “ Improving English skills and to know better other cultures, which can benefit later in worklife “. Having the knowledge about different cultures without studying (working) abroad is a big benefit of the program as Respondent 19 claimed that he/she can learn the knowledge in a comfortable and familiar environment without traveling. Coinciding with this answer, Respondent 15 added, “ It is possible to learn a lot in multicultural environments. It is more fruitful and acceptance is also considered a benefit”. Respondent 7 believed that studying (working) in the international environment brings a huge opportunity to having networks all around the world as Finnish students can make friends and have contact with international students. This thought is matched with several other answers such as Respondents 9 and 20. Studying (working) among international students also brings a broad view of life for Finnish students, they can earn experience for business , personal life and study in the international environment. This thought was expressed by Respondent 3, “ It will offer experiences to the students, which might help them later on in their business life or even personal life.” Although most of the respondent’s answers give some kind of benefits of Internationalization at home, Respondent 17 believed that there are no impacts of nationality or internationality on the systems in general, and school should not locate these concepts into education since it is just the beliefs which serve the political purposes.

The author believes that internationalization at home program in Lamk and Haaga-Helia in Finland is successful. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, the main purpose of this program is to help local students develop themselves in the international studying environment without study abroad. This main purpose is reached via the above answers of Respondents. Several Respondents have positive response on how does the program help them to develop and extend their knowledge and skills. It helps local students on their language skills, have knowledge of different cultures, have a comfortable studying/working environment, saving cost, etc.

The last question of the survey mentions the suggestion of local students on enhancing the collaboration between Finnish and international students. Since this is an open question, seven respondents (account for 33.33%) did not give their own opinions. Keeping an open mind and being nice with each other is the suggestion of Respondent 1. He/she recommend Asian students should not be shy when working with westerners and vice versa for westerners who are working with Asian students. Respondents 18 and 4 said that students should have patience with each other. Respondent 4 added that international students need to show the commitment to the work that they are doing with other team members as well always be on time. Respondent 20 advises Finnish students should learn the way to work with foreigners. Similarly Respondent 15 mentioned the issue of communication and suggest that the university needs to help students on their communication such as have some tips/guides to students on how to talk directly with people from different cultures ,to make the communication fluent and to understand each other better. He/she believes that these tips/guides would bring the benefits for both local and international students. Having same idea with previous answers about the role of universities, Respondent 3 claimed that schools should be more concerned with student's studying process as.

In courses where there are international students, the teachers should be more involved in managing the assignments (some of them are), to check the process and to help solve possible problems.

Respondent 9 mentioned the contrast of studying method between Finnish and international students as local students prefer to study alone while their foreign classmates tend to study in a group. Similarly, Respondent 8 said Finnish students might be shy talking with other students while international students might feel more comfortable with same nationality students. He/she recommends to mix Finnish and international students together to increase the communication. Respondent 19 also agrees that it is important to encourage and develop the collaboration between local and foreign students as long as everyone keeps their open mind and respect each other. Language skills are the huge concerns of Respondent 16 when he/she believes that this aspect should be improved before deciding to study abroad. Respondent 10 suggests an impressive idea: the university where he/she currently has an exchange semester, has a program where students can introduce different

courses to each other. All students from different faculties can join the course no matter their original major. He/she said “ I found this kind of project really interesting and eye opening. It is also great opportunity to make connections between different faculties”. In contrast with all the above opinions, Respondent 17 believe that trying to improve the collaboration between local and foreign students is wasting time and money. He/she suggests to let it happen naturally in a peaceful setting.

5 RECOMMENDATION

This chapter, as mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, provides the recommendations to enhance the satisfaction and collaboration of Finnish students with their international classmates. The recommendations are dependent on the previously mentioned theories, the information extracted and analyzed from the survey in Chapter 4 and the knowledge of the author.

As described in the research limitation sector, the scope of this research is within UASs. Therefore the author's recommendations are the focus on the involvement of the schools at these UASs. Language barrier is the first issue that both Finnish and International students face when they start working together. English is the main teaching language for students who choose English degree programmes. It is also the language that international students use to communicate with local classmates and teachers. Thus English language skills are really important for students in UASs in Finland. During the application period, students need to pass the entrance exam or SAT in order to qualify for the enrollment of the UASs. Although both SAT certificate and entrance exam are in English and students who pass the tests already show their English skills, the university should still open a short language course for all newbie students to enhance all four language skills, especially the correct pronunciation. In this way, both Finnish and international students who do not have good skills at the beginning can improve their skills and use them more effectively - not only when making new friends but also studying in school easier. Moreover, through the course, the school can add some tips/guidelines for both local and foreign students on how to make face to face conversation with people from different countries and cultures; how to communicate fluently and how to understand each other. These courses also help UASs to fulfill the gap between customer expectation and management perception as mentioned in Chapter 3 and 4.

Cultural difference is a huge issue as mentioned in Chapter 4. In order to fulfill the gaps between Finnish and international students, this aspect should be solved. New students who join new international studying environments with several nationalities might experience culture shock and may find it hard to integrate with others. Thus it would be necessary to prepare newbies in advance. Although UASs always have an orientation week as well as projects in first few weeks for their newbies to get to

know each other, the university still should open some cultural courses at the beginning of the semester. At LAMK, there is a course named " Intercultural Awareness" (previous name Cross-Cultural Competence in International Business). This course from the author's point of view is very effective and interesting. It prepares students knowledge of different cultures and how to work and study among numerous nationalities. Therefore, the school should add this course as the compulsory subject for newbies at their very first semester. The course should be compulsory for not only foreign students but also for Finnish students. In this way, Finnish students would be prepared for their studies and working/studying with international classmates. The author thinks that through these courses, the gap between management perception and the service quality specification would be solved (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 45). The compulsory subjects not only helps Finnish students collaborate better with international classmate, but it also helps the schools save resources as every newbie student would need to complete and have necessary knowledge before continuing their study.

Every year, UASs in Finland always have a degree tutoring program. This program recruits students within school (both Finnish and international students) to help international newbie students for their new life at the UASs. These tutors are often second or third-year students who study English study programmes, they help newcomers with their new school, new life, new culture, etc. The author believes that the school should arrange local tutors for newbies. This is a good chance for Finnish tutors to make friends with other nationalities and have knowledge of other culture as well. By helping new students, Finnish tutors know how to communicate with other nationalities as well as how to study and work with them. It also helps local students avoid the culture shock when they do the teamwork or speak with international students. Besides, international students can learn a lot from Finnish tutors, this is a win-win solution.

Studying (working) with different nationalities might cause conflict within class. Therefore as Respondent 3 suggests in Chapter 4, teachers should consider more about their students' studying process. They should manage the teamwork, check the process of assignments as well as help solve any/all problems. The teacher might also make a small survey at the end of the course to get the thinking of

students about their other team members and about their responsibilities during the course. Hereby, teachers would know who are seriously working and who are not.

The last suggestion for UASs comes from the idea of Respondent 10. The school should have programmes in which students can take different courses with their friends from different faculties. All students can join these courses to get knowledge and have new friends. The connection between different faculties also increases significantly.

6 CONCLUSION

This part of the thesis relates to the finding of the research. The chapter is divided into three parts: the answers to the research question and sub-questions in Chapter 1; the validity and reliability of the thesis outcomes are evaluated; and suggestions for future research are mentioned last.

6.1 Finding

The thesis's main objective is to analyze the experience, expectations of Finnish students while studying with international students and to determine the gaps as well as to give suggestions to UASs as how to enhance the collaboration. In order to reach the goal of the research, the author formed the main research question and four sub-questions. The table below shows the main findings of the thesis.

Table 6 Main answers for the thesis questions.

Research questions	Answers
First sub-question: What are the expectations Finnish students have about international students?	<p>Finnish students have several expectations of their international classmates while studying together such as: improve language skills, have knowledge of different cultures, expand the network and make new friend with students all over the world as well as work in multicultural environment.</p> <p>There are some local students who do not set any expectations on their foreigner classmates.</p>
Second sub-question: What are the experiences Finnish students have about their international classmates while studying together?	<p>In general, Finnish students have both positive and negative experience with international students. The positive experiences are: meeting lovely people, having fun, exciting and interesting time;</p>

	<p>having knowledge from different culture, improving language skills...</p> <p>The negative experiences are: some international students do not take responsible at teamwork, do not on time, the cultural differences that lead to the problem in communicating...</p>
<p>Third sub-question: What are the gaps between expectations and reality?</p>	<p>There are several gaps between what Finnish students expected and the reality. Language barrier, cultural difference, the lack in communicating, etc are some mentioned gaps in the research.</p>
<p>Fourth sub-question: What should be done in order to meet Finnish student expectations?</p>	<p>There are some suggestions of UASs to narrow down the gaps as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Open the compulsory language courses for Finnish students to improve and enhance their English skills. These courses are combined with some tips/guidelines for local students on how to make communication smoothly with students from different cultures. + The UASs should arrange local degree tutors for their international newbies. This combination helps Finnish students make more friend from different nationalities, have knowledge of other culture, avoid the culture shocks, know how to studying/working with foreign students as well as how to communicate with them. + Teacher should involve more on assignment during the course. They should

	<p>also take feedback of students about their team member at the end of the course in orders to have better view on their students' efforts.</p> <p>+ UASs should have some program that let students enroll to different course of different faculties. It helps increase the connection within school and helps students have knowledge in different aspects as well as make new contact.</p>
<p>Thesis question: What are the Finnis students' experiences and expectations when studying with international classmates?</p>	<p>With the above sub-questions, the thesis question is all clear as above.</p>

6.2 Validity and Reliability

Reliability and validity are two essential criteria of the research. Reliability is the consistency of the research, which means that the result of the thesis is stable when the data collection methods are repeated. Validity reflects the accuracy of the findings as it is supposed to be. (Saunders et al., 2009, 155 – 156.)

This research was conducted to answer the thesis questions. This purpose was completed since the main thesis questions and all subordinate research questions were answered. The research applied both secondary and primary data method to collect the necessary data. The secondary data was conducted by using trustworthy reports, published books, up to date electronic sources, academic articles, etc which related to the thesis topic. The primary data was gathered through online survey. The survey was given out using Facebook and other social media channels. There were twenty-one Respondents - Finnish students who choose English degree programmes in UASs. All respondents are anonymous and do not know the author. There were no bonus or reward before or after respondents did the survey, therefore there were no reasons for them to provide untrue answers. The answers to the

questionnaires questions are reliable. The survey language was English. There was a short explanation with the questions to make sure respondents understood the meaning of the questions. Therefore, the collected data are valid.

However, it is important to note that this study focused only on Finnish students' perspective, who are (were) studying(working) with international students and choose English degree programmes in Finnish UASs. Thus, the findings do not reflect the perspective of Finnish students who chooses other languages to study in as well as the perspective of other students in different countries.

6.3 Suggestion for Further Research

The purpose of the thesis is to determine the expectations and experiences of Finnish students when studying/working with their international classmates. From the findings, the author gives recommendation to fulfill the existing gaps in these aspects in order to enhance the collaboration between local and international students within UASs. As this research covers only Finnish students who follow English degree programmes in UASs, further research on this topic could be done with other groups of students, other types of universities, other countries or with a bigger number of respondents.

The research would bring the benefits for UASs and students to enhance and improve the studying (working) environment within universities. Researching more on the topic would also help the UASs increase the number of Finnish students for the school.

7 SUMMARY

The research goals were to determine Finnish student's perspective of international students while they are studying (working) together. The thesis question and four sub-questions were answered in this research. The author aimed to find out the expectations and experiences of Finnish students regarding their working/studying with their foreign classmates. Based on these aspects, the gaps between what local students expected and the reality were clarified. The suggestions for UASs on how to improve and enhance the collaboration between Finnish and international students would be formed to fulfill the gaps.

The thesis applies inductive research and uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data. The author began with the explanation of the internationalization at higher education and internationalization at home programmes. Chapter three focused on analyzing the concept of students satisfaction, service quality, experience as well as expectation of customers.

The following chapter determined that the data was collected and analyzed. The data were collected using an online survey. The questionnaire was sent out to Finnish students who follow English degree programmed at UASs in Finland. The next chapter, chapter five brought some recommendations on how to help UASs fill the gap between the expectations and experiences of Finnish students when studying/working with international students.

Chapter six answered the main thesis question and all sub-questions. The validity and reliability were evaluated in this chapter. Some suggestions for further research were also mentioned. The last chapter, chapter seven was the summary of the research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Survey Questionnaire

The survey has 11 questions in English. Questions 1 and 6 are multiple choices questions. All other questions allow respondents answer with text. Question 11 is the open question thus respondents do not need to answer if they do not want to. Below is the list of the questionnaire questions.

1. What is your gender?

Female

Male

Prefer not to say

2. University of Applied Sciences (the name of your university of applied sciences)

3. Degree programme (the name of your degree programme)

4. List/Describe the advantages of studying (working) with international students.

5. List/Describe the disadvantages of studying (working) with international students.

6. Which nationality/nationalities (of students) have you already worked/studied with (while completing your studies)?

Russian

Nepalese

Vietnamese

German

Nigerian

Chinese

Other:

7. What expectations did you have, of studying with international students, before studying with them at your university?

8. Describe the experiences you have had while studying with international students

9. Were your expectations met? If not, why not? If yes, please explain.

10. Connecting with the "Internationalization at home", What are the best advantages that it brings to you? (Internationalization at home is the process in which the dimensions of intercultural, international and global are integrated purposely into the formal or informal teaching and learning systems for all students within country .This means that students can have the international learning environment and cultural diversity experiences with different nationalities students without studying abroad.)

11. Do you have comments or suggestions related to the collaboration between Finnish students and International students?