

KEMI-TORNIO UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES

EDUCATIONAL MIGRATION:

Retaining international students in Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences

Thesis

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ABSTRACT

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Title of thesis: EDUCATIONAL MIGRATION: Retaining international students in Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences
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<p>Thesis description: This thesis investigates and presents the reasons why international students are migrating from the Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences.</p> <p>Theoretical summary: Migration could be a permanent or temporary move from a place of residence to another, triggered by voluntary or involuntary factors; otherwise pull and push factors of migration respectively. Education is one main reason amongst many, why people are often attracted to migrate and this is in turn very beneficial for the destination country/region. As a political strategy, encouraging immigration is a medium through which national governments secure internationalization and new ideas/reforms.</p> <p>Methodological summary: Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in this research such as: questionnaires, interviews, documented material, internet sources, discussion sessions and observations. Questionnaires were delivered face-to-face, while personal and telephone interviews were conducted focusing on highlighting certain aspects of the research and also getting sufficient material to support discussions that emerged.</p> <p>Main results: The results of the research proved that it takes 2 or more factors to result to international students' migration from Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences. Common examples of such factors include insecurity, attitudes of teachers towards international students, dormant social life etc. Economic factors were just one part of the many other reasons that triggered international students' migration.</p> <p>Conclusions: International students' migration is preventable but it would need to be targeted from different aspects, and both students and staff should be involved in the planning and implementation of new changes.</p>
Key words: International students, educational related-migration, involuntary factors, prevention

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents Mr. /Mrs. Ndzefu Ebai Mathias whom despite the distance have remained my coaches, as they have always encouraged me to pursue my dreams and devotedly supported me in my educational career.

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I would like to express gratitude to all those who stood by me and assisted me throughout the preparation and completion of my thesis.

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1 INTRODUCTION

International degree programs taught in English language has been a practice in Finland since the early 1990s and in 2009, the Finnish Ministry of Education in published “the strategy for the internationalization of higher education in Finland” aimed at improving the internationalization of Finnish higher education institutions. This has been implemented through an increase in the number of foreign students and the number of higher educational programs in English, and also welcoming more foreign researchers and innovators. Recent statistics from the atlas of international student mobility even showed that there are 21,439 international students currently enrolled in Finland.

Similarly, international degree programs been introduced in the Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences, have promoted an influx of foreign students from all over the world. However, this huge influx has been challenged by the yearly migration of international students from the Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences, even before completing their studies. The question is “why?”

A research conducted in 2010 by Vahertimo Riina proved that about 33% of the international students evaluated the services provided in Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences as “good” Why then do international students withdraw their studies if things are supposedly great? To this effect, the main things I hope to find out in this research are the reasons behind international students’ migration from Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences, other than the popular “economic” reasons. Also, I hope to find out how to prevent future migration.

In my research the concept “international students” has been used and this strictly refers to students from countries other than Finland, studying full International degree programs in Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences. Moreover, in this research the abbreviation-KTUAS has been used to mean Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences.

The results of my thesis are meant to be used by the Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences for future developments towards improving its services, promoting educational growth and retaining the international students. Based on the results I have also made some suggestions for change and future research.

2 MIGRATION

2.1 General migration trends and case study from Finland

Migration is one of many controversial issues that have been widely researched and defined worldwide. The National Geographic Society (2005) defined migration as *“the movement of people from one place in the world to another for the purpose of taking up permanent or semi-permanent residence, usually across a political boundary”*

Everett (1996, 4) stated that migration can be across short distances as well as long distances and that, migration does not only imply moving across nations it also occurs within nations, but in both cases it is a move from one place to a better-perceived location. The only exception in movement is the case of nomads in whose case migration is continuous and they have no long-term residence (Everett 1996, 4).

Nivalainen (2003, 9) pointed out that besides rural-urban migration, there also exist rural-rural migration as well as urban-rural migration, and to support this point she stated that yearly in Finland, 20% of the people who decide to move, end up residing in the rural areas of the country. In these cases the young and unemployed more often practice rural-rural and rural-urban migration while urban-rural migration is more common with retirees in Finland (Nivalainen 2003, 17-18.)

Nowadays, the reasons for migration are highly diversified and the common question that comes to mind is why? Why has migration become such a big issue of today? In the pre modern era, migration used to be over short distances for food, shelter, pasture, safety, etc but in recent times, people migrate to very far destinations.

This often puzzles the mind; does this growing change in migration patterns occur as a result of technological evolution or is it today's changing incentives that make long distance migration more attractive (Dribe 2003, 2). Also Everett (1996, 9) stated that innovation in transport connections and network has made travel and communication cheaper and easier, thus contributing to the increase in migration.

Focusing on the case of Finland, the period between 1992-2006 in Finland was marked with great economic development and research in urban areas, and this led

to a great demand for labor and subsequently significant inter-municipal migration. While the adults and young people moved to the metropolitan areas, the middle aged and old people remained in the rural areas and smaller municipalities (Lehtonen & Tykkyläinen 1998-2006, 362).

Estimates between 1990 and 2009 showed that the number of foreign people legally residing in Finland has risen from about 26,300 to 167,962. Estonians stand out as the largest group of immigrants with a population of 28,965 closely followed by Russians having a population of 28,459 (Migri 2010).

Educational migration is a dominant practice in Finland. Finns in the field of medicine, IT, Arts, Physics, Chemistry etc, often emigrate abroad to countries like the United Kingdom, Sweden and Germany where they stay from 1 to a few years to improve their knowledge, experience, networks, and then return to Finland (Tanner 2011). No doubt why it is often said that migration is beneficial to nations. When Finns emigrate from Finland and return, they together with other immigrants, bring with them improved knowledge, skill, expertise and networks beneficial for the economic, social, technological and political growth of the country (Tanner 2011.)

In the same light, “education-related” migration makes up the largest amount of immigrants to Finland and this has been on a steady pace since 1990. Statistics in 2009 proved that 3,993 students were granted positive decisions to study in Finland (Tanner 2011). Basically the student permit is granted temporarily in Finland and yearly, the student has to show proof of sufficient income (6000€) alongside other study documents, and a certificate of health Insurance before they can be granted a new residence permit for the next academic year (Migri 2010).

Statistics in 2008 stated that 10 most prominent countries where foreign students in Finland originate are: China, Russia, Germany, France, Spain, Estonia, Poland, Nigeria, Italy, and Sweden. China proved to have the largest number of students in Finland ranging up to 2,234, i.e. 10% of the total percentage of international students’ enrolled in Finland (Atlas of international Student Mobility 2011).

Besides educational migration previously mentioned, there are other reasons why people migrate to Finland and these lie within the basis of marriage to a Finn, and a typical example of such migrants would be Russians, Estonians, Filipinos and Thai. In this case it is more often women than men, and in 2003 about 3,500 Russian

women were registered as being married to Finnish men, whereas only about 300 Finnish women were married to Russian men (Niemi 2007, 2).

Another common reason why people migrate to Finland is for family reunion and the Somalis are a typical example of such migrants. Overall in 2009, 1,674 positive decisions were granted to persons seeking to migrate to Finland on basis of family ties/marriage (Tanner 2011). However, it is far stricter to migrate to Finland on family related reasons than would be the case for education or labor related reasons. In the case of marriage or family reunion, more is emphasis placed on identification, proof of secure income, accommodation, etc (Tanner 2011.)

Finland has adopted certain immigration policies to link the students educated in Finland to the local labor market, and this has been ensured by implementing comparatively less strict work permit polices for students (Tanner 2011). With the student permit, international students are allowed to work part time jobs lasting about 25 hours per week during the academic year, and full hours during long breaks like summer holidays (Migri 2010.)

One aim of the Finnish migration policy program implemented in October 2006 was to promote immigration of students and researchers. Being an active participator in the “Research on European higher education and research cooperation”, several researches have proven that Finland’s main weakness lies in scarcity of internationality in Finnish higher educational institutions. To this effect, the internalization of Finnish higher education was hatched in spring 2008 with the aim of promoting the diversity in the Finnish society and to make the Finnish higher education more attractive. Also, internationalization of Finnish higher education is a national project run by the Ministry of education aimed to attract foreign investors and researchers and more so, to improve the citizens’ understanding of other cultures and to ensure better economic resistance in a world of competitively developed economies like china, Japan and some EU member countries. (Finnish Ministry of Education 2009, 6-39)

2.2 Finland's balancing Act on migration

Finland's working population born after world war 2 is ageing and some already started retiring from work since 2005. Estimates show already that in the year 2011, about 700,000 Finns will go on retirement (Koivukangas 2003, 8). This means that there would be the need to fill in the gap created in certain job areas as well as there would demand for elderly care/ welfare for the ageing. It has further been estimated that in 2025 there would be a population decline in Finland unless measures are being taken (Tanner 2004).

The Finnish government is actively carrying out certain measures to keep up with the labor shortage by exploiting existing labor reserves and activating those who are unemployed (Wallenius 2001, 1). In order to slow down this population decline, Finland has turned towards its immigration strategies and policies. For instance the current retirement age is between 63 and 65 and yearly about 2,000 to 3,000 migrants are granted long term resident permits in Finland, to gradually prepare for this speculated future labor shortage (Tanner 2011.)

However, this strategy has not been fully accepted by economists and statisticians, being that the language barrier, illiteracy levels and low job skills which migrants sometimes possess, might still hinder them from becoming fully active and reliable participants to fill the shoes in the job market (Tanner 2011.) This would imply that there need to be much more improvement to integrate migrants, so that they could eventually become that workforce the Finnish society could rely on.

That notwithstanding, incorporating migrants in the Finnish labor force would guarantee an open door to new ideas, contacts and diversified skills which every continuously growing society seeks. Pajunen (2008) supported this argument by stating that immigration is not only a means of supplementing the impending shortage in the Finnish labor force, but it would also serve as a source of expertise.

3 FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR MIGRATION

3.1 Push Factors of migration / involuntary migration

A common form of migration nowadays is temporary migration and this might be most prominent in a situation where the incentive to migrate is based on studies, labor, research, visitation, etc. In this case the migrant visits home on frequent intervals, especially as the availability of modern technology makes travelling far more convenient and cheaper than it used to be centuries ago (Atoungha 2010, 25.)

Generally speaking, when an individual makes a decision to move, he/she is either escaping from something or pursuing something. In other words many researchers have classified voluntary and involuntary migration as, pull and push factors of migration (Higgins 2008). It should however be noted that it is quite tricky when discussing these factors of migration as certain factors affect every individual in different ways, so discussed below are some of the generally known factors that propel migration from place to place (Everett 1996, 5.)

In the paragraphs that follow, these different factors of migration would be explained distinctively, beginning with involuntary/push factors of migration.

Tanner (2011) defines involuntary migration as when people are compelled or coerced to move as a result to violence, conflict, persecution, environmental or natural disasters, famine, etc. People migrate from places where they feel like their lives and potentials are at risk, to other regions where they feel there is hope and better guarantee for livelihood. Involuntary migration is not only limited to less developed countries, it is a phenomenon that occurs even in developed countries.

Like most countries in the world, Finland has had its fair share of involuntary immigration, such as migrants escaping unfavorable conditions in their countries like wars and civil riots, and seeking safety and residence in Finland. Annually, Finland receives between 2000-6000 applications for asylum and nowadays most asylum applicants come from Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Iran, Turkey and Nigeria. An asylum seeker is one who seeks international protection in another country because in his homeland he/she has experienced serious human rights violations (Kosonen 2008.) There is a notable increase in the number of asylum applications received in Finland every year. Between 1990 and September 2010,

Finland received about 10,000 asylum applications from the Former Soviet Union and Russia. Some of the reasons for this increased number of asylum applicants might be due to the fact that Finland is seen as a socially stable country with fewer incidents of racism and also because of the increased entry restrictions in other western countries (Tanner 2011).

Another aspect of involuntary migration to note is forced international migration. Besides political instability, people are unwillingly moved across the world in what is well identified as slavery or human trafficking/ smuggling, and it could be defined as the forceful movement of people through deception or coercion for purposes of exploitation (FMO 2011). Human trafficking statistics estimate that between 2000 and 2010, about 700,000 women and children have been trafficked into the United States (Human trafficking statistics 2010.) Also on January 21st 2011, a case of human trafficking was recorded in Finland wherein 4 Latvians were convicted for smuggling 80 immigrants from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, into Finland between 2008 and 2009. The offenders were sentenced from 14months to 5years and half of imprisonment (BBC 2011).

Often, involuntary migration occurs also as a result of drastic changes in weather conditions such as droughts, floods, earth quakes, rising sea levels, etc. Natural disasters such as floods and droughts often lead to a cut back in food production, inflation in food prices and it displaces the population as they are compelled not only to migrate in search of shelter and food but also they need to migrate to other places where there is more stability.

Etienne (2008, 7) mentioned that rising hurricanes and floods are the easiest identifiable catalysts for considerable migration and what makes this different and is it's unpredictability to be detected by climate models. A more recent case of forced migration is the 2011 earthquake that occurred in the north-east of Japan that displaced and rendered about 150,000 people homeless and many others jobless (BBC 2011)

Economically, people are often compelled to migrate due to inequality in living standards, unemployment and low salaries, to other places that seem to fulfill their expectations. Tanner (2011) mentioned in his article on "Finland's balancing act" that during the 1950s when Finland's economy began to industrialize, there was a

remarkable amount of internal migration from rural cities to the southern parts of Finland where there was the availability of jobs and the wages were better. Still, as a result of shortage of working possibilities and housing facilities that arose in the urban cities, many of these new migrants were later on forced to migrate to Sweden. For over 20 years one reason for Finnish emigration has been that, certain professions are low-paid and so typically, nurses are forced to migrate to countries like Norway while experts migrate to the Persian Gulf area (Tanner 2011.)

From the information above, it is understood that some of the reasons why people migrate involuntarily are; the urgent need for protection, natural disasters, economic stagnation etc. Also, forced migration like human trafficking has been discussed as other ways through which people through which are coerced to migrate.

3.2 Pull factors of migration/Voluntary migration

Pull factors of migration would mean the complete opposite of involuntary migration mentioned above. Pull factors or voluntary factors of migration are those aspects of a country or region that attract people to migrate to that region (Tanner 2011.) Migrants are usually attracted to move to other regions because they find it convenient or full of financial gain. Good political stability and freedom of expression and choice that reign in certain parts of the world attract people to migrate to those places.

The Swiss cheese makers and the Norwegian sawmill proprietors were amongst the first voluntary migrants to immigrate to Finland in the late 19th century for economic gains, and they contributed a great deal to the country's economic prosperity (Tanner 2004). Tanner (2004) also mentioned in his article "Finland's prosperity brings new migrants." that Finland's economic, technical and social advancements have made Finland a very attractive destination for migrants.

In the 1950s, many Finns emigrated to Sweden following the promise of better living standards, more available housing and higher salaries. These conditions seemed ideal, compared to the shortage of job possibilities and unavailable housing that reigned in Finland following the huge inter-municipal migration towards the urban cities. Nonetheless, by 1980 the salaries and housing levels in Finland began

to match those in Sweden thus slowing down the emigration rate, and those who had migrated in the 1950s due to housing shortages began immigrating back to Finland (Tanner 2011.)

Furthermore education is one good reason why people voluntarily migrate to other places and as mentioned before, “education-related migrants” constitute the largest number of migrants in Finland. In 2009 up to 3,993 applicants received positive decisions based on their interest to study in Finland. One reason why people willingly migrate to study in other places is because of the guarantee of a solid educational background. Finnish universities guarantee quality education and the possibility to transit from school to the labor market upon graduation, something which is very difficult in many developing countries.

“Unemployment in Africa’s urban areas is essentially among the youth...the pool of unemployment now includes secondary school leavers as well as University graduates who constitute a dominant labor force, socially and economically dependent and disillusioned” (Adepoju 2009, 11)

Following the quotation above from Adepoju, it is no wonder why Finland receives yearly, thousands of applications from prospective students who hope to study in a society where education is worth the efforts and there are possibilities of employment during studies and thereafter. Vahertimo (2010, 18) for instance, proved in her research done about the welfare of International students in KTUAS that, 84% of her respondents decided to pursue a degree in Finland because of the good quality of education provided.

Furthermore, education is possible in all countries in the world but what makes the difference is how the qualifications are valued and judged by the society we live in. Atoungha (2010, 38) cited that most parents in Africa find western education more prestigious and in 2005 there were about 14,000 registered Cameroonians studying in Germany. Thus the pursuit for prestigious and more valued educational qualifications is one reason why many people are drawn to migrate.

Political stability and respect for human rights reigning in certain countries tend to attract migrants escaping wars and insecurity, towards those countries. Tanner (2011) mentioned that the number of asylum applications received in Finland has escalated to about 2000-6000 annually, and the reasons are; Finland is increasingly

being perceived as a stable and socially developed country in which compared to other countries, the incidents of racism are relatively fewer.

Other reasons why people voluntarily migrate from one place to another could be tied down to family ties. As mentioned before, yearly Finland receives thousands of applications typically from Somalis who intend to reunite with their relatives/spouses. For instance in 2009 1,674 applicants were granted permits to reside in Finland on the grounds of family-based migration (Tanner 2011).

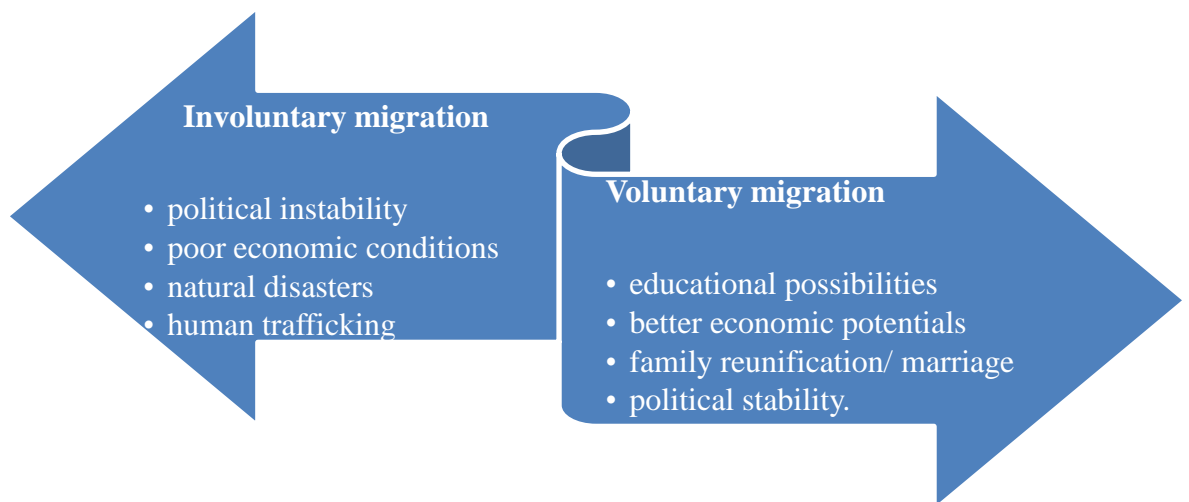


Figure 1. Summary of factors that trigger migration

Figure 1 is a summary of the main voluntary and involuntary factors that make people choose the option of migration, be it permanently or temporarily.

Nonetheless, it is not often so easy to migrate into a country, as one goes through sets of procedures and in the end only a select few are granted permits to stay.

There are positive and negative remittances of migration on the community level as well as the national level in the migrants' countries of origin.

On the one hand at the community level, remittances from the hometown associations make up the basis for improving healthcare, educational possibilities and other relevant infrastructural facilities (Adepoju 2009, 16.) Tanner (2011) also mentioned that immigration and emigration from Finland leads to the acquisition of experience and networks that are beneficial for Finland upon the migrants' return and settlement.

On the other hand, migration is not all glorious and potential migrants might visualize. Migrants moving to countries like Finland where the language spoken is not their first language often encounter lots of problems like language barrier and unemployment. Other problems faced might be cultural shock and a lot of migrants face the problem of contempt from the society, difficulties in assimilating to the new culture, etc (Atoungha 2010, 47.) Tanner (2011) for instance stated that the majority of the Finnish population is against further immigration. Similarly, there have been cases of racism and discrimination against migrants in their destination countries and for instance in Finland, the Russians face comparatively more discrimination and unemployment than their fellow migrants like Estonians (Niemi 2007.3).

More so, for many people, the journey of migration is very risky and dangerous, and often a lot of these prospective migrants die even before arriving their destinations. A typical example is the case on the 06st of April 2011 whereby a boat carrying migrants from Libya heading for Italy, capsized in the Mediterranean leading to 20 confirmed deaths, 130 others unaccounted and only 48 rescued successfully. (BBC 2011)

4 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM: EDUCATIONAL MIGRATION IN KEMI TORNIO UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences has been facing the problem of educational migration and a good amount of them are international students. The question in mind is “why”, but this remains somewhat unanswered. Statistics collected from 2008-2010 proves that between these years a total of about 293 international students were admitted. Keeping aside students who changed study programs, up about 62 of international students have withdrawn their studies.

Some abbreviations have been used to mean the following: IT08-information technology program. BSS2 and BSS3-2008 and 2010 social service program respectively. A08BIT and A09BIT-2008 and 2009 business information technology program respectively. A08BM, A09BM and A10BM-2008, 2009 and 2010 business management program respectively.

The student register (Winhapro Nov 2010) shows that in 2008, a sum of 146 international students were admitted into the following international degree programs; BSS2 received 23 students and out of that total, 6 students lost their study entitlement, 7 withdrew their studies and 2 changed their degree programs.

Therefore, the remaining number of students left is just 8 out of the original 23, summing up to a small percentage of 35% of the total number of international students that got admitted to the social services program in 2008.

In A08BIT, 51 international students were admitted and from this total number 15 lost their study entitlement, while 16 withdrew leaving just a total of 20 students or otherwise 39% of the original number of international students admitted.

A08BM received 31 international students but out of that total, 12 lost their study entitlement and 7 of the students withdrew their studies. Only 10 students were left to continue in that degree program, forming a percentage of 32% of the total number of international students admitted.

In addition to the international study programs above, IT08 also received 41 new international students but from that total 16 lost their entitlement to study and 1 changed his study program. Worse still, up to 19 international students withdrew their studies. Only 5 students remained to continue in the program, making just 12% of the total number of international students originally admitted into IT 08.

Furthermore in 2009, 79 international students were admitted in KTUAS. Out of the 27 students admitted into A09BM, 8 lost their study entitlement and 3 withdrew, leaving just 16 students or otherwise 59% of the original number. Still in 2009, 30 students were admitted into A09BIT but from this number, 6 lost their study entitlement and 6 withdrew. Only 18 students were left, adding up to 60% of the total number admitted to that study program. In addition 22 international students were admitted into the nursing program(5BHC1) in 2009 and from that total, 4 of them withdrew their studies. Only 18 international students were left, summing up to 82% of the total number admitted into the nursing program in 2009.

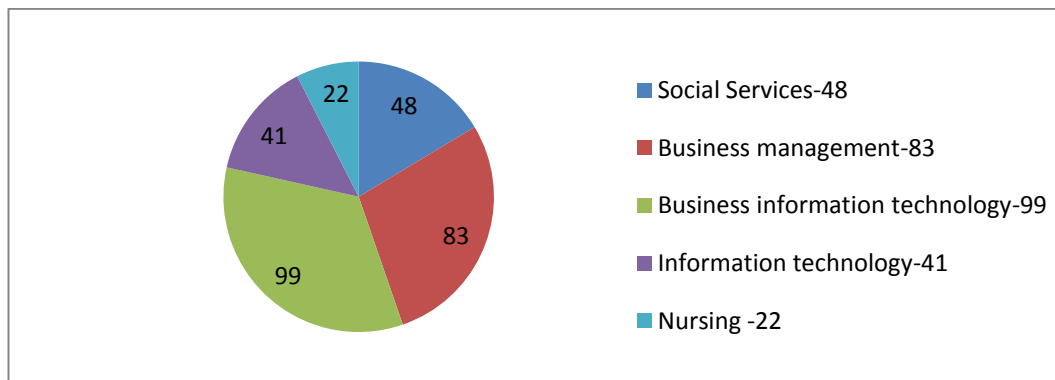


Figure 2. International students admitted into KTUAS between 2008 and 2010

Figure 2 above, shows that a total of 293 international students were admitted between 2008-2010, including even those who lost their study entitlement. It should be noted that admission into IT programs ended in 2008.

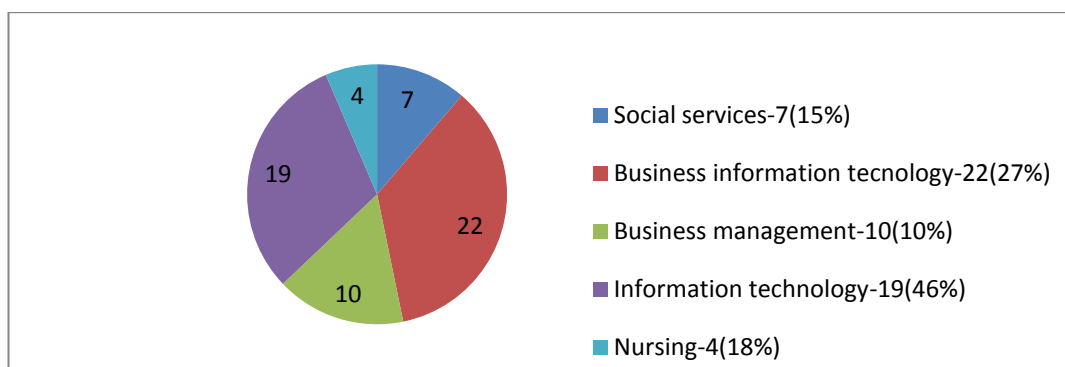


Figure 3. International students who withdrew from KTUAS between 2008 and 2010

Figure 3 above illustrates that up to 62 international students have withdrawn studies in KTUAS between 2008 and November 2010 (including even those who left without notification). The percentages lost mentioned in figure 3, have been calculated based on the total number international students admitted to the respective groups; ie the sum up of students that withdrew in 2008 and 2009.

Nonetheless, 2010 statistics gotten from Winhapro (Student Register) stated that so far all the international students admitted into KTUAS in 2010 were still present. A total of 68 international students were admitted in the following degree programs in 2010 as such; A10BIT received 18 students, A10BM received 25 students and BSS3 got 25 students. These statistics were collected on the 19th November 2010 and by then, the total population of international students retained was 100%. No student had withdrawn from any of the degree programs mentioned.

These statistics are very positive when compared to the situation wherein by January 2009, at least 2 students in the 2008 social service group had left for Helsinki. However, it is important to note that some more changes might have occurred in terms of international students' withdrawal of studies, since November 2010 when these statistics were compiled.

From my discussion with the Social worker of KTUAS, it is clear that there is a lot of speculation as regards why students are migrating to other cities in the southern part of Finland, most prominently Helsinki, Espoo, Turku and Lahti. This kind of migration trend however, is not so different from Finnish migration trends in general since Finland's technical and social advancement. Nivalainen (2003) mentioned that migration in Finland is from rural to urban areas like Helsinki, Espoo, Tampere, etc in search of better economic possibilities.

Basically most people are of the opinion that international students are migrating from the Kemi and Tornio cities because of economic issues. However, it cannot be concluded that economic issues are the strongest forces behind international students' migration. There might be some issues which remain yet unknown and until these issues are investigated there would not be much to work on, in terms of efforts geared towards providing a better educational environment for students in general.

5 METHODS AND PROCESS OF DATA COLLECTION

To get information for my research, I found the use of questionnaires to be very suitable. Many international students have withdrawn from Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences but for this research, but only 3 groups were surveyed; BSS2, A09BIT and A09BM. The reason for choosing these 3 groups is that they all represent international students and these groups have lost students more. Also, it is not so necessary to collect information from students studying Information Technology since admission into that program ended in 2008 (Sipila. Interview. 08.10.2010)

Additionally, working with 3 groups would be easier considering the fact that many students cannot be reached anymore. I prepared 22 questionnaires and they were all filled except for 2. The reason I could not get these 2 responses was because 1 student had left for vacation to his home town and I had no contact information to be able to reach the other student. I collected information using questionnaires in 3 phases.

On the phase 1, a list of international students that have withdrawn from the 3 study groups mentioned above, was handed to me by Sipila Maria (KTUAS social worker). Next, I contacted some friends and acquaintances for the contact telephone numbers of the former students on my list. After having compiled and verified all the contact details, I began contacting the students personally on phone first to discuss about my research and my wish for them to partake as respondents.

On phase 2, I travelled to Espoo where I made a second contact with these same students I had earlier spoken to. This time, I reminded them about our previous discussion and together agreed on separate meetings so they could fill the questionnaires. Finally on phase 3, I met with these students in person on different occasions. Sometimes I had appointments with 3 or 4 students in one day but at different times and locations, so I travelled between Espoo and Helsinki frequently.

In summary, it took about 3 weeks to meet with all these students. Why I met with the students face-to-face is because, in a similar research on the services for international students done in 2010, only 33 responses (12.7%) were gotten out of 259 targeted international students. From my own experience I figured that, one of the reasons for the low responses is that not everyone likes to fill questionnaires

online. Exceptionally, about 3 students had the questionnaire sent to each of them by email, and they filled and returned the questionnaires via the same means. These were exceptional cases because these students currently reside in Vantaa, and Lahti and it was impossible for me to travel to all these places.

Additionally, information was gotten from 7 telephone interviews done with the same international students who had earlier filled in the questionnaires. Interviews would provide lengthier responses and also these students had mentioned on the day they filled the questionnaires that, they had a lot more to say and would do an interview. I uplifted key questions from the questionnaire previously administered and due to timing and convenience, I sought the consent of my supervisors and therefore conducted phone-recorded interviews. Also, I conducted 1 personal interview with an international student who has returned to study in KTUAS.

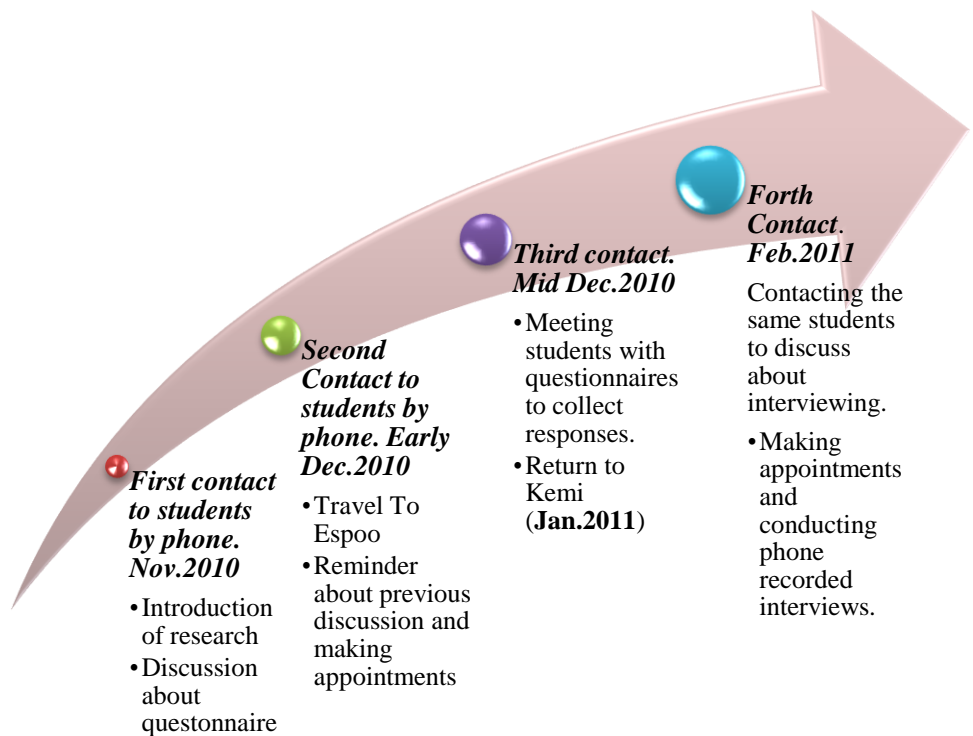


Figure 4. Process of data collection by use of Questionnaire and interview

The figure above represents the process of collecting information from the international students who have left Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences. This started when I made the first contact with the students, and ended when I conducted the phone recorded interviews. Also, I collected some information via discussion with the present students in the Social Services department-BSS3

(Feb.17.2011). Though this, I would also know about their current situation and feelings so that KTUAS could take some preventive steps. Also I agreed with my tutors to make this visit to BSS3 so I could give some advice on living and studying in Kemi and Tornio cities, based on my experiences and knowledge.

Furthermore, I interviewed Some KTUAS authorities in charge of international student affairs like projects, accommodation, recreation or extracurricular activities, etc. One aim of my research was to get more information about some of the issues that popped up during my research and also to get information about what KTUAS has been doing to tackle international students' problems, its future plans, as well as the limitations involved: i.e. is it the role of the University to provide or negotiate jobs for students as many international students believe?

Background material/theoretical material on migration derived from books, articles and web pages; with my experiences and knowledge featuring from time to time. I also got some information about the role of KTUAS' student union-KETOAKKU from Laukkanen Tarja (current president of the union) via email.

6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS, ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

6.1 Introduction and nature of Research

This chapter of my research presents more information about the questionnaires and interviews, the nature of questions, and some of the difficulties encountered in using these methods are being highlighted. Also mentioned, are some of the reasons why there were so many responses successfully collected in this research.

International students' migration from Kemi Tornio University of Applied sciences has awakened lots of thoughts in the recent years. Past researches stated that students are leaving due to the unavailability of all resources as would be in other cities, student unemployment, and so on (Vahertimo 2010.) Commonly it seems that the main reason for international students' withdrawal is mainly economic. This may not be very far away from the truth because as a foreign student in Finland, international students are not entitled to any financial benefits from Kela if their purpose of stay in Finland is educational (Kela 2009). Coupled with the language barriers, it is not so easy to get a job in small cities like Kemi and Tornio which have little experience with foreign people, unlike larger southern cities like Helsinki.

Quite a lot has also been said and done about the services provided for international students and their satisfaction in KTUAS, but not much is actually been said about the educational, social or even climatic factors that may also be as well responsible for international students' migration in KTUAS. Therefore, my research questions are mainly based on finding out; what are all the possible reasons for the educational migration in KTUAS and what could be done to prevent future migration of international students?

In pursuit of information for my research, I was somewhat limited to a certain extent due to language barrier, but I also got much help and guidance from some researches and articles written on migration such as "Finland's prosperity brings new migrants" (Tanner 2011). This article and others shed more light on some of the migration patterns that exist in Finland due to the country's economic and technological growth, and Finland's strategy of incorporating international students and migrants into its labor market.

As a guide to formulating a questionnaire for my research, I read the “Research for foreign degree students in Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences” (Vahertimo 2010). From her research, I adopted a good number of questions that I found quite good and equally applicable to my research topic. Still from Vahertimo’s research, I got a lot of understanding about some of the research done in the past about international students and a little about the issue of migration in KTUAS.

For analyzing the responses collected in this research, I decided to use “conceptual content analysis” which is an analytical method whereby the contents of materials are broken down into meaningful units of information, making it easy to be analyzed and interpreted (Stemler 2001). Personally the main reason I chose this method is because I find it easier and more practical to apply. Furthermore 2 types of quotations have been used in the analyses; one with the use of names drawn from the interviews conducted, and the other from the questionnaires, without names since they were filled in anonymously.

22 questionnaires were prepared for the selected groups of students between 2008-2010; BSS2, A09BM, A09BIT. I got just about 20 responses that is, 91% because 2 of them could not be reached for reasons mentioned before. Looking at similar researches done in the recent years, the percentage of responses was quite impressive. This could be because of the prior contacts I made to suggest former international students’ participation and about confidentiality of responses.

It might also be because, compared to previous researches that covered the entire international student population, I had a lesser population to deal with. Furthermore, I would say one of the reasons why the respondents consented to participate is because they thought my research topic was very interesting and practical and also hoped that through this research, their decisions to withdraw might be understood better. Also, delivering these questionnaires in person is more personal and it increases the motivation and the likelihood of having them answered, unlike merely administering them via internet.

There were 28 questions containing both open and closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions allowed the student to express themselves freely, while closed-ended questions were used to get brief answers on issues like background information. I did not necessarily break down the questionnaire into large subject areas but it covered all different aspects of the research such as the students’

backgrounds, problems faced during studies, sources of these problems, students' satisfaction about different aspects of their study, triggers for migration, students' expectations and proposals to KTUAS. The last question was asked about student's opinions on the nature and contents of the questionnaire.

I faced some problems during the process of collecting data. I was constantly on the move to meet respondents and it was quite difficult to meet in different locations and times. Cancellation of appointments made it even harder to collect information

Also mentioned before, another major means of data collection i used was interviewing. Actually I conducted 9 telephone interviews and 1 personal interview with the international students who have migrated and also with those who have returned to Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences. However, due to some technical problems I faced while recording these telephone interviews, 2 interviews were mistakenly deleted. Leaving me to work with just 7 telephone interviews, that is 78% of the total responses. Also, other problems I faced with telephone interviews included, differences in speaking accents and noisy backgrounds.

Separately, the table below illustrates the amount of questionnaires prepared and the number of responses successfully gotten, as well as the number of responses gotten through interviewing and how many of those responses were successfully retained.

Table 1. Amount of responses gotten via questionnaire and interview

Method of data collection	Intended number of respondents	number of responses collected and retained	Percentage of responses.
Questionnaire	22	20	91%
Interview	9	7	78%

6.2 Question Analysis and Results

From a total of 20 respondents collected, 8 responses came from BSS2 (2008 social services group), i.e. 40% of the total respondents. 7 responses came from BIT09 group, i.e. 35% of the total respondents, and 5 responses came from BM09 i.e. 25% of the total number of students who partook in this research. Though a total of 11

students have withdrawn from BSS2, I could not reach the other 2 students and I am uninformed about the study status of the remaining 1 student.

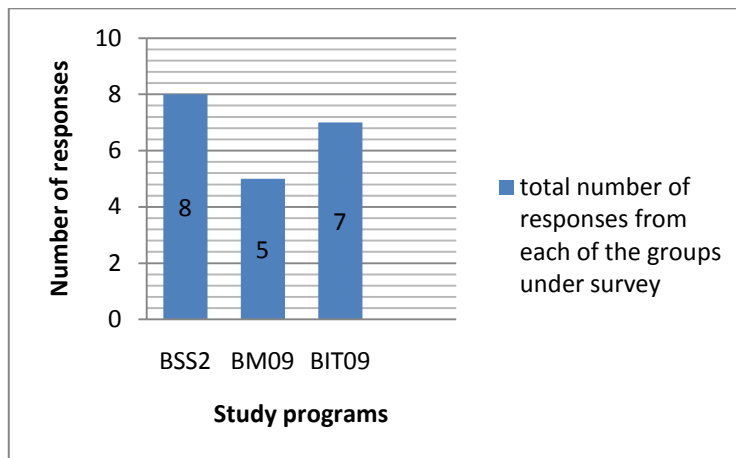


Figure 5. Respondents from different international study programs

The information on figure 5 above represents international student groups that participated in this research and responses collected distinctively from each group. I observed that BSS2 and BIT09 had almost similar number of students who have withdrawn from both programs, so it would be interesting to find out a possible explanation at a later stage.

Also, when I started the first contacts and compiling the list of prospective participants, there were only 4 students whose names were on my list and confirmed by Sipila Maria to have left from BM09. Then by December i had appointments with the students about the questionnaire and through one them, I was informed that another student had just withdrawn his studies that same month. Thus adding to the 4 students I already had, the number became 5.

Considering that i administered the research questionnaires since December 2010, who knows how many more international students must have left or are planning to? To me this was like a wakeup call stating that the issue of migration from Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences is continuing and definitely something has to be done, else many more international students might migrate and this is not a good impression about KTUAS in general.

6.3 Background information of respondents

I classified the respondents' age groups and slightly over half of the students were between 23-25 years old. Table 2 below illustrates the different age groups from the youngest to the oldest; 20-36 year. Only 19 students are represented on the table and this is because for some reason, 1 student did not provide his/her age on the questionnaire. For many reasons people usually withhold their ages except it is very necessary so I did not want to pressurize any one. As a young girl growing up in a Cameroonian society, it was common knowledge that girls do not reveal their age, while boys were more open to talk about their age and even add a few numbers to command more respect.

Table 2. Various age groups and number of respondents in each category

Age group categories	Number of students within group
20-22 years	5
23-25 years	6
26-28 years	4
29-36 years	4

Amongst the total number respondents that participated in this research, only 3 of them were females and the remaining 17 respondents were males. Looking at this statistics for the first time, I wondered why there is such a huge difference between the number of girls and boys who decided to withdraw their studies and migrate. Statistics collected from the students Register (Winhapro 2011) proved that, there are more males than females in international programs. In 2008, the ratio of male students versus female students admitted into international degree programs was, 28: 118. In 2009, the ratio was 22: 57 and in 2010 the ratio of male students versus female students was 26: 42.

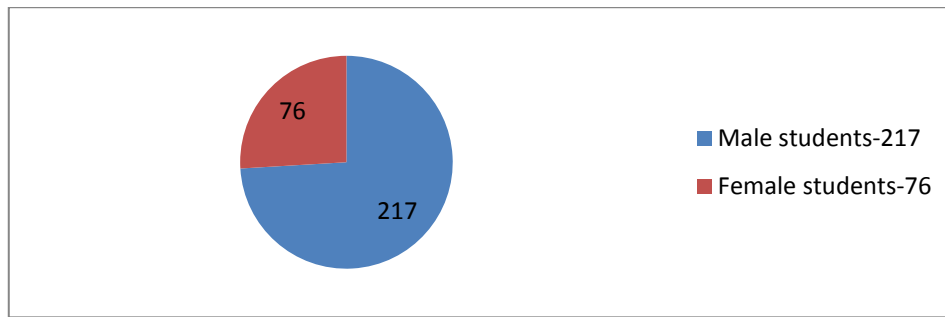


Figure 6. Ratio of male versus female international students admitted into KTUAS between 2008 and 2010

Evidently from figure 6, amongst the 293 international students admitted into KTUAS between 2008-2010, 217 are male students and only 76 are females. That is probably one reason why the number of males who have migrated from KTUAS remains higher than females who have migrated too. Nevertheless, the difference between male and female students admitted remains highest in 2008. In the years that follow the difference is not as remarkable as in 2008 and even in 2010 for the first time, the number of females admitted into the social service department is more than the number of male students; which is 14 females and 11 males.

Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences has students from all continents of the world and one of my main reasons for working with 3 different international groups was to make sure that least most of the nationalities were represented, if not all.

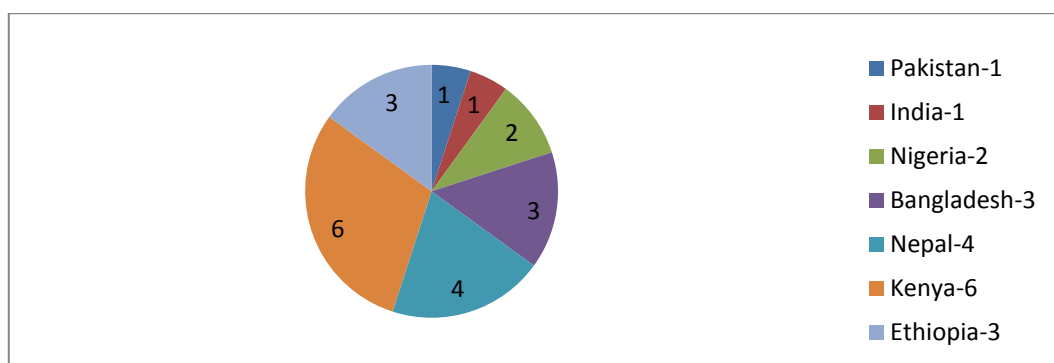


Figure 7. A representation of the respondents' nationalities

From Figure 7 above it shows that respondents came from 7 different nationalities across Asia and Africa. It also shows that most of the students who have withdrawn between 2008-2010 came from Kenya and Nepal, and I noticed that students from

these latter nationalities were the most eager to take part as respondents and were very open to tell their experiences.

When asked about their current status, 19 out of the 20 respondents stated on the questionnaire that they are studying. Only 1 student actually wrote that he was studying and working. However, though they did not mention on the questionnaire, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the students explained during our discussions that they were involved in some kind of paid or part-time work, and to them this seemed to be a good balance. This does not come as a surprise because most of the international students have stressed in the past about their desire to get some paid work besides their studies. This therefore suggests that getting a job is one of the crucial reasons amongst others why students migrate after being unable to find a job in Kemi or Tornio regions.

Currently, the respondents are either residing in Helsinki, Espoo, Lahti, Vantaa or Kemi.

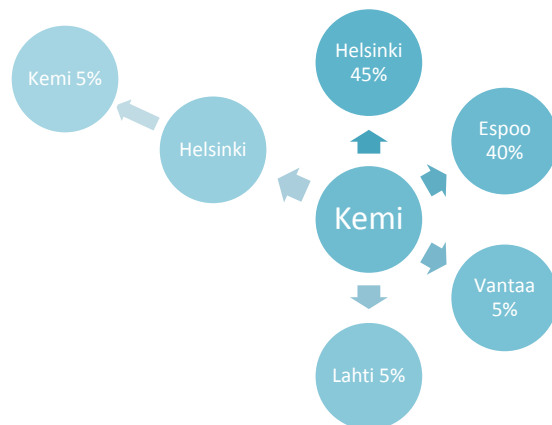


Figure 8. Destination cities after migrating from Kemi and Tornio

The figure above demonstrates that often when students migrate from Kemi Tornio regions, they reside in southern cities; Helsinki and Espoo being the most popular in terms of percentage. Figure 8 also illustrates a cycle of migration wherein after migrating from Kemi, 5% of the students resided in Helsinki and later on migrated back to Kemi. Regarding the bulk of migration towards the metropolitan area, it only confirms what Nivalainen (2003) said in her article about inter-municipal migration in Finland, being dominantly from rural cities to urban cities such as Helsinki in search of better opportunities. Moreover, Mikkonen & Kärkäinen (2002, 26) stated that about 6% of the inhabitants in Helsinki have foreign backgrounds and Helsinki alone hosts more immigrants than other cities in Finland. Hence, there is a similarity between the migration patterns of Finnish citizens and international

students' since both studies mentioned above state that inter-municipal migration in Finland is dominantly towards the southern urban cities.

Over half of the number of respondents in this research studied at least 1 academic year while others stayed just for about 9months, 8months, 4months and 3months. Of all respondents, 1of them studied it up to 1½ years.

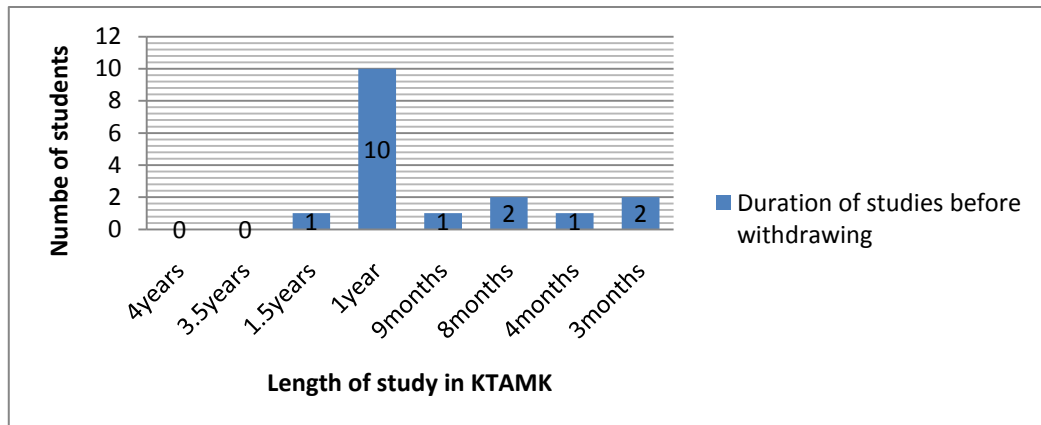


Figure 9. Duration of study before withdrawing from KTUAS

Figure 9 represents the length at which the respondents studied in Kemi Tornio University Applied Sciences before migrating to the south of Finland. Most of the respondents stayed for up to a year, while others withdrew as soon as they started. In reality, 3 or 4 months is not a good time allowance to judge the potentials of a place, except one is in a great haste. One has to consider that having moved to a new place lots of things happen within the first year, amongst which are cultural shock, language and interaction issues. This would not be a good time frame to make judge. Judgments should come after a better understanding of the life, people and functioning of that area.

“ I think it’s quite short time and if you think about that, that you move to another place I think there will come that kind of cultural shock, even you move inside of Finland to different city it comes that in the beginning everything seems to be so nice ... then you start to see the bad things..And then it takes some time to start again to see that kind of reality, then you can think about the city.” Sipila. personal interview. 02.03.2011

Adding to the fact that this is not plausible, a brief period of study might also imply that education was not actually the primary aim why some students have come to Kemi Tornio cities or to Finland in the first place. In this case if someone comes for

a reason other than education, then no matter how much KTUAS offers them, it would not prevent them from migrating.

“I think that what we can do as the school to keep them here is very difficult if you are not motivated to study, if your purpose is not studying how we can build this motivation for studying, because it comes inside of a person?” Sipila. personal interview. 02.03.2011

However, this is another issue to be researched separately since it is not the focus of my research at the moment. Unlike the rest, about 2 students responded that they had studied for 3½ years 4 years each. This suggests that the question may have been misunderstood to mean the total duration that their programs were supposed to last. This answer is inappropriate because I conducted my research in 2010 and both students began their study programs in 2009, making it even less than 2 years. Even though the majority of the respondents interpreted the question correctly, I think such misinterpretation illustrates that the question could have been framed better to avoid any flaws.

When asked if students faced any problems while studying in KTUAS, up to 80% responded that they faced one problem or the other. The remaining students 4 said they did not have any specific problems. The explanation I got from these remaining 4 students was that, they did not consider the difficulties they faced as problems, to them these were rather challenges and obstacles in their lives that did not last.

6.4 Sources where problems derived

The problems faced during studies in KTUAS were grouped under 4 different sources ranging from school, home, the communities of Kemi and Tornio cities and from personal issues. Most of the students responded that the sources of their problems were from personal issues. Also provided was an alternative to mention other problem sources that were not listed on the questionnaire. About 3 students responded to this alternative question mentioning that the climatic condition was very unfavorable and others mentioned racism and boredom.

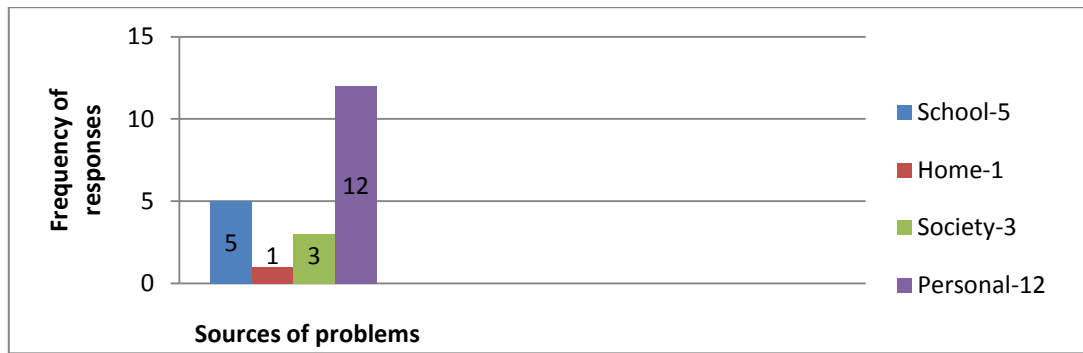


Figure 10. data representing the various sources of International students' problems

Figure 10 above represents that many the former international students in Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences faced diverse problems from different sources that culminated in their final decision to migrate towards other parts of Finland. Data collected proved that not just one problem source independently led to this big decision, a lot of the students faced problems coming from two or more sources combined. For instance some students mentioned that most of their problems came from the certain aspects about KTUAS, as well as from their personal lives.

I further categorized the problems faced under different factors; social factors, security factors, religious factors, educational factors, climatic/ weather factors. The main reason for doing this was so that I could get specific answers as to what kinds of problems the students must have faced while studying in KTUAS

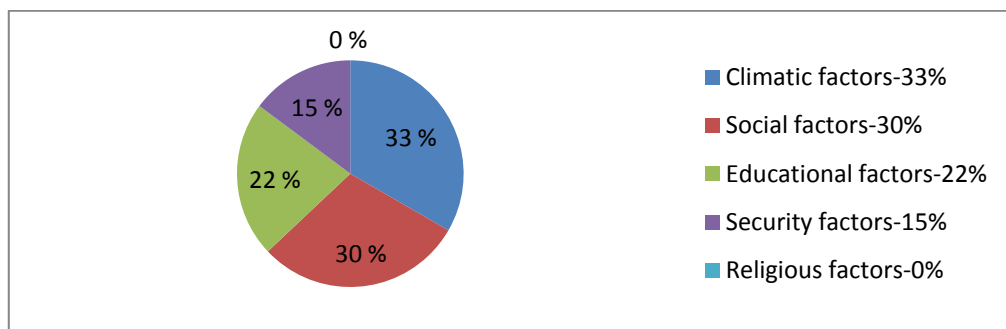


Figure 11. Main factors that prompted International students' decision to migrate

The figure above represents the different types of problems faced by the former international students and also, it tells which problems students were most disturbing causing the students to migrate. Looking at the chart, it is noticeable that there is no representation of religious factors, even though it was included in the list of factors that led to students' migration. The reason is that, no student mentioned that their

decision to move was as a result of religious factors. International students have often complained that they cannot attend church sermons in Kemi Tornio municipalities because of the language barriers. However this has not been considered as a factor that is important enough to consider migration as an option. Probably because it is the same situation even in other Finnish cities, and also some international students have managed to attend these church sermons and some have been very active in church activities.

As another alternative, students had the opportunity to explain other factors not mentioned, that also necessitated their migration. 8 students responded to this question and the most predominant factor they all mentioned was “financial reasons”. It is no wonder why students mentioned financial reasons, finance is quite an important factor and it was not added to the list of other factors that prompted migration. Intentionally I left out economic factors from the list of options and this is because to me, the economic factor of migration is a more obvious problem and I seek to highlight the less obvious issues. Also, including economic aspects to this list might in some way divert the students’ attention and in the end I might get less information on the other problem factors I wanted to explore.

6.5 Reasons that prompted migration from KTUAS

Further and deeper explanations would be observed in this section about the different reasons for International students’ migration from KTUAS.

Climatic conditions

As shown on figure 11 above, 33% of the students say that the climatic condition of Kemi and Tornio is one important reason why students have decided to move in the first place. Before now, not many students have mentioned weather to be one main reason why they decided to migrate. Often the reasons they give are highly economically oriented. Despite that the weather of Kemi and Tornio is evidently quite harsh in the winter season, it is still an eye-opener to me that many students answered that they moved because of the weather.

“..though I am aware that Finland is cold, I don’t think as much as Kemi. It is -30 something which is opposite from where I come from, which is +30. Before you

adjust to the weather, time is gone. And we hear Helsinki is not as cold, this prompts thinking.” Morris. telephone interview. 06.02.2011

“..coming from Reservi was one of the hardest thing. I can’t even now think how I did it, but it was hell on earth. That’s what prompted actually my first moving thoughts. Because I was thinking I’m in pain every time I’m walking in winter. There was no single time I was able to dress from here to Reservi without freezing and I was feeling pain” Nelly. Personal interview. 22.02.2011

It is therefore true to say that the harsh climatic conditions of Kemi and Tornio prompted students to migrate to other southern cities in Finland where they considered the weather to be more favorable. The weather seemed to be such a challenge because most international students have either come from countries that are climatically very hot or countries with warmer winters as compared to Finland. Under such circumstances living in a city as cold as Kemi or Tornio is quite a challenge because even some Finns too find it quite tough. More so, some of the students obviously believed they could learn to cope, but that was not such a bright idea because learning to cope with the weather could take years and besides, there are already warmer cities in Finland like Helsinki.

Social factors

Up to 30% of the students responded that their decision to move was highly motivated by social factors. Social factors implied; student interaction, extracurricular activities, family ties, social life, etc.

“it is always comfortable for me to be near to people..”

Students have migrated because they feel the need to be in a community where they can have some social or cultural networks. It is no news that Kemi and Tornio cities are quite small and there are not as many foreign people as there are in larger urban municipalities.

“if we compare for example Helsinki area to Kemi Tornio area, there are several kinds of communities from different kinds of cultural backgrounds ... that you can easily get a community there... it takes more than 1 or 2 people..” Sipila. personal interview 02.03.2011

The international students' community is quite multinational but most often there are few students coming from the same country and it is true that a community cannot entail 3 persons, as it is usually the case. In my situation there have been just 2 students including myself from Cameroun, in this university since 2008 and at this moment I am alone. It makes me really feel out of place at times and I can understand why students would move to other places with larger communities of similar background and culture.

In addition, some students stated that they migrated because they have family and spouses living elsewhere in Finland and keeping up with the distance was quite a challenge.

“my family lived in Helsinki and I couldn't manage to combine the studies with family far away”

Even Tanner (2011) stated that in 2009, about 2,654 migrants on the basis of familial ties and 1,674 migrants on the basis of marriage were granted permits to reside in Finland. This is quite a similar pull factor of migration when compared to the fact that students are also pulled towards other cities because of the need to reunite with their spouses and families.

“I was feeling very cut out from the community if I leave school at 15:00 and then there is no other means of communication. So it was quite disturbing socially... And also weekend I only have to sleep and slowly I start to be very emotionally disturbed like I had no social life.. and that was very scary especially when you move to new country and find yourself in such a situation.” Nelly. Personal interview. 22.02.2011

“it's all about school-home, school-home, school-home, shop, that's it. There wasn't even any social life.” Thomas. Telephone interview. 06.02.2011

“The Finnish people, though one of their stereotypes is that Finnish people are shy, they're not ready to interact thinking we're black and bad. One day I was on my way with my friend to the reception center and my bike broke down in front of a woman's house. I was trying to fix it and the woman called the police. Upon arrival at the meeting in the reception center, it was said that 2 black people were trespassing.” Morris. Telephone interview. 06.02.2011

Other reasons why students have migrated is because they find the mode of life here as a boring routine, one which rolls between home and schooling only. As regards this response I would say that even though Kemi is obviously a small and quiet city, a lot has changed between 2008 and 2011 and many of the former students cannot vouch for this because a lot of them stayed here only a few months and then moved.

Also important is that some students have migrated because they find the level of interaction between themselves and the people of Kemi Tornio area very poor and suspicious. As a push factor many students have escaped this area to southern cities where there is better internalization and interaction. Atoungha (2010, 46) also mentioned in her thesis on migration that, for communication and interaction to happen between migrants and locals of the host country, there must be a common language spoken; in this case Finnish. So it is understandable that without a basic knowledge of the Finnish language, a lot of students have migrated to other cities where there is more use of English language and more interaction with the locals.

Educational factors

Diverting a little from social and climatic factors, educational factors played a great role as to why students decided to migrate from KTUAS. Everything relating to studies as well as the staff of the university has been classified under educational factors, and about 22% of the students responded that their decision to move was due to these educational factors. One aspect of education in Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences that prompted the students to migrate was change of interests and the unavailability of certain educational programs.

“I am interested in mechanics. But I didn’t have any option to before. Metropolia UAS introduced Electronics from 2010. So, I bounced off.”

In the year 2008, 5 international students changed their educational programs and enrolled in different programs. The difference is that 5 these students switched to pursue programs still within KTUAS but others migrated completely from the university to other universities.

“there’s not enough books especially standard books which were in English. It’s hard to learn from the same teacher at the same time with more than 2 or 3 subjects. So it creates confusion. In the morning you have a different subject, in the afternoon you have different subject with the same teacher. So it’s mixed up. Sometimes even

in the class people are asking questions that relate with the other subject...” Jacob.
Telephone interview. 06.02.2011

As shown above, students have also migrated from KTUAS because of the fact that there are not sufficient text books and materials in English language found in the library and also because they found it really confusing when one teacher teaches more than 1 course within 1 semester. The KTUAS is quite small compared to other universities and study programs like Social Services were only introduced in English in the year 2008, so it is understandable why the resources are not as developed as in other cities. Vahertimo (2010)

“ did not like most teachers teaching method ..”

“When I was in my first practical training place, I didn’t have any clue about what I would become after studies, how I will end up. When I asked the same question to our tutors they didn’t have any responses...”. Desmond. Telephone interview.
05.02.2011

Some international students decided to migrate because they did not get sufficient guidance about their study programs and future career choices. Other students have moved because they felt that the method of teaching was not what they expected from the onset. In addition, some disparities between the same programs offered to international students and Finnish students also made students feel cheated somehow, and this played a great part in their decision to migrate.

“..the international student in English program cannot have kindergarten teacher qualifications because the university has not yet courses for the same. So for now only Swedish and Finnish get this extra qualification on top of sosionomi.” Nelly.
Personal interview. 22.02.2011

The Students who migrated argue that similar programs should result to equal qualifications and because there are slight differences in the courses offered in both English and Finnish social services programs, it made them question the curriculum.

Some students have also migrated because the “attitude” they get from some of the teachers makes them feel discriminated upon.

“One of our teacher inform police we (Muslim) are terrorist”

“the administration do more care about the students who are oily (selfish talkative). In last yearput job announcement by doing message to students who are in friend list of...face book. I think...should announce opportunities in school mail and choose good students.”

“few teachers discriminate for students, they select nationality for grading”

“Coming from some of the teachers, I remember one of them. Like one of them, they teach like separately. You know when they teach in class they don't give focus to all the students. It's something that has been going on even before I came there.”

Emmanuel. Telephone interview. 06.02.2011

Mentioning these experiences, the international students who have migrated said they felt the need to do so because there was discrimination between them and their fellow Finnish classmates in class and also between them and fellow international students who were more extroverts than themselves. Therefore their decision to migrate was precipitated by the kind of treatments they were getting in a place they hoped to establish in. Hence, they were compelled to migrate to other cities where they had a hope of fairer treatment and equality, to start over again. Somehow one cannot say how valid these claims might be, but it is definitely worth looking into.

Security factors.

Security is a driving force behind many involuntary migrations that occur worldwide and even Finland gets between 2000-6000 applications from asylum seekers yearly (Tanner 2011). In the same manner, about 15% of students who took part in my survey stated that they fled from the Kemi Tornio area because they felt that their security is at stake.

“..it was on a weekend..and we were just staying in the club trying to get the social life that we could get. Then we were just in the club then we were attacked. We were ambushed by some racist guys. So..security was not that good.. Ok the police can come but they come when the damage is already caused, so they should try to prevent rather than cure” Thomas. Telephone interview. 06.02.2011

“The atmosphere in Helsinki and in kemi is different... compared to kemi because Helsinki is more multicultural. In kemi at that time,.. I remember that one day the police came to create awareness about the security situation in school. And they

said don't fight. If you're in harm also, don't defend yourself just run. This is very.. this is kind of.. You're not safe for me." Jacob. Telephone interview. 06.02.2011

"Coupled with the news in another university where blacks were shot by one Finnish guy. You'll be told not to go out because Finns are racist. Some Chinese guys were beaten by some Finns and nothing was done for 2 years". Morris. Telephone interview. 06.02.2011

Students have moved from KTUAS somewhat involuntarily not only because they felt that their lives were at risk, but because very little was done by the police to prove that they were actually acting in the best interest of the foreign students. When one migrates to a new place, they hope to live in peace side by side the natives of that place, but if the natives are proving hostile to them and the authorities are not helping much, then it is obvious that the decision to migrate all over would come handy. Students felt that life would be better in larger cities like Helsinki where there already are a lot of foreign people and the rate of racism and antagonism is not as high. Similarly in search of security, since 1990 Finland has received about 3,000 Somalis fleeing from the civil war in their country (Tanner 2011).

Economic factors

Economic factors that triggered migration were intentionally asked separately as a way of letting students express much more than what is known about other less obvious factors. However, I was not going to skip out economic factors completely, for it is a very strong factor of migration. 80% of the participants of my survey said they migrated also because they had economic problems.

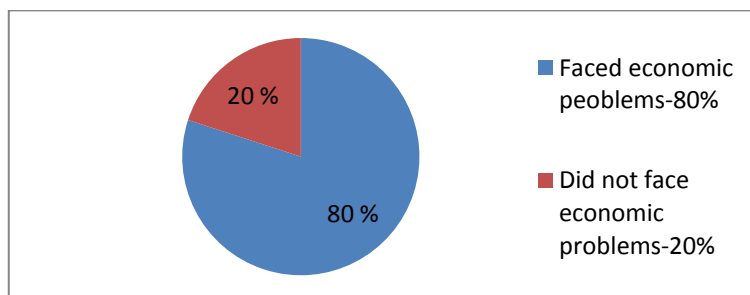


Figure 12. Migration based on economic reasons.

Figure 12 illustrates the amount of students that migrated from Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences because they faced some kind of economic hardship. Just about 20 percent of the respondents mentioned that they did not migrate for

economic reasons. The rate of unemployment among immigrants in Finland was estimated to 34% of the population as a whole (Mikkonen & Kärkäinen 2002, 22.), so it is no wonder that many international students complained about being unable to find a job in the Kemi or Tornio cities. Though unemployment implies that many international students have very tight budgets to survive on, a few other international students have migrated mainly for some other reasons that are socially, educationally or security oriented.

“I was working as a waiter in the local Chinese restaurant as a waiter. Consequently, I was away from economic difficulties..”

So some few students managed to get some part time jobs and others were getting support from home to keep them going. Nevertheless, the majority of students who left were not getting any more support after a sometime, and they were just left to manage on their own which was quite a challenge.

“my..died after long suffer. Now my family will not be able to provide sufficient support”

It is quite sad and understandable that probably some of the students would have loved to pursue their studies in Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences till the end. However, due to unforeseen circumstances they were left to fend for themselves and because the employability of students in this area is quite tough, the only choice was for them to migrate away.

A lot of students migrated also due to the responsibilities they had. As an international student to Finland, students are not getting any form of support from the Finnish government. The only circumstance when students can get coverage under the health system is when they are involved in some form of paid work under a Finnish employer (Kela 2009.)

Coupled with the above is also the fact that the student visa is only granted on yearly basis, and it is renewed at the end of each year. Requirements are; a certificate of the health insurance, certificate of bank transactions, documents from the educational institution showing student enrollment, school transcript of records and most importantly bank statement showing that the student has 6000 Euros; as proof of support throughout the year (Migri 2010.)

This is particularly stressful for the students because not only is it hard to study for 3½ years being unemployed but it is no child's play to come up with 6000 Euros. As a result of these stringent requirements, students have migrated to other cities where migrant labor is common or there is a higher rate of student employment without the necessary Finnish language skills often demanded in smaller cities like Kemi and Tornio. Also the availability of jobs here is quite smaller than in cities like Helsinki and Espoo where 45% and 40% of the students respectively have migrated to.

“..over 90% of the companies in Lapland are micro companies. And this means that they have less than 10 employees in the companies..” Mäki. Personal interview.

23.02.2011

Many students have therefore migrated because they could not get jobs in the Kemi Tornio area and this as Mäki (2011) suggests, relies strongly on the language factor and also that Kemi Tornio cities are comparatively budding small cities.

“ Even if you bring millions of Euros, it'll finish. And we need 6000... More people would still be transferring if they don't get work, not as full time but a kind that can sustain house rents and food.” Morris. Telephone interview. 06.02.2011

“one thing you understand in Kemi, only spending and nothing comes in. so can you spend your 3 years with only spending and nothing comes in?” Sebastian.

Telephone interview. 06.02.2011

Student migration is hence not only triggered by their current economic status but also due to the fear of an unknown future. To some students it was okay to cope at the moment with what they had brought with them but considering that money spent cannot be retrieved except through some employment in which case they did not have, they had no choice but to migrate. Also, some of the respondents strongly feel that more students will migrate in the future unless the economic situation is improved such that students could do some form of part time work to sustain their rents and other bills. This is unfortunately not far from the truth because since I made my first contact with the prospective participants of my research in November not less than 2 students that I know personally have migrated.

“because it's a small town, there's nothing going on. There's no trust in Kemi. Maybe now they change, because that time, I'm talking is before 2 years. so that time they need to trust you, they need ... they don't need that you are doing

something, they know you can do, so it was hard” Jacob. Telephone interview.

06.02.2011

Also, students who migrated because of some economic problems blame it all on the fact that it is not just the jobs but also the fact that the Finns in Kemi Tornio area do not trust foreign people. It is true that for there to exist any form of relationship between two strangers, there need to be trust (Atoungha, 2010.) Having international students in the Kemi Tornio Area is still a new situation and a lot of people are obviously finding it hard to adjust. Nevertheless, a lot of changes have occurred between for instance, 2006 and 2011. More foreign students say they feel more comfortable nowadays in Kemi Tornio area than a few years ago and more and more students are even able to rent apartments, and make new Finnish friends in Kemi now than before. Before now, students complained they could not get services as simple as renting an apartment in the private market (Vahertimo 2010.) Nowadays lots of students are able to do so, which means the relationship between the Kemi Tornio people and the foreign students, is getting better.

“I can see it that now after Christmas, many of those students have moved from kilikinraintie to the city... That’s positive thing.” Ikäläinen. Personal interview.

23.02.2011

No problem single handedly led to international students’ migration. Evidently some factors were stronger than others, but it takes both hands to tie a knot; meaning students moved because of several reasons and most importantly some of the less obvious factors were bought up. Some students admitted that they migrated because they were either ignorant or simply misled by students who had been in Kemi before them.

“People who studied in Kemi advised me that life was easy in Helsinki”

So some students do not blame their migration on any particular reasons, but rather on their own curiosity and failure to stick around longer to find out for themselves what was good about studying in Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences

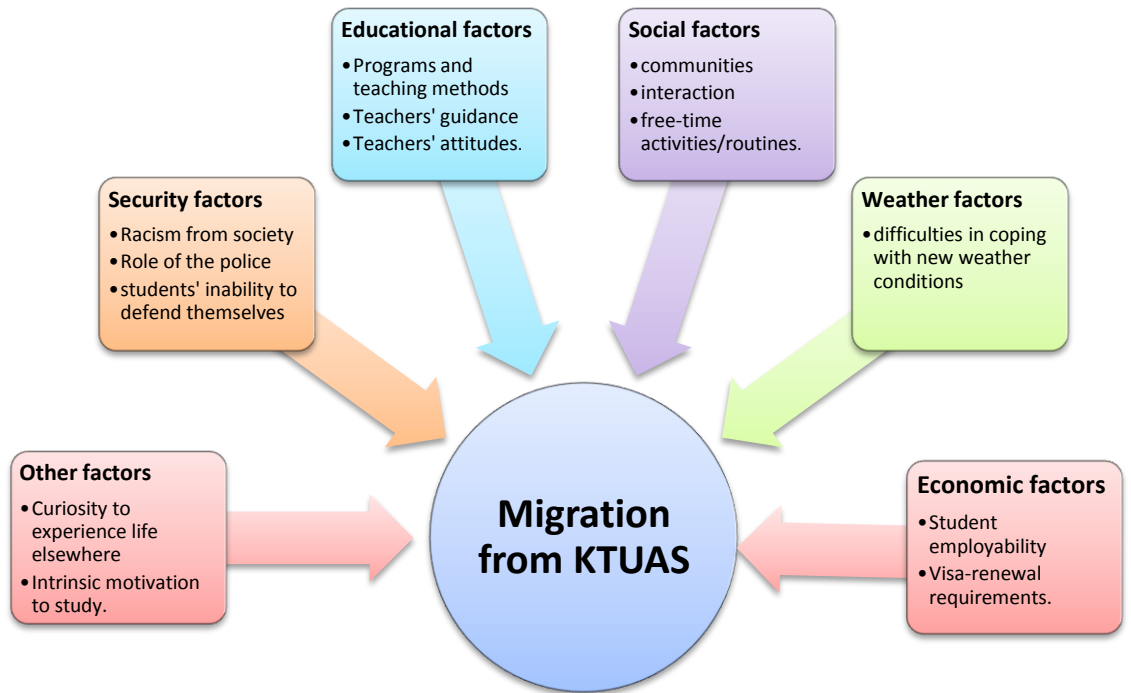


Figure 13. Factors that jointly led to International students' migration

Figure 13 summarizes the different factors that are jointly responsible for the international students' decision to migrate from the Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences. These factors do not only concern the students who have left but some of the present international students are facing these same problems. That is why I thought it would be important to highlight certain issues and experiences that the former students dared to share with me for the first time, so that a lot could be learned and some things could be improved.

6.6 Regrets about migration from KTUAS

When asked if the students regretted their decision to migrate from KTUAS, no student answered "yes" to the question and about 40% of the respondents said they partially regret their decision. They think that they would have loved to stay if they had options.

"Kemi Tornio is perfect for studies. I learned a lot while I was there. I regret partially because here in Helsinki, students don't get taught often. Only assignments and independent work...too much distractions unlike Kemi"

Up to 50% of the respondents said they do not regret their decision to migrate and this was mostly because they feel it is going to take a long time for adequate changes to happen.

The table below shows how the students feel towards their decision to migrate from KTUAS to other cities.

Table 3. Respondents' reaction towards migration.

Any regrets for migrating?	Percentage of responses
Yes	0%
No	50%
Partially	40%
No Response	10%
Total of Responses received	90%

About 10% chose not to respond to the question probably because they did not just want to, or because they did not see how the question would help them.

6.7 How preventable was the decision to migrate?

Up to 35% of the respondents said they were certain that their migration from Kemi Tornio could have been prevented.

“Better atmosphere. Decrease in hostility from Kemi region. Better English speaking teachers”

“..interaction between international and Finnish students built up..”

Had there been more serious efforts to guarantee foreign student's security, improvement of spare-time activities and student interaction as well as better language competences of the teachers, some students definitely would not have migrated. Another 35% said “maybe” their migration could have been prevented. They believed things could change but, it takes a long time and planning to make significant changes. However about 30% said nothing could have been done to prevent their migration because certain problems cannot be dealt with, such as the

weather factor. Others said they could not expect their whole families to move to Kemi Tornio, so this too could not be fixed.

“I don't think, coz my family wasn't able to move to Kemi”

The question of prevention also is linked with some of the students' actual purpose of coming to Kemi Tornio in the first place. For one who has reasons other than studies, no amount of motivation would prevent him/her from migrating. Over half of other suggestions students made centered on the job situation while a few others mentioned the educational and security aspects.

6.8 How many students have returned to KTUAS and why?

About 95% of the respondents that migrated have not returned to their studies. Finding out why students have returned to Kemi Tornio would ease understanding of changes that have occurred over time.

“... I have to come here back in north for family purposes.. I was tired of big city...I lost my time with myself and decided to come back to Kemi and have quiet life.. also I had the chance to take back my study place so I took it and of course” Nelly.

Personal interview.22.02.2011

So for the remaining 5% that moved to Kemi, some things had actually changed, making them see the opportunity to study in KTUAS from a different perspective. Not only did it concern their personal life but also, they found Kemi more suitable and peaceful to study in, compared to the hectic life in the big cities. Students who had migrated earlier needed to experience life elsewhere and in this case, they learned to appreciate their lives in Kemi Tornio Cities. Besides, the readiness of KTUAS to readmit drop-outs was what motivated these students to migrate back to Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences to resume their studies.

I inquired if international students' migrations have been triggered by certain aspects of Kemi and Tornio communities. I tried to find out what impressions students have about the people of Kemi Tornio cities and how this affected them. Out of all students, 3 students did not give any responses and some of them explained that they did not stay here long enough to pass any judgments.

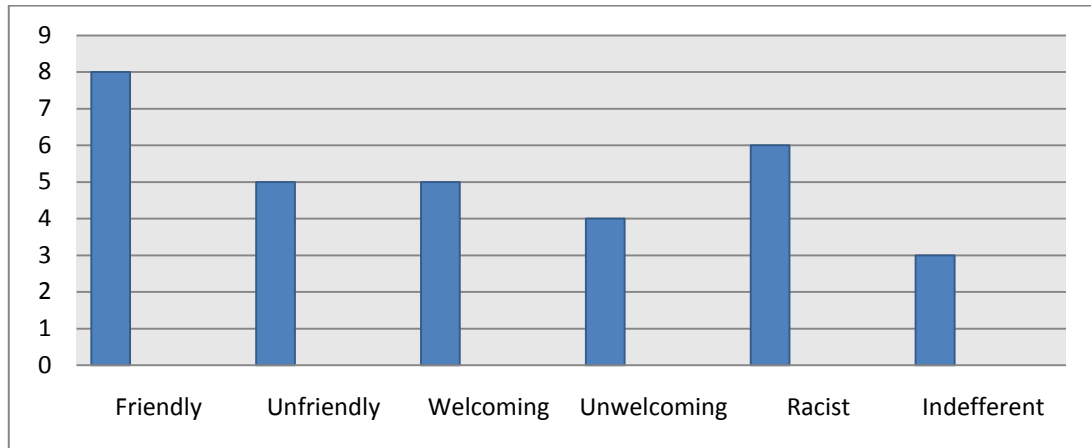


Figure 14. Overall opinion about the people of Kemi and Tornio Cities

As demonstrated on the figure above, slightly above half the number of respondents think the people of Kemi and Tornio cities are quite friendly and welcoming and that, they are willing to communicate with foreign people despite that the communication barrier is challenge. Nevertheless, a good portion of the students are of the opinion that the locals of Kemi and Tornio are racist, unwelcoming and unfriendly.

“some Kemi people are Racist, unfriendly and unwelcoming. Like one day I got to the supermarket, I noticed the security guard following me. They’re following me like I got something, but I had not taken it out of the supermarket.. Thomas.

Telephone interview. 06.02.2011

Some students think the people of Kemi and Tornio are suspicious towards them and do not want them anywhere around, because of the direct acts they have witnessed. Nonetheless, quite often when people are faced with strangers, the first reaction is withdrawal and sometimes this leads to various interpretations. It may also concern the culture; Finns are generally more individualistic and keep a respectable amount of distance when physically confronting someone, whereas the African culture is more communal in actions and decision making. (Atoungha 2010, 56.) It is no wonder why some respondents have mentioned that the Finns in this area have a very indifferent attitude and avoid interaction with foreign students.

Despite the diverse opinions students had to express about the locals of Kemi and Tornio cities, 60% of the respondents said their feelings towards the people had no contribution to their migration. Another 15% of the respondents said their decision to migrate was also deep-rooted in the attitudes of the locals towards them. These

respondents felt the solution was to migrate to other places where they would be treated better by a more receptive society. The remaining 25% said their decision to migrate was only partially influenced by their opinions about the locals in Kemi and Tornio.

6.9 General satisfaction of studies in Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences

The international students that participated in this research were asked about their satisfaction during their studied in KTUAS and these factors were grouped under two categories: positive and negative aspects about KTUAS and life in general in Kemi and Tornio Cities.

During their studies here, the students actually liked certain aspects about the cities of Kemi and Tornio like the peace and quiet and the low cost of living and transportation but there are certain peculiar things about the University that they liked. About 95% of the admirable aspects were centered in the planning of services and overall running of KTUAS.

The students BIT students were particularly very satisfied that they were provided with laptops to enable them study even at home. Also the idea of having an “international student tutoring” forum on the KTUAS moodle where students could freely discuss matters and get help was appraised to be a good way of assisting students. Students responded that the good student-teacher cooperation was quite an asset and they also liked the method and standard of teaching. Others expressed that teachers are more available to students even without appointments and some teachers are very supportive in helping students with their personal crisis. Despite the insufficiency of English materials in the library, the Library facilities and peaceful reading environment was also one aspect of the Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences that the students liked.

Another aspect liked was good sporting facilities provided by KTUAS, and the students “get-together” that is often organized on the Finnish national Independence Day.

“..the sporting facility was good... that’s one of the favorite parts I enjoyed going to, that’s the one thing that made me good to be there actually. And I got to meet some good guys.” Thomas. Telephone interview. 06.02.2011.

Through extracurricular activities and sports facilities arranged by the KTUAS, some students got the opportunity to meet other people and socialize. Also appraised was the nearness of the student apartments to the program units. Not everyone however accepted this; BIT students lived in the student apartments that are closer to the Technical unit so they saw this as a positive thing whereas the Social services and Nursing students whose program units are in town saw the distance to be a huge problem.

Nevertheless, the respondents also had a lot to say about what they disliked about the Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences during their studies. 35% of the total number of respondents stated that they could not comment on the question and some of them justified this, saying they studied in this university only for a very short while. Dislikes regarding educational issues made up 62% of the responses gotten. Students clearly disliked the English language competences and discriminatory attitude of some teachers, and the unavailability of English language materials to read even in preparation for tests and exams. The student union was also brought up as point of dislike.

“the student union was not practical. It was made of the ruling elites. People who had status or people who’re heard... It is called a student union but that’s just a terminology because it never featured anywhere...It was totally misorganized, totally mismanaged. Its role was not seen to the others..” Sebastian. Telephone interview. 06.02.2011

As a student Union, KETOAKKU is out to represent the students of KTUAS and deliver their voices to those who make the decisions (Laukkanen 2011). This seems not to be working out because a similar research (Vahertimo 2010) proved that students are not satisfied with the work of the Student Union. So even though there is already students’ representation in KETOAKKU, the majority of the students do not feel that they are well represented or consulted.

The students’ accommodation was also a point of dislike in 15% of the responses. The respondents complained about high rents, low quality and about the long

distance from the student apartments to study units in the Kemi city center, which made life challenging in the winter. Most of all some of the respondents say that what they disliked most is the rigidity of the university towards executing changes.

“We can do something, it goes slowly but it’s the right way. Nothing happens overnight.” Ikäläinen. Personal interview. 23.02.2011

Changes being made already in the KTUAS are probably not yet noticeable by the students because they have left already and also because it takes time to plan and change already existing systems. More so, it is possible to rent apartments of one’s choice but that too definitely comes at a higher price.

23% of the respondents disliked that there were quite few activities for students to interact and familiarize with each other outside their studies, and also strongly disliked that there is very little interaction between themselves and the Finnish students.

“from KTAMK everything is ok, but only thing problematic is that there is no interaction between Finnish and international students”

In summary, students disliked quite many aspects of KTUAS; from the student apartments to the organization of spare time activities, student representation in KETOAKKU and the overall attitudes they got from some of the teachers and the fact that nothing was done to investigate the latter.

6.10 Proposals for improvement: what it would take to prevent migration

When asked to suggest proposals for improvements to be carried out in Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences, 10% of the participants said according to them all was good and 20% either said no comment or left the question empty. A couple of them mentioned that they cannot exactly pin-point what needs to be improved because they moved since 2008 and do not know about the recent changes.

“I only studied there for 6 months, no complain”

Some of the issues raised were about equal treatments for all students enrolled in KTUAS, be it full time or as exchange students.

“I realized like, exchange students are given more priority than us when we first started, all the attention is focused on the exchange students... I couldn't get a place to stay there and it was free place but I couldn't get there. It is like reservikatu is reserved for exchange students or students from Russia or something like that So basically everything should be all equal, it is like there are standards for guys in Kemi or students.” Thomas. Telephone interview. 06.02.2011

Students proposed that there should be improvements in the standard of treatment between everyone in terms of housing support and overall support. Students proposed that International students should be given equal assistance as exchange student since they both have similar needs and wants.

Also students feel that the relationship between students and the staff should be improved.

I was shy to talk what are the real issues that I'm going through like those colds and so on. Nelly. Personal interview. 22.02.2011

Some students admitted they were shy to express their problems because they felt they might be misunderstood or paid no attention to.

Students all get an information guide upon admission to KTUAS but they feel that this information is either too skimpy or practicalities are left out. International students would like to read about the experiences of past students to learn from their experiences. Students would also like to learn more about the limitations of the Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences as regards its ability to influence students' employability.

In addition, students suggest that there need be more practical classroom lessons about dressing and coping in the winter. “

“It was said and put in the Moodle but it's this year I have known how to dress for winter. So maybe if there was some good teachings on those kinds of..personal like having somebody to really see what I'm dressing.” Nelly. personal interview. 22.02.2011

Students think more practical information would go a long way to familiarize them with what to do, because it might be easy to read on the computer but knowing in reality what to do, is hard.

Some students suggest that it would be good to have another social worker, but this time from a multicultural background. This would ease the fear of contact and discussion on certain peculiar cultural dilemmas they might be unable to mention elsewhere. This seemed to be a good idea but after discussing this with the current social worker, it might be impossible considering that there are many nationalities and KTUAS cannot get a social worker from every cultural background.

“I can understand that very well but I think it’s very difficult, then we should have a worker from every culture and that’s maybe impossible. I think that more important would be to find a way that the discussion could be open.”

Sipila Personal interview. 03.02.2011

Another social worker might be a good but unpractical idea, but what could be done to help the situation might be to work more on the communication flow and staff cultural competences, to encourage students to communicate more.

In terms of exchange opportunities, the respondents proposed there an improvement in the dissemination of information to the students. International students’ eligibility to participate in certain programs could be better clarified to reduce frustration and disappointment of the students in the end.

Students also proposed that there could be at most one course per teacher in each semester, and a lot more should be done to provide as much study materials in English language as there are to Finnish students. Also, the technical students proposed that there be more Finnish lessons per year.

The security of students in Kemi has been questioned, judging from the experiences of students and students suggest that a lot more should be done to prevent students from getting harmed rather than worrying about damages.

“they should try to prevent rather than cure”

About the quality of the student apartments, students suggest that there should be an improvement in the interior or at least internet connections done and added to the rents as it is done in other cities.

“The school didn’t talk to the housing agents to give us the connection, so that people would be studying while they’re still at home.” Morris. Telephone interview.

06.02.2011

The student union is there for the students but unfortunately, exercising its role remains questionable to a good number of international students. Respondents proposed that KETOAKKU should improve the organization of extracurricular activities and also put more effort to market these activities to students.

Economically, a lot of students would like KTUAS to do more to market the international students to the local entrepreneurs, in order to improve students' employability. Also students suggest that there could be more on campus employment opportunities for the students to support the students financially.

In a nut shell, the respondents stated that it was a good idea to find out about what they think and more importantly, words should be put into noticeable changes.

“Good but more useful if it had come earlier when I was there.”

Generally the respondents all thought this questionnaire was good because even though they have migrated, it gave them the opportunity to be heard and hopefully influence. Some students thought these questions could have been asked while they were still studying in Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences. It is for this reason that I decided to have a talk with some of the current students to find out what they are going through and also advice to that effect.

A lot of the respondents stated that international students have a lot of expectations as they come to study and so it would quite helpful if they get sufficient moral support from KTUAS members of staff, student tutors, and also the senior students should be willing to advice, guide and share experiences. Students as well expressed that they would love to find out about the positive changes that would be carried in the future based on the information in this research.

7 DISCUSSION AND REVIEW OF RELIABILITY

The first section of this chapter will be a discussion about the results and the validity/reliability of my research. In the last part, the research process will also be discussed. The results of this research are not only applicable to the international students who have moved, but it concerns the current international students' as well. Therefore getting a sustainable solution would make KTUAS more appreciable, fewer students would migrate before completion of their studies and the future international students would benefit from the positive changes made now. Having international students in the Kemi Tornio cities enriches and promotes internationalization in the University and the community amongst other things, so rather than treat international students' migration as a concern of KTUAS only, resources could be employed from the municipalities as well to target the issue of problem.

Summary of results

In addition to the prior knowledge about the known unemployment situation of international students in Kemi and Tornio Cities, the research confirmed that international students' migration from the KTUAS is triggered by other very important issues like insecurity, lack of social activities, level of education and the harsh weather conditions.

The results proved that educational factors are very important contributors to International students' migration (22%). International students migrate from KTUAS because they are quite disappointed with the treatment they received from some teachers. International students consider KTUAS to be their very first community and so being ill-treated by some teachers is such a turn off. At this point I cannot confirm how true this claim is, but because a handful of students gave the same complaint I think it is quite sad that nothing has been said about the issue.

Many respondents also feel that the KTUAS is not doing its best to equip the library with English materials and that the Finnish lessons are not sufficient. I observed that a lot of these complaints come from those students who did not stick around long

enough, because several changes have been carried out to this effect. There are more English language materials in the library nowadays, and in my 3 years of study in KTUAS, we have had as many Finnish language courses as there need be. Also, no matter how much is offered during the academic year, students need to take the responsibility to enroll in extra courses in Finnish and practice a lot. Some Finnish courses could be done online and some information concerning such courses was sent via the KTUAS mailing system to all students, sometime in December 2010.

Moreover, social factors featured to be another contributor of international students' migration from the University. Many students complained that there is very little interaction with the people of Kemi and Tornio and this is similar with Vahertimo's research (2010, 22) which stated that 43.8% of her respondents complained of prejudice from the same people of Kemi and Tornio cities. Respondents in this research also complained of the lack of "fun-activities" in Kemi and Tornio, besides studies, but I interpret this to mean poor communication about possibilities and activities organized. I had a discussion with some members of staff in KTUAS and through them I learned that KTUAS pays up to 5000 Euros as rents for the sporting facilities in Kemi and Tornio.

"The main thing is that you can continue with your hobby which you had in your home country. So that's the main idea for me that you don't need to have a break here in Kemi if you have some hobby which you love or like. So that's main thing and that's why we can give you information about what you can do here in Kemi."

Jukka. Personal interview. 23.02.2011

KTUAS' goal is to ensure that students do not lose track of their hobbies during their studies, and at the moment arrangements are being made for girls to have swimming lessons. There is a gym facility in the Health care unit which is open to all students. Furthermore, there are halls for boys' football and basket ball games in Kemi and Tornio.

In addition, KTUAS does not only promote group activities and group sports but also individual talents. Currently the KTUAS is sponsoring 1 student to promote his skills to compete in "Taekwondo" competitions (kind martial arts).

So on one hand, it is a problem of communication meaning information has to be effectively communicated to all the students about games and other opportunities for

activities being organized. On the other hand, students have to be more willing and motivated to participate by suggesting activities to the administration of KTUAS. Such international students' initiatives have led to the organization of the "Chinese event" on 2nd Feb 2011 and the "all African event" on April 8th 2011. So in my opinion, there are a lot of activities going on already but the problem is little communication and less motivation.

Insecurity (15%) has also been confirmed as one crucial factor that compels students to migrate from Kemi. Several students recounted the event of 2008 when some African students were threatened with a gun which was later proclaimed as a replica; mostly stating how this was especially frightful and confusing for them. In 2008, 1 students' meeting was held including the police but this was the last. Students later got into trouble but they were quite disappointed because the police stressed that they should not retaliate, yet little was done to secure their wellbeing. What I understand here is that students were basically powerless and being warned not to retaliate, migration was a good option.

To my surprise, the weather of Kemi had a huge impact on many students' decisions to migrate (33%). The weather of Kemi posed a challenge to the students and the biggest issue was that nothing can be done to change the situation. Few of the students managed for a while but they thought there could have been more practical information on how to survive in the winter.

Accommodation complaints made 15% of the reasons that led to international students' migration. Students find the apartments far, low standard quality and more students found it hard to get apartments. In a similar research Vahertimo (2010,19) proved that 53.1% of her respondents were dissatisfied with the accommodation provided for students. From my interview with Ikäläinen Jukka (accommodation officer) he acknowledged that there was a shortage of apartments especially for students in Tornio but the municipality has promised to work better on the matter in the coming year. Nonetheless, there are apartments available in different levels but the prices are comparatively higher and the living arrangements differ. So it all depends on students' choices and budget, and already many students are beginning to take that initiative by moving from the student apartments to private ones.

As a confirmation of prior speculations, economic problems like unemployment featured as one reason for international students' migration from KTUAS.

Review of Reliability

This section of my thesis focuses on the validity and reliability of the research and the last part covers the limitations of the methods used in collecting information.

Throughout my research one thing I had in mind was making sure that the information I provide is valid. Interplay of methods was adopted, to this effect; use of questionnaire, interviewing, books articles, emails, and experience to come up with the data presented. In November 2010, with the permission of the then acting vice-rector- Keränen Hannele, I got some information about international students' admitted between 2008 and 2010, from the Student Affairs office.

With support from KTUAS, I reached all the respondents in their various locations, except for 2. More than the majority of international students' nationalities were represented in the research, by different international student groups. Before meeting, I spoke with the students about confidentiality and anonymity of their responses so as to ensure their trust and motivation to open up in their responses. Meetings with the students were done at their convenience and choice of location. The last question on the questionnaire tried to find out how valid the students considered the questions.

“The questionnaire is good and it will help KTAMK to improve.”

“I think this questionnaire as well as the research work will try to give some idea as to why students are leaving.”

I asked the respondents' opinions about the questions because their motivation to respond to certain questions might depend on their judgment of the questions.

Moreover the questionnaire was framed and reframed to measure all the possible causes of migration that my research was all about. Also both open and closed ended questions were used, directly framed to avoid misinterpretation or guessing and saturation was reached in certain aspects of students' migration like the economic and educational issue. Only 1 question was misinterpreted by a couple of students, even though their responses were not so far from the intended response.

All telephone interviews have been recorded and transcribed with the permission of the respondents, for the purpose of this research even though not available for the

public. Apart from the staff members, the names of the international students who participated in this research have been totally altered to protect their identity, and I promised to have the questionnaires and recordings destroyed as soon as I was done with my research, to maintain anonymity. Some of the quotations from telephone interviews have been shortened to avoid, break offs and difficulties in hearing some parts of the conversations.

I feel satisfied with my research but nevertheless, there are some of the limitations of the research methodology that are worth mentioning.

One problem I had was the Finnish language barrier, being that Finnish is not my first language. This posed as a limitation to me because looking at research done before me about International students, a lot of resources were books and articles in Finnish language. I think I could have had more to say had there been just as many resources in English.

Telephone interviewing was quite stressful, and 2 interviews were mistakenly deleted. I had to skip certain parts of the interview while replaying them because the accent was unclear or the respondent's background was noisy.

Research Process

When I first arrived Kemi in September 2008, we had a full class of students from about 10 different countries with about 21 students in BSS2. But by the end of the year, that population had downsized leaving just about 5 different nationalities with a total of 8 students. I was really concerned about what the possible reasons could be, besides what people tell to the university administrators. Besides, I was just getting to adjust to that very multicultural environment and it seemed really interesting. However it did not occur to me yet that my topic could come from this very migration issue.

In 2010, we had to come up with preliminary thesis plans and after thinking about a variety of possible topics, the only one that stood out to me was the migration issue in Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences. I am in the midst of the ongoing migration, so why not make this my thesis topic? There were similar theses done

about international students, but to me my idea sounded a little different and more precise. I was convinced it sounded like a bright idea but how interesting or important would it be for the others? First I spoke to my friend about some ideas and later spoke to a few other administrators in the international office during summer. They were so supportive and urged me to do this, and even mentioned how anxious they already were, to read my work. Later in August 2010, I made a proposal to the acting vice-rector of KTUAS- Keränen Hannele, and got her approval. What encouraged me even more was that having spoken to some members of the administration in KTUAS, I realized that the research would positively affect the students. The results of the thesis might be used to shape some of the development plans in KTUAS targeting the international students and student body as a whole.

I later made an appointment with Sipila Maria who was appointed to me as a collaborating member of staff from the student affairs sector. We had our first discussion about the topic and how it could be used by KTUAS. At this juncture it was time to start writing. However, this did not happen as soon as I had imagined. I had done thesis writing during my previous university studies in Cameroon, but when compared it to the models in Finland, I discovered some disparities. This certainly meant I could not just start immediately without first reviewing a few Finnish Thesis models, to get an understanding. I read past thesis works and past questionnaires, and I came up with my first questionnaire which was about 4 pages long. In a review meeting with my supervisors, I was advised to narrow down exactly to the focus of my thesis.

Also, to make my work lighter, I shared my work into phases. Firstly, I administered the questionnaires, conducted interviews and proceeded to the literature review and then other things later fell in place. I wrote in bits and submitted them to my supervisors for correction and feedback.

It was not all easy for me. The list of withdrawn international students was quite lengthy and so together with my supervisors and Sipila Maria, we downsized it to about 3 study groups between 2008 and 2010. Yet it was not so easy getting in touch with all these students. I got 20 respondents out of 22 whom I sought out to contact. It sounds quite successful but I had to meet these respondents physically and it took a while to get them to trust me with the information they provided. Some had travelled abroad and others had changed contact numbers. Nevertheless, I had a very

good experience despite the difficult times. I had the opportunity to listen to the stories of international students who migrated from KTAMK. It was an interesting experience to me because many of them let me into parts of their lives and stories unknown to many.

I had talks with the present BSS3students (17.02.2011) and individually with other international students from different study programs. This also let me into certain issues which I felt needed airing so that things could get better and students would accomplish their goals here. I appreciated the opportunity to discuss about coping in Kemi, based on my experiences and also on the mistakes others regretted to have made in the past.

Nonetheless, there are a few things I would have loved to cover in this research. I stumbled on some conflicting issues about the curriculum and also some information about discriminatory acts of some few teachers towards international students. These were all aspects I would have liked to explore but due to the specifications of my research, I only had to suggest them for further research.

Also, the research questionnaire was quite precise but after collecting the responses, I discovered that a couple questions had been better omitted. I asked the respondents to mention what they would like to know more about. The responses were not too informative and a few responses were quite abstract.

Furthermore this research enabled me explore my interests i.e. finding solutions to real problems. Many figures were used for illustration of information and on the other hand I put my artistic skills to good use. Overall having developed my research skills, I would admit that this was a very beneficial experience for me. I got a lot of assistance from the staff of KTUAS and current students had interesting opinions on international students' migration.

8 SUGGESTIONS

As an assignment based research, the results of my research are intended to serve as a guide to the Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences for further research towards preventing international students' migration. Since international students' problems derive from different aspects, it is therefore important that planning should consider the utilization of different strategies. Even though it requires a lot of hard work, planning and commitment, the conclusion is that migration could be prevented through a greater cooperation with the staff and also the people of Kemi and Tornio cities, to which the international students belong.

Adding to the proposals made by the respondents, the sub chapters that follow unravel some suggestions which I consider as little steps that could tackle International students' problems and in effect reduce or prevent migration.

Communication/Information transmission

Miscommunication is something that seemed to be the core of the respondents' overall complaints as they complained about being misled to apply for study programs abroad when they are ineligible. Some changes have just taken place in recent years; for instance it was only in autumn 2010 that international students' eligibility to take part in "Erasmus" exchange opportunities was confirmed.

My suggestion is that, international students should be notified about changes that occur and also Staff members in charge could inform students as soon as program rules change, so that they do not wait endlessly with high expectations.

Also many students before coming to Finland, less-frequently used computers and still have a hard time adapting to it. In this case my suggestion is that in addition to notices sent via email about activities organized, students could be informed verbally during lessons, by teachers or student tutors. This way, it would be easier to know how motivated students are to attend, and also to know if there need to be modifications.

Through this medium it is guaranteed that every student gets informed and this would already test how workable a plan is. In February 2010 twice, the students of KTUAS were informed in class by the teachers about days for summer job applications in the employment office and Leipä Tehdäs (Multicultural activity center in Kemi) and international students' attendance was impressive.

Students' involvement in planning

Having spoken with some organizers and read past researches, it is known that a lot of students do not show up when activities are organized. My experience as an international student and my interaction with other international students, tells me that this is because quite few students are involved in the planning of these activities. What must be considered is that, multiculturalism means diverse.

What I suggest is, hosting larger discussions like the "international students' quality afternoon", on the 19th Jan 2010. During such sessions all students can decide together and agree on the nature of games or activities they would love to do and students would be even more motivated if they are encouraged to teach and learn some games from their own cultures. With this sense of responsibility and involvement in planning their own activities, students would definitely be more committed than when activities are just arranged and announced to them.

Forum of experiences

As a 3rd year student, I have had to share my experiences both individually and with groups of students who are in their first year. Students are quite interested to know about the facts and also the experiences of past students, and coming from the students is more believable. Past experiences retold, help them integrate fast, cope better with the new system and they also understand that what they are going through has been experienced by others and they too can succeed. I would suggest that there be a column on the KTUAS web page as well, for these kinds of experiences as there are on web pages of other universities.

Enhancement of students' employability

Many students blame KTUAS for not helping them get jobs but what I think is that, the administration needs to inform the students again officially about its role as an educational institution, which is to educate. From my discussion with Sipila Maria it is true that if jobs have to be arranged for the International students, the same would have to be done for the Finnish students. So clarifying this to the international students would guide them in reshaping their expectations and taking initiative of their own affairs. KTUAS is doing its best already to equip the international students with sufficient information to familiarize them with the working policies and working tradition in Finland, through use of lectures and seminars.

On the other hand, I had some discussions with my research teacher and one way through which KTUAS could link students to the job market could be to appoint someone to make local negotiations. In some nursing homes for instance, there are often old people in need and willing to pay for home care and house help. 2nd year students in the Healthcare and Social Services departments could do this kind of work. So though it's not the role of KTUAS to arrange jobs, there could be possible ways of promoting International students' employability in Kemi and Tornio.

Aspects for future research

Some new issues popped up in the process of my research and so I decided to suggest the most interesting them, for further investigation.

What puzzled me more was the discriminatory attitude by some teachers. This information to me is quite unfamiliar but as well a serious issue that needs to be investigated.

In conclusion, this research proved that international students' migration from Kemi Tornio University of Applied Sciences is preventable. Students made certain suggestions implying they might have been prevented from withdrawing had it been there was more attention on issues like security, more conducive learning atmosphere and a more receptive society in Kemi and Tornio cities.

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APPENDIX

Survey questions

Dear student,

I would highly appreciate if you spend a few minutes of your time to fill in this questionnaire. This questionnaire is meant for academic purposes and any information you provide would be kept confidential and anonymous. Thank you for your time.

1. Age:

2. Gender: Male Female

3. Nationality:

4. Current occupation:

5. Current municipality of residence:

6. Year of admission to KTAMK:

7. Field of studies in KTAMK:

8. Duration of studies in KTAMK:

10. Did you face any problems at all while studying in KTAMK? Yes No

11. From where did these problems derive?

School

Home

Kemi Tornio society

Personal issues

None of the above (please briefly state other problem sources below)

12. Which of these factors prompted your decision to move? (You may tick more than one factor)

- ❖ Social Factors (family ties, friendship, relationship, etc)
- ❖ Security issues
- ❖ Religious factors
- ❖ Educational factors
- ❖ Atmospheric/weather conditions

❖ Other factors. Please mention them: _____

13. Please explain your previous answer(s) here (from Qu 12):

14. Are there any economic/financial reasons that prompted you to move? Yes No

15. If yes, please briefly state these reasons: _____

16. Do you regret your decision to move? Yes no Partially Very much

17. Is there something you think could have been done differently to prevent you from moving? Yes No Maybe

18. Please briefly explain your previous answer (Qu 18): _____

19. Have you returned to your studies in KTAMK? Yes No

20. If yes, why? _____

21. What is your opinion of the people of Kemi/Tornio (society as a whole)?

❖ Friendly

❖ Unfriendly

❖ Welcoming

❖ Unwelcoming

❖ Racist

❖ Indifferent

❖ Other. What? _____

22. Did your view of the people of Kemi/Tornio influence your decision to move?

Yes No Partially Maybe

23. Freely tell in your own words: what you like (d) about studying in KTAMK

24. What did (do) you dislike about KTAMK?

25. What do you think could be improved in KTAMK? (Choose from all aspects)

26. What would you like to get more information about, from KTAMK?

27. As an international student, what are your expectations now and for the good of future international students in KTAMK?

28. What is your opinion about this questionnaire?
