Motivation of foreign degree students to choose ABC University for their undergraduate studies

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Abstract:
Every year, the number of foreign degree students is increasing in Finnish universities. These foreign students come from a wide range of nations all over the world. Being one of the best universities of applied sciences in Helsinki, Finland, each year ABC University receives applications of students from Vietnam, China, Nepal, Bangladesh, Russia, various African countries and so on. The aim of this qualitative research is to investigate why foreign degree students choose ABC University as the place for their undergraduate studies and from where they acquired primary information about this university. The theoretical framework of this research examined different theories of motivation. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, Alderfer's ERG theory, Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory and the expectancy theory of motivation were reviewed alternately. Moreover, the theoretical framework also includes the marketization and internationalization of higher education and college choice behavior. Focus group interview was chosen to conduct empirical research. The interview results were analyzed thoroughly one by one to find out the answers for the research questions. These results revealed that foreign degree students chose ABC University mainly because of the university’s characteristics and recommendations from friends and relatives. Information about ABC University was acquired from internet and friends of the students.

Keywords: foreign degree students, higher education, motivation, information source

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FOREWORD

To Mr. Sveinn Eldon, thank you for guiding us through the process of this research.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Either temporarily or permanently, the movement of human from one region to another has been observed for centuries. Several tangible and intangible factors have played vital roles in provoking the movement of people from their homeland to foreign land. The geographical, economical, social, cultural, political and religious aspects that influence life can be considered as the major players responsible for inducing migration of people. From twentieth century onwards, the migration of a remarkable number of people has taken place due to one more factor, i.e., education.

For past few decades, abroad study, the practice of going to a foreign country with the purpose of studying, has got an accelerating trend. Though for the concept of studying abroad, education is supposed to be the primary component, there are many other forces shaping its facets and dimensions. All those aspects do not necessarily come into play in every case; however, they create an impact on the way people get motivated for further studies abroad.

People have different types of motives and their sources of motivation vary. Abroad study cannot be an exception to it. It is also accompanied with various motives of people. The motives of different people from different places and background regarding abroad study may be different. As the global education has become phenomenal and diversified, there emerges the necessity of such kinds of studies which track and trace the trends, motives and anticipations of people involved in studies abroad.

This research is one of those studies but it has a much smaller scope as it is primarily concentrated within the circle of foreign degree students studying at ABC University located in Helsinki, Finland. The study basically focuses on finding the motivations of the foreign degree students in choosing ABC University as their school for undergraduate studies.
**1.1 Motivation for choice of research topic**

Simply, the concept that a person studies in another country rather than home country and in the process, also moves to the former with the purpose of studying, is quite popular. Generally, people opt for abroad studies considering a further study on the same field what one has already been studying; however, it is not always the case. Moreover, the period of the study varies according to the study programs aimed. It might be for a longer period of time for example, a complete degree program lasting four years or for a shorter period of time for example, an exchange study program lasting half a year.

To be counted as a literate citizen is not the only purpose of receiving education. People, by nature, want to get further knowledge in the field of their interests. Nowadays, it is widely accepted that the basic education till high school is not any more sufficient to cope up with the demand of the labor market. But it does not mean that everyone after high school want to continue studying. Therefore, there is a contrast in people's mentality that some want to go further and others just get satisfied with what they have already achieved. What is in there that people get motivated to go for further study? The authors are keen to know what motivates some people to go to a university when at the same time some others end the track of formal education and get engaged in an occupation and start a different life.

Every year, the number of foreign students is increasing in Finnish universities. This arouses a set of curiosities concerning the way people get motivated to go to a foreign country for study purpose. What really drives them that they even come up to the decision of leaving their home country? The authors are even more perplexed getting to know that there are people who actually choose just Finland for abroad studies and on top of it, they just choose a particular university in Finland. There are hundreds of countries and thousands of universities in the world, why only Finland and it’s certain university?

Getting introduced to this concept by a teacher, having their mind full of these queries, the authors turn to trace their own lives in retrospect. They too are foreign students in Finland. They have own experiences and are aware of the factors that motivated them to
pursue their studies in Finland. Knowing about own motivations doesn't satisfy their curiosities. An excitement to know more about motivations of all other foreign students grows. An urge to identify the factors those influenced other students, relying upon which, came the decision to choose a certain university is created. Consequently, the motivation for choosing this research topic breaks the ground.

Moreover, there can be a lot of factors contributing for motivation and decision on further studies abroad. Social, economical, cultural, psychological and political factors would be some of them to mention. Considering these, the authors get more interested in knowing the motives and reasons in depth for studying in a certain university in Finland for full degree programs.

1.2 Aim of the study

The study aims at finding the motivational factors that made the foreign students decide to pursue their undergraduate studies in ABC University. The realm of the study also comprises the issues closely related to the main objective of the study. It also intends to disclose the sources of motivation and ways of thinking in students having different national, cultural and educational background. Since the study is based on group discussions, it is more motivated in revealing the details of the issues from small groups of students rather than producing huge statistical results.

This research is expected to disseminate information and knowledge about the subject of research to the existing and perspective students of the ABC University and also to the university itself. The findings of the research are supposed to be meaningful and useful for both the students and the university for various educational and research purposes. The result is also targeted to provide the university some clear hints in managing the marketing and educational aspects from the prospective of foreign stakeholders. Moreover, for the students, it aims to provide the realistic knowhow of the university, its elements and the system.
1.3 Research Questions

Numerous questions can be contemplated to cover the study of motivation. Though highly narrowed, study on motivation of foreign students to choose ABC University for higher studies is still a large chunk to explore. So the authors have tried to focus on two central questions for the core research which are as follows.

1) What motivated foreign students to choose ABC University?
2) In which way and from which sources did foreign students get information about ABC University?

In addition to the main research questions, there are some other questions that are related to the main questions, for which the research has tried to search the answers. Those questions target to supplement the whole concept of the research. Precisely, the study on the basic research questions has got the foremost priority but wherever necessary, the supplementary aspects are also focused.

1.4 Limitations

Vaguely speaking, the study is about the motivations of foreign students to choose a university in Finland for further education. Since there are many universities in many different cities in Finland, it was not possible for the authors to include all of them in this research, provided the level of research and the resources being small and time being short. Neither the research could cover all the three universities of applied sciences located in Helsinki. Moreover, for the intended research, including one certain university was more meaningful. So naturally, being the students of ABC University, the authors have chosen it as the place for the research.

Precisely speaking, the study explores the motivations of foreign students to choose ABC University for their further education. As a consequence, it would have been rele-
vant to choose all the foreign students studying there, which on the other hand, was not possible due to the huge size of the foreign students studying in the university with respect to the size of the research intended. Moreover, the study couldn’t involve as many foreign students as intended due to the time and availability constraints of students.

The area of the research is not capable of formulating a generalized system of understanding the trend of getting into ABC University, in lieu; it collects the result from different particular cases to depict the similarities and differences, remaining in a tight loop. It is not able to look through the academic performances of the students. Neither has it shed a light on all the aspects of living in Finland as a foreign student.

1.5 Background information

1.5.1 Finland

Finland is a Nordic country which is situated in the Fennoscandian region of Northern Europe. With a moderate population of about 5.4 million people, in an area of 338,424 km², Finland as one of the wealthiest countries in the world possesses standardized education, social security and healthcare.

Education is one of the most important fields in Finland. In the Global education ranking 2012 carried out by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), Finland is located at the top of the list. The evaluation criteria includes international test results, literacy rates and graduation rates between 2006 and 2010, examination on quantitative data and qualitative data of education inputs as well as potential outcomes. This also explains why Finland has been chosen to be an ideal destination for more and more international students recently. The higher education system of Finland includes universities and universities of applied sciences (Polytechnics). The quality of education is equal in every university of applied sciences despite the location. This assures that the Finns can obtain the same level of education wherever they live.
All the Bachelor’s degree programs in Finland are free of charge. The tuition fees are covered by the state regardless of nationalities of the students. However, the students have to finance their living expenses and travel costs themselves. Because of no tuition fee on education, there are almost no scholarships available. Person holding a student card can rent cheap flat from student housing companies, can get discounts on school meals and travel costs and can get subsidies at some restaurants and stores. Despite that, the living expenses in Finland are still quite high due to the high living standard. The average monthly expenses for a student in Finland range from 500 to 600 €, depending on the spending habit of the student and the region where one lives. When applying for a residence permit, a student must show the bank statement of at least 6720€ to prove that he or she can cover the living expenses for one year. This residence permit needs to be renewed every year. A full-time student is allowed to work for an average of 25 hours per week. Popular part-time jobs are cleaner, babysitter, personal assistant, newspaper distributor and other simple jobs. More often, students can find professional jobs such as office assistants, translators and so on if they have enough knowledge of Finnish, Swedish or both languages.

1.5.2 Helsinki

Declared as the capital of Finland in 1812, Helsinki was founded by King Gustavus Vasa of Sweden in 1550 on the mouth of the Vantaa River. Already grown as an administrative, university, garrison town, and the biggest industrial city at the beginning of the 20th century, it has become the largest city and the leading seaport in Finland. Though it is located in the far south of the country, it is the northernmost continental European capitals. It is considered as one of the major cities of northern Europe and the major financial, political, educational, cultural and research hub of Finland.

According to population register center (2013), Helsinki has a population of 605,523 making it the most populous urban area. It does not only have the highest population density but also has the largest immigration population in Finland. People from Russia, Estonia, Sweden, Turkey, Somalia, Iraq, China, etc. occupy the larger part of the immigrant population in Helsinki. Moreover, housing a blend of people from more than 130
nationalities with the local population, compared to other Finnish cities, Helsinki clearly has domination on multinational and multicultural dimension of Finland. English is widely accepted by the vast majority of population as a language of communication whenever needed and that has strengthened up the internationalization of Helsinki.

A Helsinki Sanomat article (April, 2013) states that 83 out of 100 largest corporations in Finland have their head offices in the Greater Helsinki area and 84 out of 200 highest-paid Finns live in Helsinki itself. Being the financial center of Finland, Helsinki offers a broad range of job opportunities and career prospects. The employment rate of Helsinki Region (2011) for 15 to 64 years population was 73.9 percent with a staggering 744,600 number of jobs. A major portion of Finland’s GDP is generated in Helsinki Region and there is a growing trend of migration, especially foreigners, to Helsinki for job opportunities and financial prosperity. The industries like telecommunication, electronics, information technology, computer software, media, finance, energy, shipping, food, fashion and so on are the key elements of the daily financial activities of Helsinki.

Helsinki is one of the focal points of Finnish education system. The educational development of Helsinki has a very strong root. In 1828, Finland’s only university which was established in Turku in 1640 was transferred to Helsinki. It is now known as University of Helsinki and has frequently been ranked as a top 100 university by various international university ranking systems. At present, there are five universities and three polytechnics (known as universities of applied sciences) in Helsinki. Other than that, there are a large number of comprehensive schools, upper secondary schools and vocational institutes which are either private, state-owned or owned by municipality. Other than programs in Finnish and Swedish, the number of degree programs offered by various universities in English language is growing rapidly. This has been one of the reasons for Helsinki to attract a huge number of foreign students every year. Helsinki provides ample educational amenities for students and compared to other cities of Finland, it has been the first choice for most of the exchange students, foreign students pursuing whole degree and researchers as well.

On one hand, Helsinki has a wide mix of cultures coming from different places of the world and on the other hand, it is very rich in Finnish culture too. From the National
Museum of Finland to the Finnish National Theater, from Finlandia concert hall to Sibelius Academy and many other important cultural centers of Finland are housed in Helsinki. Some internationally recognized bands like Hanoi Rocks, Stratovarius, HIM, Rasmus and so on originated in Helsinki. Helsinki always gets lively with some musical and cultural happenings around. Many art festivals and sporting events add up the charm of living in the city. It has even been selected as the 2012 World Design Capital which shows that the city recognizes design as a part of social, cultural and economic development.

Helsinki has been listed as one of the best cities to live in the world by various international surveys and researches. It has a very well-functioning public transport system. It is also considered as a very safe and clean city. Though Helsinki too has the harsh Nordic climatic condition, it tops so many superlatives related to Finland that it is obvious for people to get motivated to live there.

1.5.3 ABC

ABC is one of the 27 universities of applied sciences in Finland. It was established in 1996 in Helsinki, the capital of Finland. Primarily, ABC serves the higher education needs of young Finns of Swedish origin and international students with a wide range of study fields including sport, healthcare, social services, business administration, media, culture and technology. It has about 170 staff, 2700 students, 16 Bachelor’s degree programs (three of which are in English) and six Master’s degree programs (two of which are in English). About 10% of the student population originates from 40 different countries. This helps to create an international study environment in the school.

ABC’s vision is to become one of the three most international schools in Finland in terms of students, faculty, research and educational cooperation by 2015. It is also making an effort to be positioned as a leading school in Nordic area and is achieving growth through increased demand from international students. ABC’s internationalization also presents its strong network with universities around the world through exchange programs for students and teachers.
Although ABC uses Swedish as the primary language for instruction, it has similar module and education programs as other university of applied sciences those use Finnish as the primary language for instruction. At present, it has 16 Bachelor’s Degree programs in total, out of which three are taught totally in English. Study programs also include Swedish language courses; Swedish being the second official language of Finland and the main language used in teaching in ABC. During study progress, students have the chance of going abroad for study or internship. Therefore, students can, at the same time, experience new culture and achieve knowledge. This also helps them to broaden their mind and be internationalized without paying a lot of money. These programs attract a lot of applications of international students all over the world each semester. The majority of applications come from Vietnam, China, Nepal and Nigeria. Classes are conducted by Finnish, Swedish-Finnish or foreign teachers. Most of them have Masters or PhD degree and experience in business related job. Thus their teaching method is very professional and theory parts are often illustrated by practical and lively examples. Furthermore, some classes are delivered partly or entirely through internet. Study materials are uploaded to Itslearning, an interactive web-based platform, so that the students can download and review contents easily. Signing up for courses is performed through the university’s intranet and class timetables, news and course grades can also be accessed through it. Moreover, classrooms and the facilities used in teaching are modern and meet the requirements of a good study environment. There is also a library full of textbooks and materials and a reading room which is quiet and ideal for studying especially when the exams come. The cafeteria serves snacks, breakfasts and lunches for teachers and students and the gym provides fitness service.
2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Motivation

Motivation is an inherent part of life. It is basically assumed as the factor that paves the way to success or to certain achievements. It can be considered as a broad term to relate drives, desires, needs, wishes and similar forces. Online version of Oxford dictionary states “motive” as a reason for doing something. The achievement of an act is the consequence of the motive behind it. The visualization of negativity or positivity of a motive is dependent on the objective of the task concerned. People do not always necessarily know what motivates their behavior or they might have limited insight of it. Generally, it is believed that almost everything that is done has a motive, knowingly or unknowingly. With respect to motivation directed to achievement, motives can be broadly categorized into two types, non-conscious (implicit) and self-attributed (explicit). Both motives have different sources; they respond to different types of incentives and they have different classes of behavior on which they can affect strongly.

2.1.1 Implicit Motivation

The motives that come into play without the consciousness of the doer are categorized as implicit motivation. One of the pioneering approaches to analyze implicit motives was developed by Mc Clelland and his colleagues (1953); it is known as Picture Story Exercise (PSE). In this method, ambiguous picture cues are used to create fantasy stories and later, the stories are analyzed indirectly. The PSE stories are classified into three different themes: competing with standard of excellence, unique accomplishments and long term involvement in achievement goals. The accomplishments due to implicit motives are supposed to be rewarding and pleasurable as their major functions are concentrated in selection, giving a sharp direction and energizing the behavior. Moreover, implicit motives are not influenced by conscious awareness and they effect automatically on learning, attentional orientation and behavioral energization. They respond to the incentive cues that present challenging work triggering sense of amusement.
2.1.2 Explicit Motivation

The self-attributed (explicit) motives are those about which a person is aware of and can be verbally expressed. They are a person's self-related knowledge and are useful in goal setting. They are supposed to have a connection with the aims and anticipations aligned to a certain community. They address the decisions and behaviors of an individual pertaining to achieve something that is considered important and desirable. They can be assessed through self-report measures and can even be created in response to others' feedback about own behavior. Explicit motives respond to incentive cues that present socially demanded task. Generally, the behaviors generated by explicit motives are the reactions against the known external stimuli.

Various studies in the past have showed that the implicit and the explicit motives do not overlap remarkably and just co-exist within the person. “The crucial difference between implicit and explicit motives is that the former motivate and the latter channel (or regulate) goal-directed behavior.” (Schultheiss, Oliver C. & Brunstein Joachim C., 2005)

2.1.3 Implicit Achievement Motivation: Approach and Avoidance

Hope of success and fear of failure are two aspects of motivation directed to achievement. An individual can either be punished or rewarded as per the consequence of displaying or not, a goal-directed behavior. The motivational mode, active approach, comes into play for a goal-directed behavior with positive incentive. In that case, a hope of future motive is formed which provides the person an enthusiasm to cope with tougher challenges in the future. On the contrary, when a punishment or a negative incentive is the contingency of showing goal-directed behavior, the motivational mode passive avoidance is observed. If a successful completion of a work has a negative consequence (e.g. heavy criticism, jealousy), a person will be less motivated to perform similar work in future and might develop a fear of success. Moreover, after learning that a punishment awaits if a goal-directed behavior is not displayed and nothing is done to achieve success, the active avoidance motivational mode (against punishment) is formed. Hence, the fear of failure aspect of motivation appears urging the person to master the
challenges by avoiding the punishments due to failures in the future. Lastly, if a person is rewarded for not displaying goal-directed behavior (i.e., doing nothing), which is quite rare, then a passive approach is continued.

Hope of success can also be described as the key to satisfaction or pleasure that is obtained after mastering a challenge whereas the fear of failure is responsible in bringing a relief (from punishment) after the mastery. Though hope of success and fear of failure ignite different aspects of behavior for initiating a task, they show the same destination. So, they are functionally compatible as well.

The socioeconomic status of the family and the neighborhood affects in the motivation for children. The economic condition, human capital, employment and other measures like family and societal structure and turbulence are the major factors concerning the socioeconomic status of a child in relation to motivation.

Motivational activities can be influenced by race and ethnicity through the structural variables like discrimination and racial stereotypes. In children, adolescents and adults of minority group having experiences of discrimination, the risk of undermining motivation is higher. Another perspective of seeing an undermined motivation is the stereotype suggesting a certain ethnic group more productive and intelligent than another. The favored group fears that their performance disconfirms a positive stereotype and the dis-favored group fear that their performance confirms a negative stereotype. For immigrants, the socialization of the family is important to keep motivation in an appropriate level.

2.1.4 Need theory of motivation

Different people have different motives depending on their needs. The needs can be broadly categorized as basic needs and secondary needs. Basic needs include primary elements of life like water, food and shelter whereas the secondary needs can include needs such as self-esteem, affection, status, accomplishment, giving and so on. The mo-
tives of people to fulfill these different kinds of needs get generated consciously or unconsciously. As the time changes, the needs vary and so do the motives.

Sometimes, the motives trigger the creation of self-motivation which completely depends on the individual. Self-motivation can be seen, for example, when a person sets a goal and follows it without losing the hope for it even for a remarkable period of time. In such case, long-term goal can be supplemented by short-term goals and appropriate specific actions. Moreover, in the course of time, skills to solve challenging tasks can be developed and the productivity can be boosted even by constructive imagination. Competence building in certain areas to subsequently transform various weaknesses into strengths also comes into shape. And when the goal is achieved by the virtue of self-motivation, one can evaluate and give feedback to own-self followed by a reward.

2.1.5 Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Abraham Maslow, an American psychologist came up with a theory of human motivation in 1943 popularly known as the Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. In his theory, he has categorized various human needs in five broader layers. His model depends on the assumption that each need is to be satisfied in turn, starting from the bottom layer. So the reason to have different layers of needs is to show that people get motivated to go for the needs on higher layer only when the lower layer needs are fulfilled. The needs depicted in the five layers (from the bottom to top) are the physiological needs, the needs for safety and security, the needs for love and belonging, the needs for esteem and the needs for self-actualization. The five layers of needs have commonly been described using a pyramid diagram having five layers providing the largest area in the bottom for physiological needs and going gradually up to reveal the needs for self-actualization at the top with the smallest area.
a) **Physiological needs**: The physiological needs comprise the most basic elements of life that people need to survive. Those needs include air, water, nutrients, balanced temperature, etc. The needs to be active, to have rest, to sleep and to get rid of wastes also fall under this category of physiological needs.

b) **The safety and security needs**: When the physiological needs are satisfied, the safety and security needs come into play. Physical safety, financial security, health and well being can be the major parts of these needs. The search for stability, protection and the need for order and limits is the basic characteristics of safety and security needs. For example, people want to live in a safe neighborhood, want to have secured job and even want insurance.

c) **The love and belonging needs**: When physiological and safety needs are considerably satisfied, there come the needs for the love and belonging. People start looking up for friendship, intimacy, family and community for interpersonal activities. They show
their belongingness in various kinds of groups and lack of love and belonging causes loneliness and similar kinds of difficulties.

d) The esteem needs: People start looking for self-esteem provided that they have all other three lower layers of needs largely satisfied. They want that they are accepted and valued by others. Esteem needs have two branches; one deals as the need to respect of others, the need for status, fame, glory, recognition, reputation, attention, dignity, appreciation, etc. The other deals as the need for self-respect including feelings like confidence, competence, mastery, and freedom. The negative consequence of this need leads to inferiority complex.

e) The self-actualization needs: This stage of needs is the one that makes a person to realize own potential. People have specific needs and they have desire to achieve what they can with that potential. It is believed that only after the complete satisfaction of the other needs, these needs can be fulfilled. These needs are also termed as growth motivation or being needs. They are the matters that make people most complete.

All of the four lower levels are termed as deficit needs or D-needs. If there is not enough of something, a deficit is felt and a need for it arises. But if all those are fulfilled, then they do not motivate any more. These four lower levels of needs have also been defined in the terms of homeostasis, a process of remaining in a proper balance. So when there is an imbalance in all these four needs, a balanced is to be found in order to remain in a stable condition.

Javis (2005, p.121) lists the characteristics of self-actualized people (adapted from Maslow, 1970) in the following points.

- Accurate perception of reality
- Enjoyment of new experiences
- Tendency to have peak experiences
- Clear moral standards
- Sense of humor
- Feeling of kinship with all people
- Close friendships
• Democratic characters accepting others
• Need for privacy
• Independence from culture and environment
• Creativity and spontaneity
• Problem centered
• Acceptance of human nature
• Resistance to conformity

Although Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is widely accepted, it has not been away from criticisms. Boeree (2006), states that Maslow's methodology for analyzing self-actualization had inadequate sample as only few familiar people for Maslow himself were chosen for the study. He further adds that the self-actualization, in some cases, come before the lower needs are satisfied. He strengthens his opinion by giving the examples of best artists and authors suffered from poverty, bad upbringing, depression, etc.

2.1.6 Alderfer's ERG Theory

Clayton Alderfer has propounded the theory called ERG theory which is quite similar to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory and differs with it by having only three categories, namely, existence needs, relatedness needs and growth needs.

The existence needs shows the resemblance to Maslow's basic needs, the physiological and safety needs. The relatedness needs include the needs pertaining to satisfactorily relating to others. They show the importance of maintaining interpersonal relationships with family, friends and others such as superiors. The social needs like getting public fame and recognition also fall under this category. The growth needs refer to self-development, creativity, growth and competence. They can be considered as the intrinsic needs having similar characteristics with self-actualization described by Maslow.

Alderfer sees the possibility of one getting motivated by the needs at several levels at the same time. He differs with Maslow in that what Maslow describes as the order or
hierarchy of needs. The argument is that even if a need in a lower level is not satisfied, one can pursue for a higher level need. An interesting argument showing the flexibility of the ERG theory can be the example of a “starving artist” who strives for growth needs even though hunger has not been satisfied.

Moreover, the inability to achieve something at a certain level can cause frustration which may lead the person to concentrate more on the needs lying in the lower levels. The ERG theory describes this kind of phenomenon as frustration-regression principle. So as to say, if a growth need is not satisfied, the individual might get motivated to fulfill the relatedness need and if the relatedness need is not achieved, the individual might aim for the existence need. For example, people might concentrate on drinking, eating, making money, etc. to compensate themselves for not achieving higher order needs. So, there is always a possibility of regression to a lower-level need.

On the other hand, there are critiques who point ERG theory as a problematic one to use as it tends to be more empirical and approaches a set of experimental generalities. However, the empirical aspect of ERG has opened the possibility to perform researches on various dimensions of life. It has been tested in various perspectives of life such as job performance, measuring enduring desires, military perspective, cultural application perspective, examining job satisfaction, improvement of technology, etc.

### 2.1.7 Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory

Herzberg and his associates worked on to find a two factor theory on motivation. According to Miner (2005, p.63), the research was conducted to sort out two hypotheses.

1. The factors causing positive job attitudes and those causing negative attitudes are different.
2. The factors and the performance or personal effects associated with sequences of job events extending over long time periods differ from those associated with sequences of events of short duration.
The result of the research produced list of factors leading to job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. These factors later became the integral part of the theory itself. Miner (2005) further states that the outgrowth of achievement, recognition (verbal), the work itself (challenging), responsibility and advancement (promotion) are the five factors for job satisfaction and are considered to be related closely both conceptually and empirically. Their presence in a job marks the satisfaction of a person's basic needs and as a result of which, positive feeling will appear and performance will improve. These factors are also called satisfiers and hence, act as motivators. They satisfy the basic needs related to personal growth and self-actualization. As they have the potential to yield the sense of satisfaction they can be assumed to be the real motivators.

On the other hand, there are factors that consequently produce job dissatisfaction. They are known as dissatisfiers or hygiene factors. Miner (2005) argues that they characterize the context in which the work is performed and names them as company policy and administrative practices, supervision (technical quality), interpersonal relations (especially with supervision), physical working conditions, job security, benefits and salary. Their appropriate receipt by the workers is supposed to wipe out the dissatisfaction and increase the performance to a certain level. However, the fulfillment of these factors does not guarantee an overwhelming amount of positive job feelings or very high level of performance. Koontz and Weihrich (2007, p. 292) mention that their existence in a work environment in high quantity and quality yields no dissatisfaction. Moreover, their existence does not motivate in yielding satisfaction but the lack of their existence would produce dissatisfaction.

According to Koontz and Weihrich (2007), Herzberg's research has been challenged by other researches saying that the way of his investigation has prejudiced his findings. For instance, the common practice of people to attribute good results for own efforts and blaming others for bad results is said to have prejudiced his findings. His motivation-hygiene theory is presented in three volumes and although the basics of the theory have remained as it is, it has been elaborated considerably.

Besides, a fundamental way of keeping up motivation in the work places can be rewards. “Employers who want their workforces to be positively engaged with their work,
to participate in continuous improvement programs and to work beyond contract when required must have in place a reward package which does not demotivate and which, as far as is possible, motivates positively. In this regard, the total reward concept referred to above has plenty to offer as it incorporates intrinsic motivators alongside extrinsic motivators” (Torrington D. et al, 2008, p. 640).

2.1.8 The Expectancy Theory of Motivation

Expectancy theory gives another dimension to see how people get motivated. Koontz and Weihrich (2007, p.293) describe psychologist Victor H Vroom to be one of the leaders to explain the expectancy theory. His basic point is that people get motivated in striving for a goal if they see worth in it and if they see the chances of achieving it by the things they do.

Koontz and Weihrich (2007) add, Vroom's theory theoretically shows that the motivation of people to do anything can be determined by the value they place on the outcome of their effort (whether positive or negative) multiplied by their confidence that their effort will consequently obtain the goal. It means, motivation is a product of expected worth that a person sees on a goal and the probability that the person sees on achieving the goal. Mathematically, it can be stated as “Force = valence*expectancy” where force is the strength of the person's motivation, valence is the person's preference on the outcome and expectancy is the probability that the work will lead to the expected result.

If a person does not want to achieve the goal, the valence is negative and if he/she is indifferent about the goal, the valence is zero. In both of these cases, there will be no motivation. Similarly, if the expectancy is zero or negative, it means that the person has no motivation in achieving that goal. So the force used to do something is dependent on both valence and expectancy. It should, however, be considered that a motive to achieve something might be determined by the desire to acquire something else.

Vroom's theory takes into consideration the importance of individual needs and motivation. It is more realistic and goes together with the concept of harmony of objectives,
i.e., it tries to harmonize the individual's personal goals and the common goals of an organization. It also complies the system of management according to objectives. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in real life, worth of a goal varies among different people, at different places and in different time. So it is not so easy to apply Vroom's theory but it has however logically accurate and clearly explains that the measurement of motivation is a complex calculation.

2.2 The marketization of higher education

According to economic theory, a market is “a set of arrangement by which buyers and sellers exchange goods and services” (Begg et al, 2008, p.37). In a market, the relationship between supply and demand is balanced by price mechanisms. It is believed that markets “provide both greater ‘static efficiency’ (the ratio of outputs at any point in time) and greater ‘dynamic efficiency’ (sustaining a higher rate of growth over time through product and process innovation and better management of resources) than any alternative” (Brown, 2011, p.11). Therefore, marketization has been a trend in almost every field from business to academy. Education, especially higher education is not an exception.

The arguments about whether or not market mechanisms should be brought into higher education have existed for hundreds of years. In the history, there are two main supporters of market mechanisms application who are Adam Smith (1723-1790) and Milton Friedman (1912-2006). Adam Smith – father of economics – believed in “the role of private initiative over public ones in the provision of education, especially as regard higher education” and that “competition stimulated rivalry and emulation, and promoted excellence” (1976:759, quoted by Teixeira and Dill, 2011, p.xiii). As for Friedman, he debated that government should not intervene the cases of families who meet the financial condition. Moreover, he proposed that individual funding would make better use of resources and create university diversity. (Teixeira and Dill, 2011, p.x)

The reason for the “growing visibility” of the market forces in higher education, according to Teixeira and Dill (2011), is the “welfare state crisis”. This crisis results to the lim-
itation of the resources due to increasing social expenditures including higher education. Thus, it is questionable whether the resources used for higher education are spent reasonably and the outcomes meet the expectation of the society. As a result, market mechanisms are applied in higher education with a hope of increasing the productivity of higher education.

Furthermore, according to Maringe and Gibbs (2009), the marketization of higher education is driven by four main elements. The first element is the “massification” of higher education which affects teaching, examination, performance, physical facilities, institutional management, financing and student quality of life. Second, the “expansion and diversification” of higher education are shown not only in different types of higher education providers (universities, polytechnic, vocational school, etc) but also in various curriculums. Next, “the growth of heterogeneity” of higher education is the consequence of the second element and globalization phenomenon. The final element, “the growth of competition” among institutions for funding, students and reputation is also listed as a motive for the marketization of higher education. (Maringe and Gibbs, 2009, pp.30-33)

Brown (2010) characterized the marketization of higher education according to four main segments: institutional autonomy, institutional competition, price and information. Firstly, institutional autonomy refers to “the freedom to specify the product and to procure and deploy the resources to deliver it” (quoted in Molesworth et al, 2010, p.13). In the case of higher education, institutions have the authority in decisions relevant to their staff, number of students, rules and policies, tuition fees, curriculum, etc without any intervention of other parties including the state. This freedom’s extent is directly proportionally to the degree of marketization of a higher education market. In a highly marketized one, institutions might control almost every above aspect. However, in a less marketized one, institutions can only determine a few elements. Secondly, a so-called marketized higher education requires an authentic competition among institutions for enrolments, funds and reputation. In details, new institutions should have opportunity to enter the market to ensure the quality of education service for customers. Moreover, customers or students should be free to choose “what, where and how to study”. Thirdly, the marketization extent of a higher education is also evaluated by the way tuition
fee and subsidization are determined. Last but not least, whether or not accurate and complete information is exposed to students plays an important in deciding the quality of education service. A more marketized higher education should provide students with access to useful information regarding to the institutions and the service they offer.

The variation of marketization in different higher education markets and the arguments about the extent of state’s intervention in higher education results in the introduction of quasi-market in which there are “only some elements of a market introduced to coordinate supply and demand as market mechanisms” (Teixeira and Dill, 2011, p.xiii). These elements include “the competition among higher education providers”, “the privatization of higher education”, and “economic autonomy of higher education institutions” (Teixeira et al, 2004).

### 2.3 Higher education marketing and students as consumers

Education is often assumed as a service rather than a product. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2011), a service has four main characteristics which make it different from a product: intangibility, inseparability, variability and perishability.

![Figure 2. Four service characteristics (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011, p.237.)](image)

Education has been through a commoditization process, transforms to a commodity which can be sold for money in knowledge industry. A product or service is commoditized when it is produced or provided to exchange for money with the purpose of gain-
ing profit. This process is the result of tuition fees and demand for applicable knowledge of students. This turns universities to “revenue generator” using tangible and intangible resources. However, this transformation might be dangerous because it can result in “a devaluation of liberal education’s virtues of tolerance, critical thinking, trust and benevolence” (Maringe and Gibss, 2009, p.161).

There have been a lot of arguments whether students should be assumed as consumers and institutions as service providers. Consumers are people who buy products or service from a provider. Students can pay for tuition, but they are not fully a customer because they do not receive all the rights of a customer. They cannot modify the curriculum or the schedule. They cannot be refunded whether they are satisfied with the program. Furthermore, students are not passive but active consumers of the service. Their effort put into the education will determine their exam grades and whether they will be awarded the degree. They are also the ones who interpret the lectures and assignments into their own knowledge. However, institutions can benefit from the customer perspective to overcome challenges and deliver more value to students. One of the most important factors leading to successful marketing is to understand customer wants and needs to satisfy them. These needs and wants, however, may be in disagreement with the benefits and desire of other parties such as teachers, society, staff, etc. Thus, keeping these elements in balance is a tricky and time-consuming work. However, once universities achieve this balance, its success is no longer out of the question. In order to do this, institutions need to know who their students are, manage students’ expectations and perceptions of service quality, deliver educational service with student satisfaction at the heart and conduct research in the notion of student as consumer. (Maringe and Gibbs, 2009)

Consumerism is believed to affect strongly on higher institutions with less reputation rather than elite institutions. Students in top institutions prefer stability because they suppose that there are many opportunities after graduation. However, students from underprivileged backgrounds are more likely to look forward a change in their institutions. (Maringe and Gibbs, 2009, p.5)

Although marketing is usually assumed only as a business activity, every educational institution involves in some marketing activities. For example, education is marketed as
a service; advertising and personal selling are used to recruit students; and many other activities (Krachenberg, 1972). Maringe and Gibbs (2009, p.162) define university marketing as “an underlying cultural and organizational disposition to position the customer at the centre of all decisions in the critical tripartite university business of teaching, research and service.”

According to Paulsen (1990), colleges can apply the marketing concept successfully through three main stages. Firstly, the institution must identify its potential competitors among higher education providers. These potential competitors are usually institutions which have similar resources and target similar students. Secondly, the institution needs to determine the image it desire to be perceived by students and competitors as well as its position in the higher education market. This image can be designed by examining the desire image of target students that the institution wants to recruit. The last stage is market segmentation. Market segmentation is “dividing a market into smaller segments with distinct needs characteristics, or behavior that might require separate marketing strategies or mixes” (Kotler, 2011). In other words, the institution should divide their target students into different groups which have similar characteristics. Popular segmentation methods are dividing by geography, demography, academy, etc to name a few.

2.4 The internationalization of higher education and mobility of students

The internationalization of higher education is defined as “the process of integrating international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution” (Knight and Hans de Wit, 1997, quoted by Hawawini, 2011). Together with globalization, the internationalization of higher education has become a critical issue which has been researched and examined recently. It is not only a response to globalization but also a method of increasing higher education quality (Maringe and Gibbs, 2009).

According to Hawawini (2011), there are two main motives for higher education institutions to internationalize: academic motives and economic motives. Academically, high-
er education institutions need to internationalize to achieve their missions in a globalizing world. International factors and problems should be brought into curriculums to prepare students necessary skills to deal with future jobs. This also keeps universities competitive with others local and even global ones. Moreover, an international curriculum helps institutions to attract best domestic and overseas students and faculty. Economically, there are benefits from internationalization such as growing revenues and funds. International institutions can increase their revenue by recruiting overseas qualified students. Moreover, international campuses opened abroad receive funds from local governments for facility and research. These campuses also help reduce risks for students and institutions from travelling and political problems. However, “the ultimate benefit of internationalization for a [higher educational institution] is to learn from the world, and not just to teach the world what the institution already knows to in order to satisfy some educational and economical motives” (Hawawini, 2011, p.9).

Moreover, Maringe and Gibbs (2009) argue that there are six main drivers of internationalization of higher education. Firstly, internationalization opens a new universal knowledge world for students. Secondly, the rapid development of internet and technology communication makes education more effective and creates many new forms of teaching. A lecture can take place with teacher, student and computers, laptop or other electronic device with communication function. In addition, assignments and even exams can be done online and submitted through the university’s website. Thus, students can enrol in universities and courses abroad without physical present which is convenient and reduces the living costs. Thirdly, degree programs and courses in higher institution are being modified so that they can be easily applied to daily life and students can find jobs with the best reward. Apparently, working in international companies and organizations seem more attractive than local ones. Therefore, higher institutions also prepare for their students necessary skills and knowledge to work in international environment and they use this as a marketing strategy to attract new students. Fourthly, growing population means increasing demand of higher education and not every country develop as fast as this demand. As a result, students start to seek universities and courses abroad to satisfy their need for higher education. Next, unstable political and economic situation in the home country also contribute to the motivation for students to leave their home country for a developed country which has stable political and eco-
nomic state. Finally, shrinking state funding for universities results to students’ sharing tuition fees. This makes students be more aware of the real value of their money and require quality for their university life. In the case of international students, the requirements are even higher because they have to pay more for universities. Besides, there are universities offering financial support programs and scholarships for international students to attract talents from all over the world.

There are five main structures of internationalization: the import model, the export model, the academic joint-venture model, the partnership model, and the foreign campus model (Hawawini, 2011). The import model is performed by attracting as many as possible students and faculty from as many as possible nationalities in the world. The purpose of this model is to bring the international and intercultural atmosphere into the program of the university. In contrast, the export model encourages students and faculty to go to partner universities through exchange programs. Thus many universities try to partner with top universities around the world to attract students. This model is hoped to have students and faculty exposed to educational environment and culture of the host university and brought them back to home institution. These exchange programs are usually the start of a joint-venture model when two institutions cooperate to deliver a joint program in which students will often receive a dual degree. These kinds of joint program are usually known as “2+2” or “3+1” programs and they are proved to attract students more than programs provided by a single institution. Partnership model is a more developed form of joint venture model where two or more institutions establish alliances in which institution members agree to provide respective courses to the partner’s program. Finally, the institutions performing the foreign campus model deliver courses abroad in rented facilities or their own campus. This model serves both local students and home students who wish for international experience.

Brooks and Waters (2011) pointed out the link between the internationalization of higher education and the mobility of young people. Globalization and the rapid growth of internet and technology not only make travel more convenient but also help keeping contact with families and friends faster and easier. Moreover, travel overseas is assumed as a means for young people to discover the world and themselves. Thus the number of young people travelling abroad for leisure, study, or work is increasing more than ever.
Brooks and Waters (2011) propose that young people who have been abroad for travelling or other purposes other than studying usually tend to pursue opportunities of studying abroad.

In addition, migration is also considered connected to the internationalization of higher education (Brooks and Waters, 2011). Many students seek education overseas as a tool to find employment and raise the chance of achieving a permanent residency in another country. Economic factor is usually the main reason in this case. Some governments also ease the process of immigration to attract talents all over the world. This situation is usually called “brain drain” and makes countries which lose talents concerned. Moreover, the fierce competition in the labour market motivates students to seek a degree from prestige and elite universities in the world to gain an edge in their application after graduate. In many countries, an overseas degree is unconditionally assumed to be superior to a domestic degree. This distinction is believed to gain students a job with better reward in the future for example in an international company or multinational organization, etc.

2.5 College choice behavior

Students as consumers purchase higher education as a service so they require a return on their investment (Molesworth, Scullion and Nixon, 2011). Therefore, students become more selective in choosing a university or college to complete their degree. The internationalization of education also creates more opportunities and alternatives for them.

Since 1970, universities and colleges desired to forecast their enrolment and to influence the decision making process of students. Paulsen (1990) argue that by examining student college choice behavior, universities can benefit in enrolment planning, student marketing and recruitment. The information achieved from this examination will have institutions to recruit students who have the characteristics suitable to the responding institution. Besides, institutions might adapt themselves to fit the characteristics of their target students. Hence, the study of college choice behavior of students became very important and practical for those areas. There have been a lot of researches about stu-
dent college choice behavior from sociology, psychology or economics perspectives. Socially, student college choice behavior is a “status attainment process”. Psychologically, it is “the impact of college experiences and environments on students and optimal student-institution fit” while economically, it is just “a form of investment decision-making behavior” (Paulsen, 1990, p.7)

In his study (1990), Paulsen examines Hossler and Gallagher’s college choice model (1987). This model includes of three phase: predisposition, search and choice. The predisposition phase develops the student’s university expectation. At this phase there are three main types of factor affect student’s aspiration for university: socio economic background factors (for example race, educational attainment, family income), academic factors (for example academic achievement), and contextual factors (for instance disciplinary problems, attitudes toward school and success). The second phase is information search in which students gather institutions information and set criteria for choice. Socioeconomic factors and academic factors also affect students in this phase. Finally, in the choice phase, students will use information achieved to make a final decision. Paulsen found that institutional characteristics (cost, financial aid, programs, size, location, quality, social atmosphere, athletics, and religious emphasis) have a considerable effect on student choice of a particular university.

A five basic stage consumer buying decision process can be applied to study student college choice behavior. This process includes: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase and post-purchase evaluation (Kotler, 1997, cited in Moogan, Baron & Harris, 1999, pp.212-213). Because there is no way of testing the higher education program in advance, students are suggested to gain as much as information as possible before making purchase. However, the extent of the information search process is variable among different students. An active student might search for information extensively from a lot of different sources.

There are many arguments about factors claimed to affect student college choice behavior. According to Baksh and Hoyt (2001), institutional attributes, financial aid, cost considerations, student ability, socioeconomic status and location influence student college choice (cited in Shen, 2004, pp.55). Paulsen (1990) suggests that students characteristics
(race, marital status, family income, academic aptitude, etc), institutional characteristics (tuition fee, financial aid options, accommodation, geographical proximity, etc), interaction of student and institutional characteristics, environmental characteristics (local economic conditions, job market opportunities) and student responsiveness to costs affect whether a student attend college and which particular institution to attend.

Veloutsou et al. (2004) investigate nine main themes that students usually require information in their information search phase which include: local infrastructure, local social life, career prospects, university’s infrastructure, university’s social life, business contacts, university’s reputation, course studied and campus. Price et al. (2003) also argue that facilities factors can make the differentiation of a higher education institution. Accommodation, learning and teaching facilities such as availability of computers, projectors, libraries, etc seem to have quite an impact on student choice of university. This result is similar to study of Shen (2004) in which attractive campus, adequate security and friendly, open atmosphere are found to be the most important factors on the functional value to affect student university choice.

Study of Simoes and Soares (2010) in Portugal suggests that students use Internet as the key tool to search information about institutions at the pre-purchase stage. Beside formal sources, advices from counsellors, teachers, friends, etc also obtain students’ belief. Also in this study, geographical proximity is the most important factor when students consider among choices, following is academic reputation of the institution and the degree.

In the UK, Maringe (2006) observes that programme factors such as field of study, courses, majors, etc and price which includes tuition fees, cost of living, transportation costs, etc are the most important factor in university choice of students… Prominence of the institution and place (campus location, class size, accommodation, etc) are less important. Moreover, the prominence of institution expressed on press, websites such as ranking and review seem to have not much impact on student choice. Furthermore, promotion, people and prospectus are the least important factors. Thus, universities which invest a lot of money on promotion and advertising might have to examine the marketing process again.
Callender and Jackson (2008) examine the price factor’s impact on student choice of university. His results show that the price factor (tuition fee, cost of living, transportation costs, etc) has influence on the student decision. Since the state funding decreased and students have to share the tuition fee with universities and colleges, student loan has become a solution for students to cover the fee. This is the reason why “the fear of debt” is a factor constraining the decision to go to university and university choice. However, this influence is found to be stronger to students from low-income families. Thus, usually they will choose to apply to universities with low cost of living or universities offering good chances for term-time employment.

Study of Maringe (2006) also shows that the main motives for students to choose their subjects and courses at university are career opportunities and performances in the subject, following are teacher influence and interest in the subject. Moreover, teachers are the most important external factor while parents are the least. It can be said that students believe more in teachers who assumed to have experience in studying and teaching. One more thing, not many students choose a particular subject because they think it would be easy. It seems that students are really serious about higher education experience.
3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Background

The research method used not only plays a major role in determining the completeness of a thesis but also influences its relevance and quality. Choosing a proper research method for completing the task demanded by the thesis topic was one of the most challenging steps faced in the process of planning and writing the thesis. Since there is a huge range of existing research methods, the process of selection was tough and complicated. The decision on using a research method needed the consideration of its flexibility as well as its ambiguity. Not all the methods aligned to this thesis topic, so, to pick the most appropriate one was a good beginning for the thesis itself.

Since the topic “Motives of foreign degree students to choose ABC as the university for their undergraduate studies” was chosen, the authors, without being an exception, had been wondering a lot about the most promising research method suitable for the topic. As they got to realize that the topic itself can be approached using a number of research methods, it became harder for them to decide on a particular research method. Considering the fact that it is a Bachelor's thesis which is not expected to be anything “changing the world”, they wanted to be realistic and stuck to select just one though there were also possibilities to combine two or more of the methods.

Since the purpose of the authors was to have a deep insight on the topic than producing a huge statistics, it seemed more productive to concentrate within a smaller sample. And for that, they were convinced that the application of a qualitative approach would be suitable. Among the qualitative methods, they wanted to use the one which is relatively flexible, interactive and dynamic. One of the methods that fitted well into their concept was the method of focus group interviews. So, they decided to use the focus group interviews as the major tool to proceed on with the research.
3.2 Focus Group Interview in a Nutshell

“Focus groups are group discussions exploring a specific set of issues. The group is “focused” in that it involves some kind of collective activity.” (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999, p. 4)

Focus groups have been defined in many ways as per the context by various experts. The online version of Oxford Dictionary gives the literal meaning of a focus group as “a group of people assembled to participate in a discussion about a product before it is launched, or to provide feedback on a political campaign, television series, etc.”

Simply, a focus group is a group discussion where participants discuss on certain aspect(s) of a certain topic. Generally, they provide their opinions on the questions raised and interact vigorously to show their understanding and perception towards the subject matters of discussion. Being a part of qualitative research method, focus group is widely used in researches related to marketing, social sciences and usability engineering.

“The major assumption of focus groups is that with a permissive atmosphere that fosters a range of opinions, a more complete and revealing understanding of the issues will be obtained. The goal of focus group interviews is to create a candid, normal conversation that addresses, in depth, the selected topic.” (Vaughn, S. et al, 1996, p.4)

According to Barbour & Kitzinger (1999), the generation of the data by explicit use of group interaction is a characteristic of focus groups which differentiates them from the broader category of group interviews. The researchers who use focus group, do not ask questions to each person in turn. Rather, they encourage the participants to talk to one another by, for example, asking questions, exchanging anecdotes, and commenting on each others’ experiences and points of view.
3.2.1 Focus group: Process

The size of a focus group varies from 8 to 12 participants who get involved in the discussion on a particular topic. The discussion takes place under the direction of a moderator whose main task is to promote the interaction between the participants and to ensure that the discussion remains within the topic of interest. One of the challenges to conduct a focus group is that if the group is smaller, one or two members may dominate the whole discussion whereas a larger group is difficult to manage and it may inhibit the participation by all members of the group.

Since a focus group discussion is concentrated and limited to a small number of issues, a focus group session typically takes 1.5 to 2.5 hours. The moderator has to play a key role in making sure that the discussion runs smoothly and can be more or less directive as per the flow of the discussion. One of the most important things to be considered is that the types and the quality of the data obtained from the group is influenced by the amount of direction provided by the interviewer. (Stewart, David W. et al, 2007, p. 37-38)

A focus group discussion should be organized in a suitable place where the participants can reach easily. Though the venue for the discussion may differ according to the topic of the research, a comfortable environment for the participants in order to continue a healthy discussion is inevitable. Since the whole discussion can be recorded by making first-hand notes, audio recording and/or video recording, especially for the latter two, the participants should be asked for permission before-hand. In some cases, even a written permission may be required.

3.2.2 Focus Group: Advantages and Limitations

Focus groups can be useful in any research but they are particularly useful in the research about which little is known. One of the most appealing features of focus groups is their robust versatility for shedding light on almost any topic or issue. (Stewart, David W. et al, 2007)
Focus groups are quite important and offer a relatively wide range of advantages to other forms of research methods. They are quicker in providing data from a group of people than that individual interviews do. They can be conducted in a comparatively less cost and assembled in a shorter notice than a larger systematic survey. As focus groups are designed to interact directly with the participants, there are always opportunities for follow-up questions and for clarification of responses. They are very flexible and can be used to research on different kinds of topic involving various people and place. The discussion among the participants provides a large and rich data which may also result in production of a completely new data or idea.

A focus group discussion can be conducted to obtain data even from people who are illiterate. Generally, the results produced by focus groups are simple, user friendly and easy to understand. (Stewart, David W. et al, 2007, p.41-43)

Like all other research methods, focus groups also have some limitations. Though some of them can be subsided by planning carefully and moderating effectively, there are some which are, after all, have to be faced. One of them is that the moderator doesn’t have so much control over the data production. Neither has he/she, the control over the interaction other than keeping the discussion focused on the topic. Moreover, it is not always easy to recruit the desired population in a focus group. Since a focus group provides a common sharing ground for all the participants, it may not be the best method if a total confidentiality is required. (Gibbs, Anita 1997)

### 3.3 Reasons for choosing Focus Group

With the diving into the focus groups, for the authors, the phase with confusion and perplexity of choosing a proper research method for this thesis had ended. After going through its theory, practicalities, advantages and limitations, they saw it clearly that focus group is that flexible, dynamic and interactive method they were searching for. Personally, they like to meet, talk to and socialize with people from different places and
Practically, there are quite many reasons for explaining why the primary research was done by using the Focus Group Interview method. First of all, as suggested by the thesis topic, in order to answer the research questions, the authors needed to collect the opinions and motivations from foreign students who are enrolled in ABC at present and focus group method is found to be the most effective one for learning about opinions and attitudes. Secondly, focus group method has the advantage of relatively easier to assemble, inexpensive and flexible in terms of format, types of questions and desired outcomes. Many different and even surprising results can be revealed through this method which cannot be easily gained by normal questionnaires or other research method. Moreover, focus groups allow participants to build their answers based on others’ opinions. Therefore, through a range of well-designed questions in a focus group interview, the authors could get not only broad but also deep information and that is what this thesis research required. Thirdly, while there are respondents who do not take surveys seriously and even are dishonest in answering; focus group interview could solve this problem. Normally, in a focus group meeting, with the skilled guide of the moderator, the members can produce meaningful and honest answers. In addition, the feeling of being “listened to” also leads to open and sincere responses from the members in the interview. The participants have flexibility to say anything they like and are not be restricted by A, B, C in questionnaires. Therefore focus groups are considered to be naturalistic (Krueger and Casey, 2000). In the interview, one could not only listen to the answers but would also be able to observe the emotions, ironies, contradictions and tensions. This helps to confirm the facts and also maybe realize the insight or under covered meaning behind the facts. Fourthly, though the primary purpose of the research is to find the motivations of foreign students for choosing ABC, there is also a possibility to compare those among different segments such as nationalities, age, gender, etc. With the support of focus group method, the authors could find out the similarities among one segment and the differences among segments through several focus group interviews which are held separately. Finally, it is expected that, in focus group meeting, the area in need of study can be brought out and the discussion can result to the creation of a
comprehensive survey which ensures the topics of discussions are understood in the same way by all respondents.

Besides, the authors intended to present a deep and detailed study within a fairly limited sample for this thesis topic that they have chosen. Moreover, very little is known about the topic itself and it demands a method to be implied which can extract interactive data effectively. For both of these purposes, focus group study fits quite well.

3.4 Focus Group Interview: Implementation

The targeted participants for the focus group interview were the foreign students studying in various degree programs at ABC University. The favorable number of the participants was about 30. They were chosen randomly regardless of their degree program and nationality. Since the idea of sending emails to all the students of the school to inform about the interviews and request them to participate in one of them was not a viable option because most of the emails would not be responded at all. The reason behind it is that people don't tend to reply to emails send by some unknown person even though if it is not a spam. There was a need of a procedure providing personal contact with the prospective participants. So a better solution was to show up in front of them, provide the information and get them interested. For the ease of getting a mass attention, the beginning of some lectures at the school was chosen to provide the information and collect the participants. So accordingly, with the consent of the teacher, few short information sessions about the topic, interview process and the date and time were conducted and the names and contact emails of the interested students to participate in the interview were collected. The interested ones when required were provided with the updated information by email later. Since the participation in the interviews were voluntary, though the number of interested participants was promising, for different personal practical reasons, only 13 in total actually participated.

The initial idea was to conduct four focus group interviews each interview having around 5 to 8 participants. The limited number of actual participants, consequently, forced to modify the plan and creating the ideal sized focus groups was not possible. So
finally only 3 focus group interviews were taken: the first having 4 participants, the second having only 3 participants and the last one having six participants. The intention was to have each group mixed with participants from different nationalities. The reason behind that was to avoid similar types of expressions and views in a single interview as far as possible. The other reason was to make the interviews more interactive with cross-cultural and cross-national perspectives.

The participants were studying Bachelor's degree in the ABC University in different years in one of the three degree programs conducted in English. The details of the nationality, sex and degree programs related to all the participants is listed in the table below.

*Table 1. Focus group participants’ information.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant 1</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Degree Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>International Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>International Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Plastic Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>International Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td>Nepali</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>International Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 8</td>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>International Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 9</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>International Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 10</td>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>International Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 11</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>International Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 12</td>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>International Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 13</td>
<td>South African</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>International Business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table, the first 4 participants were in the first interview, the fifth, sixth and seventh participants participated in the second interview and the rest were in the last interview. Though the study was primarily focused on foreign students, in the third interview, one Finnish student also participated.

All the three interviews were taken in the ABC university premises inside closed rooms. The participation was voluntary and the participants were assured the confidentiality of their identity before the interviews began. Though the expected length of each interview was about 2 hours, each interview session lasted for only an hour and few minutes. After getting the oral consent from the participants, the interviews were recorded using a laptop computer and a mobile phone.

The flow of the interviews was based on the research questions which were prepared by the authors and approved by the thesis supervisor before-hand. There were altogether 12 clear questions to be discussed in the interviews. Though the main discussions were focused in finding the answers to those questions, the interviews dealt with different sub-questions and instantaneous comments every once in a while. Moreover, in general, the participants were very energetic, excited and proactive which added to the charm of the interview environment.

The vigorous discussions in the focus group interviews were concentrated in finding and visualizing the answers for few major topics related to the participants which can be summarized as follows.
• Their motivations to study further in a university and choosing a particular field
• Their motivations to first study abroad and then choosing Finland and later choosing Helsinki
• Their motivations to choose ABC university in particular
• The source of information for them regarding Finland and ABC university
• The way they finance their studies
• Their expectations before joining the university and after graduation
• Suggestions on marketing of ABC university

The other step after the interviews were taken was the transcription of the recorded interviews. So the recorded interviews were duly transcribed and the main points from them were sorted. The transcription was quite a hard job. The different accents, pronunciation, speaking speeds and so on of the participants brought the challenges in transcribing the interviews. After the transcription was completed, the data so obtained from the interviews were ready to analyze.
4 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Information about the interviewees

There were totally 13 participants in three interviews. The majority of the participants were from Asia and the rest of them come from Africa and Europe. There was one Finnish student and one Tajikistan student who moved to Finland for a couple of years with her family. Except these students, other ones moved to Finland for studying only.

The participants studied in different programs which include: Nursing, International Business and Plastic Technology. Thus they barely knew each other except people from the same program. Most of them were in the first year or second year. Some participants actually studied at a university before being accepted to ABC.

4.2 Motives for going to university

Participants were asked why they decided to go to university - which motives influenced their decisions? There were a lot of answers given by the participants. However, the answers which had similar contents were summarized into one so there were actually 17 different answers. The answers could be divided into four main categories which are: academic and job-related motives, financial motives, and social-cultural motives (see Table 2).

Table 2. Motives for going to university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic and job-related motives</th>
<th>Financial motives</th>
<th>Social-cultural motives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Career prospects</td>
<td>• Financial stability in the future</td>
<td>• Former work experience on border with Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dissatisfaction with previous degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Making life interesting and getting more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Building network</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knowledge and skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

46
in a particular area
- Soft skills

opportunities
- New experience
- Getting into society
- Travelling
- Meeting new people from different nationalities
- Family background
- Gaining prestige and respect in local society
- Norm in local society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic and job-related motives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial motives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-cultural motives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Going to university: division of main motives.

It was not surprising that most of the participants were motivated by career prospects for going to university. They believed that nowadays most of the good jobs require an academic background or a particular degree and that going to university was the best way
to gain them. Some of the participants actually possessed a Bachelor degree and were employed. However, they were not satisfied with their previous degree because it was not easy to find a well-paid job which would ensure financial stability in the future. In their case, going to university were believed to provide them not only knowledge and skills but also network which are necessary to find a better job.

“...all say that getting a degree is the main thing. That shows your academic level and which is important further to find a professional job, academic job.” (Female, Tajikistan)

“...I already have one degree in Russian literature and in English and Russian language. I have some work experience and my last job was working in an international company on the border with Finland. That is why I decided that my future would be better to go and study some international environment to get more experience. I have chosen to get another degree in business because literature is very interesting but it doesn't provide you with best salary and opportunities and I just decided to make my life more interesting and to have more opportunities.” (Female, Russia)

“...when you go to university or college you can build your network around. Cause networking is really important in today's life no matter what you do. So like you can make friends, make networking for your future career or your real life may be.” (Female, Vietnam)

“...Taking a Bachelor degree actually can develop my career in the near future. To some prospect I believe that some areas in business environment require having a strong background of academic and going to university can help me to develop some types of soft skill that very benefit in working environment.” (Male, Vietnam)

In addition, social-cultural motives or factors in the participants’ home country also had effect on their decision to go to university. Parents’ high-educated background and social norm were mentioned several times as important factors affected the participants’ decision. Moreover, going to university, to the participants, was an opportunity to travel and meet new people from different cultures.
“...in my country which is relatively good, Russia is a closed country. It’s not easy to travel outside. And education gives me freedom of movement and freedom to meet a lot of people from other nationalities which you do not normally meet in Russia.” (Female, Russia)

“I guess my family is quite educated and the place, the society where I live they are highly educated. Everyone has university degree and other things like that. If somebody has preschool level or high school level, they are not so much appreciated. That’s why I think joining university kind of getting appreciation and prestige in the society. And getting high level education, qualification really gives you kind of level in the society, kind of pose.” (Male, Nepal)

“For me the culture and social background of course it has a very strong effect on my decisions of what I want to be...And in our circles, normally people consider going to university is natural plan after you graduate high school. And if you somehow don’t do that it will be consider as weird.” (Male, Vietnam)

“I actually took two years because I wasn't sure if I want to study in a university. So I moved to Paris and I lived in Paris for two years. But then it's always kind of been a thing in my family that it’s a good thing to study. And my parents first of all, and my...they have all studied in university ....and are highly educated. So it was kind of expected of me to do that as well. So after my two year break I wanted to do that as well.” (Female, Finland)

“I come from a family where my mother has Ph.D., my father has Master's. So that's sort of the norm...” (Male, India)

“In my country actually, it’s like social pressure because if we don't have university level then you are not even qualified for the lowest level jobs. So that was much...the social pressure and in my family no one takes the university so they were expecting me to go...” (Female, Poland)
Especially, one girl from China expressed her disinterest in the degree but her experience in life.

“For me personally this university, I don’t care about this degree, this diploma what I get in final but if I chose a right program, I can enjoy my life here. It’s based on our culture...Of course that high educated person is good but more important thing is you do what you want. Of course I can quit this if I don't like this university life. I can go to the society; it’s just a trying, apart from my experience in my life. I can miss them but if I have opportunity, I should get it”. (Female, China)

### 4.3 Motives for choosing a particular program

When asked about the reason why the participants chose their currently studying program, there were some surprising answers given besides interest to the particular program. It came to our knowledge that the participating students got motivation to choose the particular program they were studying from the influences of the program itself (see Table 3). The participants were basically studying international business, nursing, and plastic technology. Thus for example students from business degree were motivated by the benefits of studying business and so on.

Table 3. Motives for choosing a particular degree (divided by program).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International Business</th>
<th>Nursing</th>
<th>Plastic Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning to be independent</td>
<td>Interest in natural sciences</td>
<td>Interest in science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earning own money</td>
<td>Wish to work in healthcare sector</td>
<td>Becoming an engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-demanded jobs</td>
<td>Wish to help people in the society</td>
<td>Wish to do business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being an entrepreneur</td>
<td>High-demanded jobs</td>
<td>in manufacturing industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing other business cultures</td>
<td>Taking care of one-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For business students, the interest in business and the usability of a business degree were the most motivated factors affected their choice. Possessing a business degree was believed to help the participants find a variety of high-demanded jobs. Moreover, knowledge of the field and different business cultures would be also useful if they wanted to open their own business.

“...in my case I don't want to be in control. I want to earn my own money and then to choose international business...besides nursing and or technical job, I think we can do most of the things like marketing, financial or whatever but then later on like after you work for a company for a while....you can open your own business like entrepreneurship...in a way you control of your life..” (Female, Vietnam)

“...the general thing is that you really like the culture, the business culture of the school because the school represents the society. It’s like small model of society and you really don't know a lot of small thing that you will never get if you are outside. It is really so. It is the reason why I applied for international business. Also because I was working in business but just as an interpreter.” (Female, Russia)

“Well I tried to go to this medicine field and then...that it is not so useful for me and other fields and then again I found that it’s not for me...I tried to go further into business field and I was interested in lots of things like economy, finance, lots of degrees. And I think it is interesting for me. And I ended up in studying career in business...” (Male, Nepal)

It was also similar in the case of nursing students that the degree would gain them high-demanded jobs. Moreover, they expressed their deep compassion in healthcare area and wish to help people in the society.

“I chose nursing because I like working in the health care area, that’s what I wanted...biology, chemistry.....I like the natural sciences. I like working within society. I like helping people. Therefore I really love this job working in the health care places...This
thing is now the economical, the society everything is going high and high and the demand for health care professional is going higher.” (Female, Tajikistan)

“...we have the natural compassion. We have to have this ....so according to our personalities, we should go for this. And we have this responsible too to take care of them. From the further point of view, it’s a stable work or job in the future and you can also take care of your family and yourself even the people in the society. It has more benefits to all people.” (Female, China)

The only student in Plastic Technology program also mentioned his interest in science and engineering. However, his purpose to study the program was not merely to become an engineer but possibly doing business in manufacturing area which would exploit the knowledge of an engineer.

“For me I study in plastic technology and for me originally I want to do something more than just simply the engineer. But because I’m highly interested in science from an early young age so and science is something that you cannot just stand outside and know how it works. So for me even if I want to do business in the manufacturing business, I believe that to actually know how to do it, first you must have the knowledge and the viewpoint from an actual engineer work in the field. You must be able to see with the lens, through the lens of the engineer working in the field before you can actively with other engineers to help you create something bigger than just the work of the engineer.” (Male, Vietnam)

In addition to these categories, the motivation of participants could also be analyzed from the viewpoint of the social, financial, and personal aspects touching daily life (see Table 4).

Table 4. Social-cultural, financial and personal motives for choosing a particular degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social-cultural motives</th>
<th>Financial motives</th>
<th>Personal motives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

52
- Career prospects
- Lack of industry infrastructure in home country
- Being impressed by the healthcare system of Western countries
- Father’s occupation as a doctor
- Recommendation from relatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social-cultural motives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial motives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal motives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Not being able to afford the same program in home country
- Possibly becoming rich in a short time
- Own decision
- Developing personality
- Dissatisfaction with the previous degree
- Interest
- Business is the most attractive degree among programs in English
- Continuation of previous study
- Component for another subject

Although social-cultural motives did not dominate the field of motives for choosing the program, they still took an important part in affecting the participants’ decision. There were two main types of social-cultural motives mentioned: career prospects and rec-
ommendation. Firstly, the participants chose their program because they perceived the lack of professionals in their home country. Moreover, their chosen program would lead to opportunities for high-demanded jobs. Secondly, the participants chose their program according to the recommendations of relatives, friends, or by observing their parents’ occupation.

“I think most Asian countries or like in Vietnam I think most people choose business because we don't really have any...as you say like...main industry like car industry or like heavy industry. So like going to business is the main thing for us here.” (Female, Vietnam)

“I am influenced by my father. He is a doctor. So he's been in health care profession for long time, he's still. I've been watching him working, discussing with patients, talking you know health ....so this is how I got interested into this...” (Female, Tajikistan)

“Firstly, I was very impressed by the hospital or health care system in western countries. It’s totally (different) from, I can say Asian or my country. So I ...don't know what to say...I also asked my some relatives. They just like if you want to get a stable job in the future and also based on your interest on biology and chemistry research stuff, you can try. But I am not sure if I can do well, I just try. May be I will change to another program I don't know. I just try and see what the big difference is in west and the east health care system.” (Female, China)

There were only two financial motives given by the participants. Firstly, the girl from Russia chose International Business degree because she wanted to have another degree yet she could not afford the same degree in her country. Secondly, the guy from Nepal chose International Business because in his opinion, no occupation but entrepreneur could make one millionaire or billionaire in a short time.

“I decided to take this degree mostly because of financial reasons. I needed another degree another education and I was thinking about ...couldn't have afford it...in Russia.” (Female, Russia)
“Well I think business is the field that can make you millionaire or billionaire. I don’t think any field like medicine or… research can make you millionaire. I’m highly motivated to make money. If you do your own business, you can be a millionaire maybe in two years, three years, maybe in ten years. But if you get salary every month that limited paid it won’t make you a millionaire, it won’t make you rich. Business is the field that will make you millionaire in a very limited time, in a short time…” (Male, Nepal)

Although most of participants had clear motives for choosing their current studying program, it was very surprising that there were some participants who just happened to choose the program randomly. There were participants whose first choice was not the program they were studying now and they changed the program because it was more practical and gave them more job opportunities. Besides, some participants had their personal motives to choose the current program such as developing personalities or the program might benefit another field that they were pursuing.

“I always want to struggle because I always wanted to study arts. Even this year I want to, maybe I will submit some documents to some art schools but it is…I get it. It is not possible to find a job in this profession. I have read the statistics that there are only 2 percent of students who find a job in that field and for a foreign student it’s especially difficult…” (Female, Russia)

“I chose business quite much by accident. I pursued different career path in Poland, where I am from, after high school. But for personal reasons I moved to Finland. And I had to decide what to do with my life further. So I decided to study something and from the English speaking option, business was the most suiting for me. But I wouldn’t say that I consider it before I came to Finland.” (Female, Poland)

“…I studied engineering before. I decided to switch as well. I wanted to study something related to internet marketing, e-commerce. And this seems like a good opportunity majoring in e-business. So….I could fit.” (Male, South Africa)

“I will say I ended up here completely by accident. Cause I applied to bunch of different schools. Sociology, culture and visual……international business and management too
and stuff like that. And I just happened to get in here. And then I was like yeah, why not? It’s a very general degree. You use it wherever whatever. I like to travel, I like people, I want to meet people all around the world. So…that’s why I studied.” (Female, Finland)

“…I have strong incentives to develop my personalities as a very interesting person. I believe that business area can develop my personalities on the direction that I have…” (Male, Vietnam)

“…I studied already in media design. Actually I have some more which I’m going to relate to that. There was a section in media design where I will do advertising and all that basic layouts. What is interesting in advertising is that it’s so connected to marketing. So I realized that the only way that I can find interest in that was to have something in business. Because of that all, at certain time or point I will have myself working as self-employed. I said let me try that and the opportunity was there for me to come and study.” (Male, Africa)

4.4 Motives for studying abroad

Participants were asked about the reasons why they chose to study abroad and not in their home country. When put into analysis, the answers could be divided into four main categories: academic and job-related motives, financial motives, social-cultural motives, and personal motives (see Table 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic and job-related motives</th>
<th>Financial motives</th>
<th>Social-cultural motives</th>
<th>Personal motives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Dissatisfaction with local education</td>
<td>• Free tuition fee</td>
<td>• Visiting new places</td>
<td>• Learning from Western technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic and job-related motives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial motives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-cultural motives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal motives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 5. Studying abroad: Division of main motives.*
It was not surprising that a lot of participants mentioned their dissatisfaction with local education as one of the main motives for studying abroad. The local education was assumed as quite abstract due to lots of theories without practical knowledge. Moreover, studying abroad was believed to provide students more practical knowledge, more participation in the class by interactive teaching methods. It was also believed to prepare students to work in an international working environment.

“In my country, the situation is so that I don't think we are quite competitive with other universities in other countries. So, therefore, now we are having this degradation in educational level in my country. Therefore we are trying to, the young minds are trying to....universities outside at the places where the qualified education is given, is offered.” (Female, Russia)

“For me, in China, the health care education is not good. We still need to develop. Also, even we have the program in nursing or doctor, we just focus on academic stuffs, theory more. We don't have this so much practical training and stuffs. So when they graduate, they only know how to do but they don't know really how to and what to do practically. So I will think in this way, it's not a profession nurse. And also even you become a nurse the only basic stuffs they do. Here it’s much more professional. Like for me I just think if I finish, I can be a doctor in China even I get a nurse degree here. Because the requirement is different in these two countries.” (Female, China)

“...In my country, I studied for almost three years in college before I came here. So why I chose to study here instead of continuing to finish my degree back home is that I think a lot of people go into the educational business in my country. So a lot of universities, colleges are open but then again I think most of the corporations in Vietnam are multinational companies. But then the universities don't prepare you for the international environment, work environment. So you don't get prepared. So I think if you want to go into work, you should have more experience outside the university.” (Female, Vietnam)

“...I have never been to universities in my country but what I know shortly is that we have there more teaching rather than giving feedback from students...For example, in
this school... the teachers give you lectures, they just offer few lectures and you have to do the rest. So you have to study, you have to work on this, you have to do practical and you have to show and you have to give feedback, a lot of feedback. What we do in my country is...speaking for Tajikistan country...teachers come and they teach you, teach you, they do everything for you. They basically teach you everything and you have less to do...” (Female, Tajikistan)

The tuition fee was the only one financial motive for studying abroad of the participants. The Nepalese student mentioned tuition fee as one of his main motives for studying abroad. Because the tuition fee in the country he chose (Finland) was free, it was much cheaper than going to UK or other developed countries to study. The Indian student also took the intuition fee serious that he decided to study abroad.

“For me I really consider this financial... largely because if I had to instead UK or some other countries to study, I have to pay institution fee to those kinds of university maybe I could get scholarship from them but it’s not 100% sure that I will afford the education...so what I decided to...I could use those institution fees for other expenses...as for me I consider closely the financial...” (Male, Nepal)

In contrast, one of Vietnamese students neglected financial factor and considered the degree as more important thing to him.

“I can see the financial statement like financial support is very small reason that I consider when I choose a place to study. Since I had a very long plan to go for study and getting a higher degree then it’s not really important thing.” (Male, Vietnam)

As it could be seen in Figure 3, social-cultural motives dominated the field of motives for studying abroad. Both the Nepalese and Bangladesh student mentioned the difference in value between a foreign degree and a domestic degree. It was a social belief in their culture that a degree gained overseas was more precious than the one gained domestically. People who possessed a foreign degree had more job opportunities and received more prestige from local residents.
“...If I have a foreign degree, like European degree or United States any degree, any university degree, then the job sector will prefer me more than others... who are graduated from local universities...” (Male, Bangladesh)

The Chinese student mentioned the difficulty to get into a good university due to high competition in China. Therefore, Chinese students’ parents sought studying abroad as a solution for their children.

“In my country, there is very a high competition when we try to get into a university. Nowadays even the best university in China you have to...very hard to get there so all the family they are thinking to send their children to go abroad. It’s not easy as well but it’s good to see more, open mind.” (Female, China)

In addition, a lot of participants repeated experiencing a new culture as their motive for studying abroad. Studying abroad was an easy way to travel, visit new places and meet new people. International students also had opportunity to learn a new language and start an independent life.

“...In most western countries, when you turn 18, you go independently. You go living alone or whatever but then in Asia it’s not like that. You stay with your family, you depend on your parents. So in a way I wanted to find my independence or like to learn how to be live independently. I think I have matured a lot since I came here.” (Female, Vietnam)

“I want to see the world in different points of view. I want to know how the Western think, run the business. How is it different to the Western? Actually getting foreign international degree can have a better consideration from other people but I’m not really concerned about that. What I concern is that I come into new country, I have to a touch to new culture and I have another way to see the world.” (Male, Vietnam)

“It was my dream when I was a child that I will have some degree or study in Europe or any other countries so that I can meet some people who I really am not to meet, whom I always see in movies or television. It was like something like multicultural system of
Especially, one student from Vietnam expressed his deep disappointment towards his local society that he wanted to study abroad for a new cultural environment. Moreover, because his degree program was in Plastic Technology, Western advanced technology was also the reason why he chose to study in a Western country (Finland).

“For me the main reason to go abroad is new experience. For me personally I just can’t stand the culture where I came from and that’s why I just want to leave.... We all know that the leaders in the world of technology nowadays stay in the Western world. They are the main innovator and all of the highest technology stays in the Western world. So if you really want to learn the latest and greatest in technology you have to go abroad.”

(Male, Vietnam)

In addition, there were quite a lot personal motives for studying abroad of the participants. The Chinese student had relatives in her chosen country (Finland) so it was easier for her to decide to study abroad. Moreover, she also mentioned the advance of technology which made her communication with family much more convenient and fast. The Polish student chose to study in her boyfriend’s country. Finally, the South African student went to Finland as an exchange media student in 2005 and he decided to come to Finland to study another degree.

4.5 Motives for choosing Finland and Helsinki

4.5.1 Motives for choosing Finland

The participants were asked about the reasons behind their decision to choose Finland. Most of the answers were expected but there were still a few unexpected ones. The answers were divided into three categories: academic and job-related motives, financial motives and social-cultural motives (see Table 6).
Table 6. Motives for choosing Finland.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic and job-related motives</th>
<th>Financial motives</th>
<th>Social-cultural motives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Education system</td>
<td>• Free tuition fee</td>
<td>• Lifestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Partners of many companies</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Easy entrance exam</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Guarantee of personal rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Nature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Division](image)

Figure 6. Choosing Finland: Division of main motives.

Being ranked as one of the best education system in the world, it was not surprising that Finland’s education quality was mentioned the most as motive for choosing Finland. Some participants were not so satisfied with their local education system that they sought for another education system abroad. Normally, one participant raised their opinion then others agreed. For example, the student from Tajikistan was a fan of Finnish education and society system. Moreover, she appreciated the safety and individual rights protection in Finland.
“Well first of all I said about the education. As I realize Finland has the best education and I feel very honored to be in one of those schools in one of those countries. Secondly it’s about lifestyle. It’s really safe to live here. You don’t have to worry. You can just walk on the street at night time without fearing that something’s gonna happen to you. Thirdly you have the confidence that if anything could happen you can always prove your rights here” (Female, Tajikistan)

Free intuition fee was another popular motive for choosing Finland. A free but good education had a large impact on the decision of the participants.

“I think first of all its free education. It’s the first foremost important reason for international students to choose degree or to just choose Finland. And I think it’s a western country. You can see in the statistics even. Finland has high educational level in the world.” (Female, Vietnam)

“Actually before deciding to come here, I went through a lot of research to compare different countries and different choices. And for me my top priority before I decide anything is the value what you get with your effort and your time and your money you put in something. It’s more like a performance price. So consider if you go to the State to study for a similar degree, I have done some calculation and it came out that for 1 year for you in the State it will be enough for you in Finland for 4 years. (in terms of the money). Yeah in terms of the cost. So if you consider all the aspects like transportation and many other things, you will come to the decision that this will be like the best value for you hard earned money. So it’s very simple to come to the decision.” (Male, Vietnam)

The student from Russia also mentioned her concern about financial factor as the reason for choosing Finland. Moreover, she used to be employed in a company which had many partners from Finland. This was an important source providing her information and interest about Finland. Another important motive was the nature of Finland.

“In Finland because Finland has education free of charge. Also I came to a company where there are a lot of partners from Finland. I actually worked with them and I tried
to move to Finland sometimes...And I think this country suits me according to my nature. I feel very comfortable here.” (Female, Russia)

In addition, another Vietnamese student was so confident with his academic ability that the entrance exam to Finnish universities was assumed easy for him.

“The reason is that my general background of academic, I have high score transcription. I have foreign language certificate IELTS. I can do well with the enrolment test so I choose Finland...” (Male, Vietnam)

### 4.5.2 Motives for choosing Helsinki

The participants were asked about the reason behind their decision to study in Helsinki but other cities in Finland. The answers were also divided to three categories: academic and job-related motives, social-cultural motives, and personal motives (see Table 7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic and job-related motives</th>
<th>Social-cultural motives</th>
<th>Personal motives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Offering a particular degree</td>
<td>• Capital city</td>
<td>• Home city was a big city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Job and internship prospects</td>
<td>• Multicultural city</td>
<td>• Home city had many foreigners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Multinational universities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Entertainment facilities, activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Many foreigners</td>
<td>• Living in Helsinki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Near the airport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Motives for choosing Helsinki.
It could easily be seen that social-cultural motives dominated the field of reasons for studying in Helsinki. This is easy to understand because Helsinki is the capital city of Finland. It is the centre of politics, business and culture activities. Moreover, this is also the place where there were a lot of foreigners. This also helps international students to adapt quickly to local life. In addition, because Helsinki is the capital city and the biggest city in Finland, there are many companies having headquarters located in Helsinki. Therefore, there are more job and internship opportunities for international students.

“I chose Helsinki, ABC because it is more multidimensional, multinational, multicultural, very dynamic.” (Female, Tajikistan)

“I think the other universities in other cities are kind of simple. You don’t have the multicultural environment compared to in Helsinki. And then I know in Asian countries there are many entertainments much more than Helsinki like food or stuff to play. Helsinki is where you can like spending time after school. In other cities you can hardly see people walking around.” (Female, Vietnam)

“Helsinki because it is the center, many interesting things. Easy to find the job.” (Female, Russia)
“When I first came I was thinking I have to adjust this new country so I choose the big city first. It is pretty similar to my previous city so I can adjust first.” (Female, China)

“…at least you feel you are in a place where there are lots of foreigners. I have been in other cities. I spent one year in Mikkeli. Because...not so multicultural. So to get multicultural environment I moved to Helsinki.” (Male, Nepal)

“For me the decision to go to the Helsinki because it is the capital city. And normally if you do any kind of business you want to have your headquarter at least your representative in the capital city. Besides, if you stay in the capital city, you will have the option to go to other countries as well because normally the airport will be very near to the capital cities. So you have option to go to other countries easier as well.” (Male, Vietnam)

“Here are more people, more bars, more activities, more things to do.” (Female, Finland)

One student from Vietnam chose to study in Helsinki because the only university offering his chosen program in English located in this city.

“For me actually if you do some research the only school that has plastic engineering here maybe in the whole Finland. ABC only offers that major. No other school has that major in English.” (Male, Vietnam)

The student from Poland chose Helsinki because her boyfriend lived in the city and there were more job prospects. The Finnish student lived in Helsinki for all her life and her brother also studied in a university here. Finally, the student from Indie had lived in New York so he sought for similar prospects in Helsinki.

“Multicultural definitely has a big role playing in that. I come from New York and I've been used to be around people from different ethnicities, nationalities and backgrounds. Irrespective of where they come from, the communication is always great and I was ex-
pecting something similar in Helsinki and so far I've not been disappointed. I made a good choice.” (Male, India)

4.6 Motives for choosing ABC UAS

When asked about the motives for choosing ABC UAS, most of the participants had clear reasons why they chose ABC out of many similar universities in Helsinki in particular and in Finland in general. The answers were divided into three main categories: the university’s characteristics, recommendations, and personal reasons (see Table 8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The university’s characteristics</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Personal reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Finnish is not compulsory</td>
<td>• Brother recommen-dation</td>
<td>• Not sure about other schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Swedish is easier to learn</td>
<td>• Friends recommen-dation</td>
<td>• Transfer application accepted only in this school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Calm, quiet building</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Not get in other schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Small number of students</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Friends study in ABC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Offering particular degrees in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Name of the university</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flexible curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support from admission depart-ment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Well-design website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Internet ads</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Motives for choosing ABC University of Applied Sciences.
It was easily seen that the university’s characteristics dominated in the field of motives for choosing ABC UAS. It might be said that the participants had searched thoroughly about the university before making decision.

ABC was not the first choice of students from Poland, Nepal, Bangladesh and Russia. They just happened to go to ABC because they were not accepted by other universities. The Russian student actually put ABC as her last option when she applied for universities. To explain for this, a student has four options arranged according to his wish when he applies for entrance exam of Finnish universities. However, when the Russian student visited the university’s campus, she was persuaded by its calm and quiet building.

“Because I read the requirements for the entrance exam, I did hear that ABC has a lot of math so it was my last option. But it turned out that every school has the same exam.
But when I came here I pretty like the building because it seems to me it is quite quiet and calm so I really like the area and the building so I regret to put it the last option.” (Female, Russia)

The student from Nepal actually spent one year in another university in another city before moving to Helsinki. His transfer application was accepted only by ABC and that was the reason why he ended up studying here.

“I tried to transfer my credits to other university of applied sciences in Helsinki. And I got realize that if I have free seat or free place to get new change and then I got information from ABC that you are accepted. As I feel education in every university of applied sciences is almost similar, there’s no difference. And I wanted to increase my probability of being accepted at any university of applied science in Helsinki. And I applied for transfer in all the university in Helsinki. Finally I got accepted here in ABC.” (Male, Nepal)

On the other hand, ABC was the first option of Vietnamese, Chinese, Indian, Finnish and Tajikistan student. The main reason was the compulsory language course of the university (Swedish) was much easier to study than Finnish. A Vietnamese student and the Indian student chose ABC because it had a small number of students so teachers could focus more on individuals.

“For me it’s the first option. Because I think compared to HH or L, they have a lot more students compared to ABC. That’s why I chose ABC. I think it will be more focused on the students. Because if other universities they have a lot of students, a lot of degrees or study programs I don’t think they can focus on students individually.” (Female, Vietnam)

“The other part is it’s a small school. You are in touch with all the people you study with and you are in touch with your professor. It’s a big deal for me ...because the university I went to had 40000 students, if you don’t take initiative you are pretty much lost in. You never get your questions answered.” (Male, India)
Another Vietnamese student and the Finnish student had friends and brother studying in ABC and they received recommendations from them. Moreover, another motive for choosing ABC of the Finnish student was the design of ABC’s website. This was similar to the Polish student’s motive.

“I think that ABC has strong reference among students who come from Vietnam. And I take suggestion from my friends actually. Then I applied to ABC. But right now I believe that I have a right choice when I come to study in ABC.” (Male, Vietnam)

“. The videos in the website that ABC has given a very fresh nice modern image of ABC. I also had to choose between HH and ABC.....that’s definitely one of the things that made me choose ABC but also I knew a lot about ABC because my brother went here. It’s a nice campus. It’s close to the city....” (Female, Finland)

“It was more of accident. When I was choosing the schools I was, the most appealing for me was the website. That’s why I was choosing between ABC and Tampere or Turku. They had very colorful. More focusing on the Turku but my boyfriend was also planning to study here and he was preparing for Helsinki. So from these two cities I chose ABC after all. And for this reason of website I didn’t chose HH because I was feeling like....they don't want me at all. In ABC, they were talking, these videos like why you should come here. It helped me most to choose ABC.” (Female, Poland)

For the Tajikistan student, she was not sure about other universities and just happened to see ABC’s advertisement on the internet when searching about universities.

“For me I don’t know why I chose ABC. It was my first option. I wasn’t sure about any other universities. What I knew was that when I was graduating from high school I was really lost because I didn’t speak Finnish. I wanted to stay in Finland and study something in health you know dealing with healthcare yet in English. When I did a research I don’t know why ABC was the first thing to appear on the internet “study in ABC” so I think that’s a good idea.” (Female, Tajikistan)

The student from South Africa chose ABC because it was close to his accommodation in Helsinki.
4.7 Information sources

The participants were asked from which source they got to know about Finland and the university. There were two main information sources mentioned by the participants: the internet and recommendations (see Table 9). A lot of different internet sources were mentioned by 8 participants from Vietnam, China, Russia, Tajikistan, Nepal, Poland, and South Africa. Recommendations from friends and relatives were also mentioned by 5 participants from Vietnam, Nepal, India, and Bangladesh.

Table 9. Information sources about Finland and the university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internet sources</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Other sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <a href="http://www.admission.fi">www.admission.fi</a></td>
<td>• Friend</td>
<td>• University’s international department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A Russian website</td>
<td>• Relative</td>
<td>• Finnish brands in home country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <a href="URL">www.studyinfinland.fi</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vietnamese Student Association in Finland website: <a href="http://www.vsa...">www.vsa...</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <a href="URL">www.google.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ABC’s internet advertisements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Forum of foreigners in Finland website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Finnish government’s website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <a href="URL">www.ABC.fi</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from two main information sources which were internet and recommendations, international department in universities was also a good source for students seeking studying abroad.
“When I studied in Russia we had special department sponsored for communicating with English speaking universities, study in foreign languages. It has a special department responsible for interacting. They had advertisements all the time even in Swedish. I used to go for lectures like education in Sweden…” (Female, Russia)

Students from Vietnam have formed Vietnamese Student Association in Finland and they have a website which provides Vietnamese students information about Finland, Finnish life and universities in Finland. In addition, a student from Vietnam mentioned Finnish brands in his home country and his friends’ recommendation two information sources providing him information about Finland and his university.

“…we have Vietnamese student helping forum I think so like they created a website where you can get information about lots of universities, study life for like how you live here…” (Female, Vietnam)

“In my hometown, actually where I come from in Vietnam, we have a good reference who refers...it’s just like that because we have some kinds of brand in Vietnam. IKEA, no. the elevator Kone, Nokia and some companies then we know quite well about Finland. Another reason is that we have a network of student in Helsinki and they give a good feedback that they study quite well in Helsinki. That’s just the reason why we choose to study in Helsinki.” (Male, Vietnam)

4.8 Discussion about decision to study in Finland and in a particular university

The participants were asked if they discussed their decision to study in Finland and in a particular university with family, friends, teachers, etc. All three students from Vietnam and one student from Africa answered that after searching information about Finland and the university, they decided on their own without discussing with anyone.
“I think mostly I decided on my own. I told my mom I wanted to study abroad. She said OK you chose the country. “Are you sure you want to go abroad? You don’t know how to cook. It’s cold here”. But then again she supported me because I chose and applied everything on my own and I just tell her the results.” (Female, Vietnam)

“Ok I get feedback from my friends who came here to study and I just decided. I mean that the strong feedback from students significantly affected my decision.” (Male, Vietnam)

Most of the other participants discussed their decision with parents, siblings and friends who they trusted. Moreover, the Indian student and the Finnish student had their friend and brother having studied in ABC so they could get a lot of information from the discussion with their friend or brother. The main contents of the discussions were about the education quality, career prospects after graduation, the costs, etc.

“I didn’t discuss about studying at ABC but I discussed about studying in Finland with my little brother. We discussed about costs and education quality and career prospects, what will you do after you graduate from there, how is the value of the degree you get from there and other things.” (Male, Nepal)

“I talked to a lot of my friends, my mom, my sister and my brother. My brother of course had a lot to say about ABC as a school and he recommended it. It wasn’t really a discussion about which school to choose but more like the subject if it motivates me and if it’s really where I want to study and if it’s what I want to do.” (Female, Finland)

4.9 Preparation time before the entrance exam

The participants were asked how long they took to prepare for the entrance exam to ABC. The answers revealed a wide range of time amount spent by the participants. The shortest time amount was several days spent by a student from Tajikistan and the longest one was up to several years spent by a student from Russia (see Figure 9).
The student from Tajikistan did not have much time to prepare because she was having final exams in high school at the time of the entrance exam. However, she did a good job and was satisfied with her results.

“Well actually for me it was like less than a week before the application deadline when I applied. And after I applied, was it April (yes) I had my finals. That was actually pretty hard to get ready for entrance exam... So I don’t have a lot of time to prepare, maybe several days... But I’m pretty happy with the result. It is very good.” (Female, Tajikistan)

Some students spent quite a lot of time to prepare for the English certificate (IELTS) which was one of the requirements to apply for the university. In addition, one student from Vietnam took more time to prepare because he had graduated from high school for a long time.
“I think if the entrance exam was in April then I think I prepared for like for four months. Because I really wanted to come here so I took a break in my university temporarily. Because I have to have IELTS so I had to take the test to apply my application so I think it’s like four months.” (Female, Vietnam)

“For me it was 6 months. I spent 3 months to prepare for IELTS exam. And it took me around 15 to 20 days to do the research then I started finding all the colleges and universities...so it took me around 1 month and another 1 month to find a suitable one. And...which I consider much was the entrance exam that I’m going to have in my own country. Because some universities they don’t provide the facility of the entrance exam
in your own country. So I tried to find those universities and then found some of them and applied for them. So it took me about 6 months before I applied for...” (Male, Nepal)

“For me it’s like the preparation time is relatively 1 year. We start school year in ABC in August and my preparation began at the September the year before that because I need some time to refresh my knowledge and prepare for the IELTS test. And it takes at least 1 course to refresh the knowledge and it takes some time to prepare for the IELTS test to achieve at least the minimum level that is required by Finnish government for you before you can apply for the visa process and entrance exam and all stuff like that. For me it takes like 1 year to do all of them.” (Male, Vietnam)

### 4.10 Financing the study

The participants were asked how they were financing their study – what was their source of finance? Although tuition fee in Finland is free, students have to spend quite a lot of money in other expenses such as accommodation, food, transportation, entertainment, etc because Finland has high living standard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial solution</th>
<th>Number of students mentioned</th>
<th>Students’ home country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family support</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>China, Tajikistan, Nepal, Vietnam, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working (full-time or part-time)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>China, Russia, Tajikistan, Nepal, India, Finland, South Africa, Gambia, Bangladesh, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal saving</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Russia, Vietnam, India, South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government support</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Finland, Gambia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the students do not finance their study by only one source but the combination of two sources such as family support and working, government support and working, etc. Because Finnish law only allows students to work for maximum 20 hours/week, most of students have part-time or summer jobs.

“I have something from home and during summer I do some kinds of work here. You all know that getting job here is quite difficult. Doing the work like newspaper delivery during summer is quite fun and I do those kinds of job during summer. And during the year I get fund from my family. So it is mix from family and the summer jobs.” (Male, Nepal)

“For me because this is my first year so I still want some time to get used to the environment first before I apply to any job. I want to know the environment around me first. So this time I mostly survive on my own saving from many years ago that I bring with me.” (Male, Vietnam)

### 4.11 After graduation

The participants were asked about the intention after graduation from ABC. Except for three participants from Nepal, Finland and India who did not want to stay in Finland after graduation, the rest of students were not sure about their plan.

“As for me personally, I don’t want to live here in Finland anymore after graduation...And then after my graduation, I will try to find a degree in somewhere else. I know master degree is more valuable for me. I should learn some skills and things from
that…maybe I will try to find some places where I can get a good degree.” (Male, Nepal)

“I am gonna get an awesome project manager job somewhere in France or may be in Australia.” (Female, Finland)

“I don't think I will stay here either...pretty much...I will end up work in Germany or England.” (Male, India)

Most of the participants who had not had their future plan in their minds would like to study a higher degree or certificate or work for a while and then continue study. They would not mind if it would be in Finland or not.

“I think if I am able to find a job here I will stay for 1 or 2 years but then I want to get my master degree so after working for a while I’m gonna get my master degree. I don’t know if it’s here or in another country…” (Female, Vietnam)

“I don’t know now I study healthcare nursing but I am interested in everything, every areas of knowledge whatever I do I would like to get a part time as a nurse and do a part-time study. For example I don’t know maybe business or some other area...And it is interesting to me personally to know more, investigate the world more so possibly I can manage to get into some courses. Maybe there are some universities they offer the courses, virtual courses, open universities courses. Maybe those courses I want to do for a while and after finishing those courses I go for a full time job in Finland.” (Female, Tajikistan)

“I think maybe work for 1 or 2 years here and then let’s see if it’s needed for me to get a master degree or some special...” (Female, China)

“I want to take another degree. I also want to take nursing but I don’t want to give up business I think...Actually now in Russia people come to Finland to get their medical services so I think I’m interested in business and nursing so I will try to work in this area somehow. I don’t have very clear image now but I think I will try to work in the di-
rection of some business stuff. I also want to do nursing because I want...” (Female, Russia)

“I think that I should take additional consideration whether to live in Finland or to work in Finland. But after graduation I think I should switch between different areas in the business environment. Then I deeper taking some kind of ...certificate and go to master degree.” (Male, Vietnam)

“I think I will be staying in Finland even though...I am talking about some exchange but somewhere there but probably Finland...about the job I have no idea. I think the safe choice is to follow financing like part of this school. But I also dream about some my own business. So maybe I will do...” (Female, Poland)

“I also had the opinion of starting my own company.....I am still happy if I go back home after studies. But whatever is going to determine is that...situation in Finland.” (Male, Gambia)

4.12 Suggested way of marketing in home country

The participants were asked if they had any suggestions of marketing for ABC in their home country. Therefore, the suggested ways of marketing given by the participants were listed according to their home country (see Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested ways of marketing in home country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Suggested ways of marketing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| China     | • Providing information about Finland and the quality of Finnish education system  
<p>|           | • Word of mouth                                                  |
| Vietnam   | • Seminar                                                        |
|           | • Brochure                                                       |
|           | • Increase the program’s ranking                                 |
| Russia    | • Seminars in universities                                      |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture centers</td>
<td>• Benefit shown logically on the website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish website</td>
<td>• A website about study in Finland with topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>• Sending exchange students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Making contracts with different universities in the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Seminars of the companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Support finance for researches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>• Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Information from the embassy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>• Organizing the entrance exam in the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Building video library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cooperation with companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• More guest lecturers from other universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Using students as promoters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>• Holding the entrance exam at different times of the year</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Organizing the entrance exam in the country</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>• Partner with different universities in the world</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>• Commercializing more on the university website</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Having representative in the country</td>
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The primary aim of this research was to examine why foreign degree students chose ABC University as the university for their undergraduate studies and from where they got the information about this university. The focus group interviews were conducted to answer the research question raised in the Introduction part. The results of the interviews not only answered the research question but also revealed important information about foreign students at ABC University. These results described opinions and thoughts of a diverse group of foreign degree students currently studying at ABC University. However, they cannot be generalized as the opinions of represented nationalities.

When the participants were asked about the motives for choosing ABC University, the university’s characteristics definitely dominated the field of reason. This result supported Paulsen’s study (1990). In his study, Paulsen found that institutional characteristics (cost, financial aid, programs, size, location, quality, social atmosphere, athletics, and religious emphasis) have a considerable effect on student choice of a particular university. Especially, one of the most important factors mentioned by many participants was the compulsory language course at ABC. Normally, students studying at a Finnish school are required to take mandatory Finnish language course. However, at ABC, students are required to take Swedish language course which are assumed to be much easier than Finnish language by many students. Thus many students decided to choose ABC instead of other Finnish universities. Calm and quiet campus was a motive for choosing ABC of a Russian student. This result is similar to study of Shen (2004) in which attractive campus, adequate security and friendly, open atmosphere are found to be the most important factors on the functional value to affect student university choice. Other ABC’s characteristics such as small number of students, good location, many partner institutions, offering particular degree in English (Plastic Technology) were also mentioned as the motives for choosing this university. Interestingly, several students expressed their fondness towards the university’s website. In their opinion, the university’s website was very well-designed with beautiful colours and attractive videos. Moreover, the university’s internet advertisements had a great visibility to the potential stu-
It can be seen that ABC succeeded in their marketing campaign. A student from Vietnam also mentioned the support from admission department as one of his motives for choosing ABC. Beside the university’s characteristics, several students received recommendation from their friends or relatives. These students and relatives used to study at ABC or had knowledge about the university so they recommended for the participants. There were also several students did not choose ABC on purpose. They finally joined the university because they were not sure about other universities or were not accepted to those universities.

According to Hossler and Gallagher’s college choice model (1987), the predisposition phase develops the student’s university expectation. At this phase there are three main types of factor affect student’s aspiration for university: socio economic background factors (for example race, educational attainment, family income), academic factors (for example academic achievement), and contextual factors (for instance disciplinary problems, attitudes toward school and success). When the participants were asked about the motives for going to university, academic and job-related motives dominated the field of reason. These included career prospects, knowledge, skills, network, etc. The participants believed that the degree gained from the university would find them a better job ensuring future financial stability. However, the student from China expressed her disinterest in the degree. She only considered university life as a new experience and she could quit whenever she wanted. Especially, one of Vietnamese student revealed that going to university was a norm in his society and somebody could be considered “weird” if he did not want to go to university after graduating from high school.

Study of Maringe (2006) shows that the main motives for students to choose their subjects and courses at university are career opportunities and performances in the subject, teacher influence and interest in the subject. Moreover, teachers are the most important external factor while parents are the least. Career prospects, interest in the subject and parents influence were mentioned in the answers; however, there was no student state teacher influence as his motive for choosing a particular program. Moreover, there were a lot of “random” answers which meant the students did not choose the program purposely. This can be explained by two reasons. Firstly, there is a lack of degree program in English. Currently, there were only three degree program taught in English at ABC:
Nursing, International Business and Plastic Technology. Secondly, the student was not interested in any particular program so they just picked one randomly.

The internationalization of higher education is connected with the mobility of young people (Brook and Waters, 2011). Young people assume overseas travel as a mean to discover the world and themselves. Brook and Waters (2011) also propose that young people who have been abroad for travelling or other purposes other than studying usually tend to pursue opportunities of studying abroad. The rapid growth of internet and technology also contribute to the probability of travelling of young people. This theory was supported by the results of the interviews. Several participants in the interviews had been travelled abroad before joining ABC. The Gambia student was an exchange student in Finland in 2005. When asked about the motives for studying abroad, answers such as “to meet new people”, “to visit new place”, or “experience new cultures” were given. In addition, technology encouraged the Chinese student to study abroad because she could talk with her family every day. Besides, the participants also considered the advantage of studying abroad such as “interactive teaching method”, “international environment”, or “practical training opportunities” as the main motives for their decision. Interestingly, several participants mentioned the superior value of a foreign degree to a domestic degree in their home country. This might be explained by the quality of education in the countries at where students choose to study. Finnish free education is also an important factor motivated the students to study abroad.

Study of Simoes and Soares (2010) suggests that students use Internet as the key tool to search information about institutions at the pre-purchase stage. Beside formal sources, advices from counsellors, teachers, friends, etc also obtain students’ belief. This theory was supported by the results of the interviews. When asked about the sources where the participants obtained information about Finland and ABC, internet sources were mentioned by eight participants and recommendations were mentioned by five participants. The rapid growth of the internet and technology allows people to search freely and extensively about almost everything. The interviews also revealed that the degrees of information searching are different among the participants. Nevertheless, a Chinese student considered her teachers as unreliable people and that she could not tell them about her personal plan.
As being described in the theory, implicit motivation is subconscious and effects automatically. For a student, easy entrance exam was the motivation to choose Finland and for another student not being sure about getting into other universities was the motive to choose ABC University. Both of these cases comply with implicit motivation theory as they are more subconscious and automatic. For a Russian student, dissatisfaction with previous education was the reason getting the motivation to go for further study in a university. Here, the active avoidance related to implicit achievement motivation has played a role: she had showed a goal directed behavior i.e., completed a degree, but the result became negative i.e., the degree was not fruitful in terms of job for her. So she now knows that she does not want to continue in the same field and consequently, jumped to another field avoiding the previous field of study. One of the motivations to choose nursing program was the wish to help people in society that gives pleasure of working which goes along with the theory which states that the consequences of implicit motivation are supposed to be rewarding and pleasurable.

Explicit motivation describes the decisions and behaviors of people targeted to achieve important and desirable things. The motivations of students to go for further university studies were more about career prospects, making life more interesting, getting more opportunities. These motivations can simply be categorized as explicit ones as they are things that the students desire and consider important for themselves. Two of the motivations to study the particular programs were “being rich in short time” and to “become an engineer”. They can be visualized in terms of explicit motivation as they have chosen the program consciously in purpose.

Motivations to go to a university, choosing a particular subject and for choosing ABC University supported the self motivation theory. Some students had highly educated family which motivated within their selves to continue studies by going to a university after high school. Learning to be independent was the self motivation for few students to choose a particular subject. Self rewarding is also a part of self motivation. The motivation of one student to choose ABC University because it was the only school that accepted his transfer application was after all rewarding for himself. This too adheres to the self motivation theory.
The Maslow’s hierarchy of needs defines the things like health, employment, family, social stability, property and so on as the safety and security needs. Some students had financial stability in future as the motivation to go a university whereas some got motivated to choose the particular program in hope of getting high demanded jobs. On the other hand, one student saw the guarantee of personal rights in Finland as a motivational factor in choosing Finland and another had chosen ABC University due to its reputation which made him feel secured that he has chosen a right university. All the above mentioned motivations reflect the safety and security needs of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.

The third layer of the Maslow’s hierarchy of needs includes love and belongings according to which people look up for friendship, intimacy, family and community for interpersonal activities when their safety and security needs are fulfilled. They show their belongingness in various kinds of groups. The motivations of students to build network and prepare themselves to get into society by going to a university can be considered under love and belonging heading. One student was motivated to choose Finland because of her boy-friend being there. Being himself a foreigner, another student chose to be in Helsinki because a lot of foreigners live there. Having own friends in the same university motivated a third student to choose ABC University. In all these cases, it can be seen that the students are looking for intimacy, friendship, and/or belongingness which obviously supports the love and belonging needs of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory.

To gain prestige and respect in local society was the motivation of one of the students to go to university. A second student chose to be abroad having a motivation to work with international people. A third student wanted a choose ABC University because it has comparatively small number of students. The esteem needs describe that people want to get accepted by others and get recognized and respected too. Here it seems that, the student wanting to work with international people wants to get accepted by different types of people and societies and the student liking the small number of students wants to get recognized as it is easy to get recognized, build confidence and get achievement in a small group. So these esteem needs have influenced the students’ motivations for different decisions.
The theory says that self-actualization needs make a person realize own potential. They are the things that make people complete. Developing knowledge and skills and getting new experiences were two of the motivations to join a university. These motivations are related to self-actualization needs. Choosing a particular subject to become an entrepreneur was a motivation for one student which was triggered by the self-actualization need. Students have selected Finnish capital Helsinki due to its multinational appealing life style. This also conforms the self-actualization needs of people.

The research revealed a lot of factors associated with the characteristics depicted by the different layers of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory. The physiological needs described as in the theory was not represented in the motivations of the students. So it seemed that their basic physiological needs are all satisfied. But each of the four remaining layers above the physiological needs was represented at least by one or more than one factors that created the motivations in the students. The general interpretation of the Maslow's theory says that to get motivated for achieving a higher level need, one must satisfy the lower level need first. The result of this research shows that the students had motivations to achieve needs lying on the all the four layers above physiological needs at the same time. The statements of the students revealing their motivations contradict with the Maslow's theory in the part that explains that needs are to be achieved one layer in turn and then move up to the needs on the layer right above. So, though the research identifies the different types of needs triggering motivations described by Maslow's theory and agrees with the reasons behind the logic and creation of those needs, it failed to verify the concept explaining the movement through the layers of the needs.

According to one student, she got motivated to choose Finland also because of its being safe and for another student it was Finnish nature which was one of the factors that motivated her to choose Finland. Both of these motivations align to the existence category of the Alderfer's ERG theory which includes basic natural resources and safety as the needs for existence. The student's motivation to go abroad due to the unaffordable tuition fees in home country and decision to choose Finland because of the free education show a tendency to be financially secured which can also be interpreted in terms of existence needs.
The relatedness needs in Alderfer's ERG theory explain the needs to be related to others and the needs necessary for recognition and getting respect. The motivations to go a university considering it to be the norm in local society to get into it and to build network can be the part of the relatedness needs. Moreover, going abroad due to the recommendation of relatives and choosing Finland just because some relatives live there are too connected to relatedness. One student chose Helsinki because its largest city in Finland and tried to relate herself: being from a big city back home. It is also a form of relatedness.

Some students pointed the wish to know other business cultures when asked about the motivations to study business in particular. Some of them also had a motivation to be get matured by the virtue of studying abroad. Job and internship prospects were the motivations of one student to choose a university located in Helsinki. All these kinds of motivations that address towards the growth and excellence are covered under the growth needs described by Alderfer's ERG theory.

According to the ERG theory, there is no strict pattern that defines the steps requiring particular needs to be fulfilled before proceeding to the needs in another category. So existence needs can be fulfilled before or after relatedness needs or growth needs and so on. The research figured out the different categories of needs described by the theory. But the research wasn't concentrated about the movement to the directions of different categories of needs defined by the ERG theory. So the authors conclude that the research is more neutral to the ERG theory.

The Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation tends to describe motivation as a product of expected worth that a person sees on a goal and the probability that the person sees on achieving the goal. Some students said that their motivations to study in a university abroad was traveling and meeting people from different nationalities. That means these two factors were worthy to them and had a full probability of occurrence as they were going abroad; so they would already have traveled and were about to study in international program taught in English; so they would for sure have met people from different nationalities. So it can be concluded that their motivation in this respect was positive.
Similarly, the motivation to choose a certain program for some students was earning money which too seems to be a positive motivation, once they complete the degree and get proper job. Some students were motivated by the Finnish education system to choose Finland for studies. They even explained that Finland has the best education system in the world. Regarding this too, they had a positive motivation. Besides, it was interesting to find out later that the research itself was more concentrated in exploring the motivations that were oriented to positive consequences. So, in the case of this research, the expectancy of negative outcomes was overshadowed by the expectancy of the positive outcomes.

In conclusion, the findings of this research, for the most of their parts, are supported by theoretical framework. Foreign degree students chose ABC University mainly because of its characteristics and recommendations from friends and relatives. The Swedish language course that is taught compulsorily can be seen as one of the most important factors among the university’s characteristics that motivated foreign degree students to choose the university. Internet and friends are two major sources from where foreign degree students got information about ABC University.
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www.finland.fi

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Focus group interview questions

1. What motivated you to go to a university?
2. What motivated you to choose a particular subject?
3. What motivated you to study abroad not in your home country?
4. What motivated you to study in Finland and Helsinki?
5. What motivated you to choose ABC University?
6. How and where did you get information about Finland and ABC? Mention the sources.
7. Did you discuss your idea and decision to study at a university in Finland with a) your parents, b) your school masters, c) your friends, d) someone else?
8. How long did it take to prepare for the entrance exam?
9. How do you finance your studies now (do you work, do you receive money from home, do you receive study aid money from Finland)?
10. What do you plan after graduation? Do you return to your home country? Do you stay in Finland? Do you expect to get a suitable job soon in any case?
11. How should ABC be marketed in your home country? (Who is the target group? How should it be reached? What should the message be?)