

Competence development in the Journeyman Travel
Students' experiences of Nordpraktik

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PREFACE

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Ph.D Seija Jäminki for offering me a possibility to work with this thesis commission. Her expertise and valuable advices have been highly appreciated throughout this thesis process and the participation in Nordpraktik in fall 2013. Additionally I would like to thank other Nordpraktik staff members and fellow participating students for the support and unforgettable experiences.

In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to Ph.D Pirjo Alatalo for her patient advises during this thesis writing process.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends of their unconditional love and support during my studies and other divisions of life.

“The future is not some place we are going, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made. And the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination.” - John H. Schaar –

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TIIVISTELMÄ

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<p>Tämän opinnäytetyön tavoitteena on tutkia, kuinka kansainvälinen yhteistyö ja Journeyman Travel –malli Nordpraktik -hankkeessa tukevat opiskelijoiden oppimista syksyllä 2013.</p> <p>Tutkimus keskittyy myös osoittamaan Journeyman Travel -mallin mahdollisia etuja ja epäkohtia. Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys perustuu Euroopan Unionin kasvustrategiaan ”Eurooppa 2020”, Elinikäisen oppimisen ohjelmaan sekä eurooppalaiseen tutkintojen viitekehysten tasovaatimukseen (EQF) 6:een, joka määrittelee alemman ammattikorkeakoulututkinnon vaatimustason oppijan tiedoille, taidoille ja pätevyyksille.</p> <p>Tämä tapaustutkimus yhdistää niin laadullisia kuin määrällisiäkin tutkimusmenetelmiä. Tutkimuksen primaarisina lähteinä ovat Nordpraktik-hankkeen syksyllä 2013 osallistuneiden opiskelijoiden täyttämä mielipidekysely sekä jälkeenpäin toteutettu avoin haastattelu yhdistettynä tutkimuksen tekijän omiin kokemuksiin projektiin osallistujana. Nordpraktik- ja HansaVET -dokumenttien analyysit puolestaan toimivat sekundaarisina lähteinä kattavan kokonaiskuvan hahmottamiseksi.</p> <p>Tulosten mukaan opiskelijat kokivat osallistumisen kansainvälisiin hankkeisiin tärkeänä mutta kansainvälistymisen ja siihen liittyvien hankkeiden tulisi olla tärkeä ja luonnollinen osa opiskelijoiden opintosuunnitelmaa. Opiskelijat kokivat ohjaajan antaman aktiivisen tuen tärkeäksi niin hakuvaiheessa kuin työharjoittelun aikana. Haku- ja opastamiskäytäntöjen tulisi myös integroitua osaamisaloille. Ohjaajilla tulisi olla riittävästi aikaa ja resursseja opastaa opiskelijaa tämän erityisosaaminen huomioiden. Näin voitaisiin välttyä epätyytyttäviltä harjoittelukokemuksilta.</p>	
<p>Asiasanat: Journeyman Travel, Nordpraktik, kansainvälistyminen, Pohjois-Kalotti, EFQ 6.</p>	

ABSTRACT

LAPLAND UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES, School of Business and Culture

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<p>The objective of this research is to find out how international collaboration and the Journeyman Travel support students' competence development in the case project Nordpraktik during fall 2013. This research also focuses on finding out the possible benefits and drawbacks of the Journeyman Travel. Two research questions were formulated for the purpose of achieving these objectives.</p> <p>The theoretical framework builds on the European Union's Strategy to boost growth and jobs, i.e. 'Europe 2020', key competences of lifelong learning and European Quality Framework level 6 (EQF 6) skills and competence requirements imposed on Bachelor level studies.</p> <p>The case study method is used and this research draws from both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. This research is based on synthesizing analyses of primary and secondary data. The primary data was gathered through open-ended interviews, a survey and personal experiences as a participant in Nordpraktik project during fall 2013. The secondary data was gathered from analyzing various Nordpraktik and HansaVET documentation.</p> <p>The results of this research indicate that students experienced the importance of participation in international projects. International projects should be integrated into students' study curricula. Active contact and support by tutors during the application process and internship was found important. The application and tutoring practices should be integrated into the study units. The tutors should have enough time and resources to guide the students and take into consideration students' specialization field. Such practices would prevent unsatisfactory internship experiences.</p>	
Keywords: Journeyman Travel, Nordpraktik, internationalization, North Calotte, EQF 6.	

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Orientation

International experiences are valuable advantages in today's labour markets. Unemployment rate has increased significantly due to the current situation of world economy. Current situation is unstable around the world and additionally inside the European Union. The European Union's Strategy to boost growth and jobs "Europe 2020" objective is to build a stronger, more competitive Europe and in addition to tackle the current crisis. To meet these objectives, people have to be equipped with the skills and qualifications requested on today's labour market, and specifically on tomorrow's global knowledge-based economy. The key factors determining Europe's economic success are skills and qualifications. (European Commission, 2014e.) European Qualifications Framework level 6 define the skills and competence requirements for university and polytechnic Bachelor's degrees as follows: "In the context of EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual. Achieving advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles."

In European Qualifications Framework skills are described as cognitive by involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking and practical by involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments. Advanced skills, demonstrating innovation and mastery, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialized field of work or study. In this framework competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy. This refers to managing of complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts and ability to take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups. (European Commission, 2014a.)

The young generation is the future of North Calotte in order to secure the arctic vitality of the region. Without continuation to already existing business and having new entrepreneurs the North Calotte region won't be able to acquire economic growth and neither entice new inhabitants leading to decreasing population as well as diminishing

of services. Eventually North Calotte won't be able to reach regional growth or development in multiple sectors of industries. Already in the history, trade and business have been essential sources of income for the inhabitants of the region. Due to similarity of the cultures and languages internationalization and international cooperation for businesses are extremely important.

Deriving from EFQ 6 requirements, the current economic crisis, rather high unemployment rate and sparsely population in North Calotte region, there is a need for education and projects such as Nordpraktik to support students' international competences. Such support contributes improving employment and regional development in the North Calotte region.

1.2 Motivation and background

Internationalization and entrepreneurship in the SME level are important and current topics in North Calotte region. The participating students in Nordpraktik complete their internship period outside their home country. The idea is also to increase the awareness of the possibilities and potential in North Calotte region. The case project Nordpraktik is introduced in the chapter 1.4.

Nordpraktik is based on Journeyman Travel. The goal is to have business idea and apply the project in students' university followed by a match-making with a suitable internship company outside of the students' home country in North Calotte region. In the history apprentices learned from the masters who already had established businesses and after apprentices had gained enough skills and knowledge they had requirements to establish their own company. (Nordpraktik, 2014.) The introduction of the Journeyman Travel is provided in the chapter 1.5.

Interest in this specific research area was increased after my participation into Nordpraktik during the fall 2013. During the project I acquired understanding and experience what Journeyman Travel actually is in practice, how it works and how it could be possibly improved. Additionally I gained more knowledge about North Calotte region, history and the industry structure. Figure 1 shows Nordpraktik focus areas.



Figure 1. North Calotte region with Nordpraktik is focus areas (Nordpraktik, 2014)

Finland, Sweden, Norway and northern Russia include the areas of North Calotte. It consists of the provinces of Nordland, Tromsø and Finnmark in Norway, Norbotten in Sweden, the province of Lapland in Finland and the Kola Peninsula in Russia. EU membership has made the free movement of the workforce more fluent. For decades the citizens of Nordic countries have not been required a work or residency permit when moving inside the region. In addition the Nordic citizens have also been able to travel without a passport since the countries have joined to EU.

Working and movement inside the region is easier by the fact that the Swedish language is understood nearly in all countries. Based on fact that North Calotte is sparsely populated and high unemployment rate internationalization and entrepreneurship are important topics. Therefore cooperation between educational units and SME sector in rural areas is required.

Despite the fact that retrieving education and employment near home might feel less risk-taking option for the student, participation in student mobility programmes and working abroad offers opportunities of obtaining valuable international work experience, improvement of language skills and establishing relationships.

(Crossborder Tornedalen, 2014.)

1.3 Objectives and research questions

The main objective of this research is to analyze how Journeyman Travel support students' competence development in Nordpraktik during fall 2013. The second objective is to analyze the possible benefits and drawbacks of Journeyman Travel. Finally some suggestions for improvement are presented.

The first research question addressed in this research is as follows:

How does the Journeyman Travel support students' competence development in Nordpraktik during fall 2013? Because this research focuses on students' perspectives during fall 2013 I will research how the Nordpraktik participants perceived their competence development.

The second research question is addressed as follows:

What are the possible benefits and drawbacks of the Journeyman Travel from students' perspective? With this question I will research the possible benefits of Journeyman Travel. Additionally I will research what are the possible drawbacks that would need attention or development in order to create better learning outcomes for participating students in the future.

1.4 Introduction of the case project Nordpraktik

According to Nordpraktik the objective of the project is to assist students to develop their business ideas with a company abroad which in this case is located in the North Calotte region. Improving students' competence in their own profession and offering new knowledge about the history, economics, culture and industry of the North Calotte region are important focus areas. (Nordpraktik 2014.)

In a view of educational institutions Nordpraktik supports internationalization and for their students it offers an opportunity to complete students' compulsory internship abroad. Nordpraktik offers students practical training and possibilities to develop their business plans in order to establish a company during or after the studies. (Nordpraktik 2014.)

As for internship companies, Nordpraktik supports the companies by employing graduates and encouraging possible internationalization activities in the North Calotte region. Through co-operation in the project together with students companies receive knowledge from new market areas and a well-educated student would have possible future working place after the graduation. (Nordpraktik, 2014.)

Nordpraktik is operating together with five organizations. Swedish organizations are Norden Association Norrbotten, Norden Association Sweden and Nordic Aviation Technology Centre. Troms County Council is located in Norway and it is one of the partnership organizations. In Finland the partnership organization was Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences. (Nordpraktik, 2014.)

1.5 Introduction of Journeyman Travel

In the history, traditionally students in vocational as well as academic courses have learned their skills and competences in their own countries, but also from masters and professionals in various countries through the apprenticeship system. In vocational education this way of learning competences was called Journeyman Travelling. Until the end of the 19th century, the Journeyman Travel was a common form of learning within the field of vocational education. Apprentices travelled to other cities and foreign countries in order to learn the skills and competences they needed. On the basis of their learning, they had ability to establish their own workshops or enterprises. Journeyman Travelling taught them not only professional skills, but also entrepreneurial skills. Educational institutions arrange various mobility programmes as a form of student exchange or internship placements. Additionally educational institutions arrange various projects such Nordpraktik. The new strategic framework for European cooperation in Education and Training 2020 proposes that international mobility should become the rule rather than the exception. (HansaVET Journeyman Travel, 2014.)

The Journeyman Travel consist three parts as figure 2 illustrates:

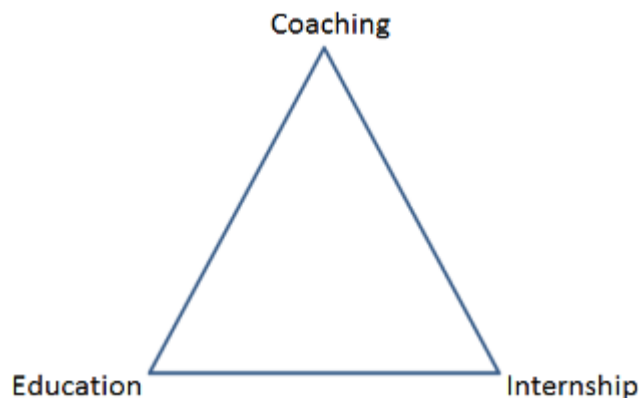


Figure 2. Journeyman Travel (modified from HansaVET Journeyman Travel, 2014)

In Nordpraktik Journeyman Travel was applied to support students learning and competence development. The process starts from application period where students present their individual project ideas based on the business idea or sector they are interested in. The next stage is formulating the project idea together with the project coordinator in students own educational unit. This includes also verifying the

applicants' fluency of English language. Usually students can also express their interest towards any specific foreign country, i.e. Finland, Sweden or Norway. When these stages are completed, the coordinators from students' own educational unit and from the destination country starts the match-making process with potential host-companies in North Calotte region. In case the students' own business idea and company's interest for internship placement and towards students' own business idea meet there is a match.

The project continues with Educational Module 1 where all the participating students meet each other's and are mentored by project staff; managers, coaches and consultants. Project staff work as mentors and assist students to proceed and develop their business ideas and eventually to come up with a business plan to establish possibly a company. Some of the students might already work as entrepreneurs but they have interest to internationalize, explore new markets and expand their business in order to have international business operations in North Calotte. During the week participants receive valuable information concerning presentation skills, different cultures, languages, history and industry of the region. The participants prepare themselves for the next stage which is the actual internship period abroad together with the host-company.

Internship period in the host-company lasts two weeks. During this internship period students are mentored by the business owners and students are learning from them. Students have possibility to participate in everyday duties in the company but even more important is to discuss about their personal intentions to establish their own enterprise and the process of establishing a business. Actual business owners have already gone through this process and may give valuable advices and share their experiences. Being in contact with one's own educational unit coordinator as well as the destination country coordinator is important in order to have updated information and inform the coordinators how the internship has succeeded so the possible grievances could be dealt with in order to receive the best outcome from the internship period. This provides support and security to the students especially if they are travelling for the first time alone to the destination country.

When the internship period is completed, students participate in Educational Module 2. This stage of the project includes a seminar and reporting as well as presenting the

outcomes of their own project to other students and to the project staff. Figure 3 displays the Journeyman Travel as a process.

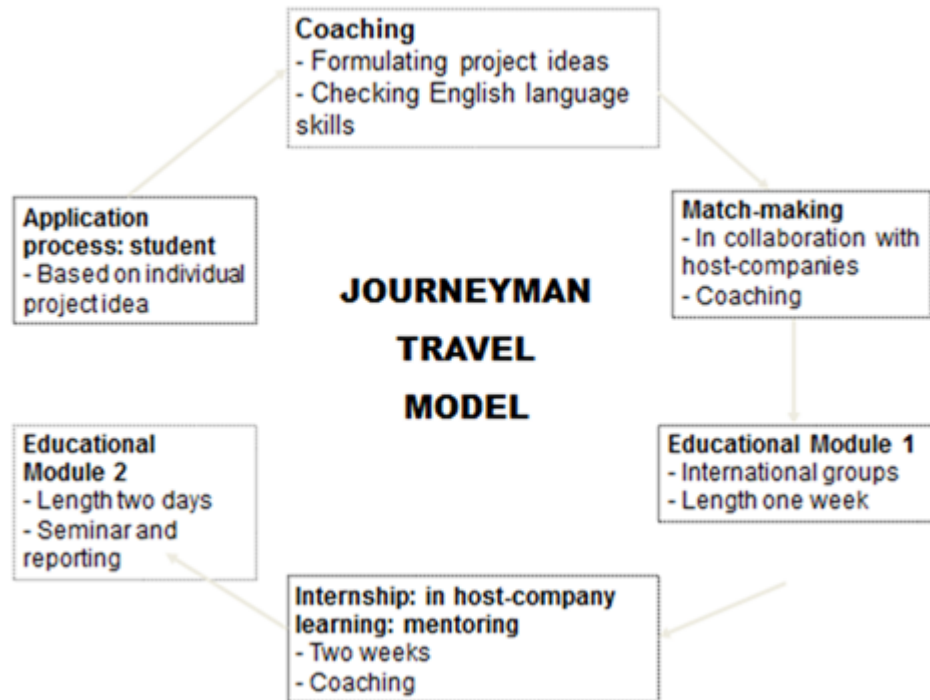


Figure 3. Journeyman Travel (HansaVET Journeyman Travel, 2014)

Nordpraktik is based on authentic learning and specializing to develop students' own specialization fields. The goal is to offer integrated learning experience. Figure 4 presents the various parts of integrated learning experience in Nordpraktik comprehensively.

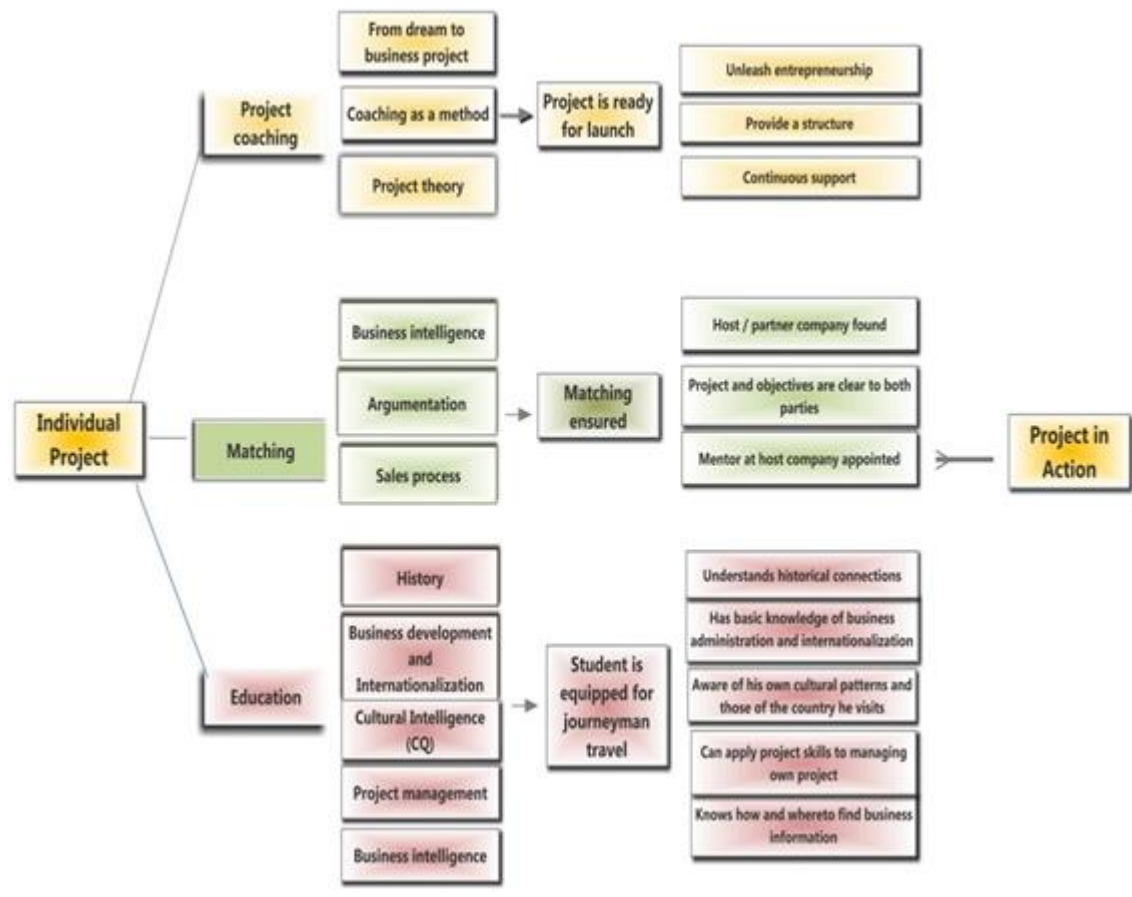


Figure 4. Integrated learning experience (HansaVET-model of Journeyman travelling, 2014)

1.6 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1 offers introduction of the thesis work with motivation and background followed by introduction of the case project Nordpraktik and the Journeyman Travel. In addition, the research objectives and research questions are presented. Chapter 2 discusses the research methodology, data collection and analysis and eventually some limitations of the work. The relevant theory review is then provided in Chapter 3. Lapland University of Applied Sciences contributes students' internationalization and entrepreneurship through education and therefore offers preconditions to participate in several mobility programs and projects that support internationalization and becoming an entrepreneur during or after the studies. Introduction of these manners is presented then in Chapter 4. Findings of the empirical research referring to Nordpraktik feedback survey results and the interviews of participants are then discussed in chapter 5

following by the discussion and conclusions of the thesis in Chapter 6. At the end of the research suggestions for improvement are presented.

2 RESEARCH METHDOS AND METHODOLOGY

The research methods and the techniques used in this study are discussed. In addition, the limitations concerning the research process are discussed.

2.1 Research methods

Several research techniques are used and combined within this case study method. ‘‘A case study is a useful method when the area of research is relatively less known, and the researcher engaged in theory-building types of research. This is perhaps the most frequently used approach for thesis and dissertation research. Case studies involve data collection through multiple sources such as verbal reports, personal interviews, observation and written reports.’’ (Marchan-Piekkari, Welch, 2004, 109-110.) Case studies can be whether single or multiple case studies. This research is a single case study focusing to specific project called Nordpraktik and to the Journeyman Travel it utilizes.

In this research the usage of triangulation technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from multiple sources involved. The purpose in qualitative research is to increase the validity and credibility of the results. ‘‘Triangulation is one of the defining features of a case study. It refers to the collection of data through different methods or even different kind of data on the same phenomenon. The use of multi-methods or triangulation is not new and can be tracked back to Cambell and Fiske (1959), who argued that to ensure validation on should use more than one method. The main advantage of triangulation, however, is that it can produce a more complete, holistic and contextual portrait of the object under study.’’ (Marschan-Piekkari, Welch, 2004, 115.)

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods are used in this research. Qualitative research is a generic term for investigative methodologies described as ethnographic, naturalistic, anthropological, field, or participant observer research. It emphasizes the importance of looking at variables in the natural setting in which they are found. Because Nordpraktik is based on authentic learning experiences the interaction between

variables is important. “In education, the term authentic learning refers to a wide variety of educational and instructional techniques focused on connecting what students are taught in school to real-world issues, problems, and applications. The basic idea is that students are more likely to be interested in what they are learning, more motivated to learn new concepts and skills, and better prepared to succeed in college, careers, and adulthood if what they are learning mirrors real-life contexts, equips them with practical and useful skills, and addresses topics that are relevant and applicable to their lives outside of school.” (The Glossary of Education, 2014.)

Detailed data is gathered through open ended questions that provide direct quotations. “The interviewer is an integral part of the investigation (Jacob, 1988). This differs from quantitative research which attempts to gather data by objective methods to provide information about relations, comparisons, and predictions and attempts to remove the investigator from the investigation (Smith, 1983).” (Key, 1997.) Primary data was collected through interviews, a survey and feedback from other participants in Nordpraktik synthesizing the results to my own experiences as a participant in Nordpraktik during fall 2013. Secondary data was gathered through various Nordpraktik and HansaVET documentation.

In order to formulate a complete impression of the participating students’ competence development an open-ended interviews were chosen to complement the survey results and document analysis. “An open-ended interview is a way of gathering information from people. An interviewer asks questions of a participant, who then answers those questions. The interview is considered open-ended because even though the questions can be scripted, the interviewer usually doesn't know what the contents of the response will be. These interviews may have some questions to gather basic factual data on participants such as age and gender, but usually they focus more on the participant's thoughts, feelings, experiences, knowledge, skills, ideas and preferences.” (Thibodeaux, 2014.) The selection of interviewees was based on the fact of different genders, ages, nationalities, level of the fluency of English language skills, educational backgrounds and whether they are already operating as business owners or planning to become entrepreneurs in the future. The interview included similar questions to each interviewee and in addition, some specializing questions depending on their educational and entrepreneurial background. The interviewees had the freedom to express

themselves freely and present their own ideas during the interviews. The interviews were conducted through online chat tool in Facebook. This was fluent way to complete the interviews due to the fact that majority of the participants' lives outside of Finland. By using this online chat application in Facebook it is possible to use both writing and video call tools. The interaction is online and real-time discussion.

2.2 Limitation and scope of the study

The extent of Bachelor's thesis work in Lapland University of Applied Sciences is 15 ECTS points. Therefore this thesis work is limited based on the workload. Some parts of project documentation and contact information are classified under a status of confidentiality and therefore the access was limited. Unfortunately due to the recent organizational change of Lapland University of Applied there is no completed internationalization strategy material available yet. Thereby it can't be included.

The research is focusing on students' perspectives of competence development. Nordpraktik had several intakes but it would irrelevant to contact all the participants. Obviously unknown participants wouldn't feel comfortable of commenting or replying and the collection of data would suffer. The most noticeable limitation in completing this thesis can be the fact that the researcher of this study has been participating in Nordpraktik project activities. Therefore some contemplation in this research can have contaminations of the researcher's own point of view and therefore be objective and there is a risk that the answers of the interviewees might not be completely reliable. This might lead to internal validity threats of the study due to biasing from the interview executor. Additionally researcher relationship to interviewees could be considered as an advantage because the researcher is not a higher authority unlike the project staff. The external validity threats of this research were the survey of Nordpraktik as well as the interviews of the participants'. In order to succeed the participants' were required to have enough knowledge, experiences and interest towards the Nordpraktik. The interviews are focusing to some individuals of the same intake group as researcher participated. Thereby the sampling of interviewees and the survey was quite narrow. These limitations in the participants screening makes the research findings applicable only to a specific group and possibly cannot be generalized too much.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter discusses about the theoretical frameworks of the research. National Framework for Qualifications and other Learning level 6, Strategic Framework Education&Learning 2020, European Commission Lifelong learning, European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (hereinafter ECVET) and European Quality Framework level 6 (hereinafter EQF 6) are presented. Skills and competences are the key factors for success of Europe. Concepts of internationalization and entrepreneurship in Nordpraktik are included.

3.1 National Framework for Qualifications and other Learning level 6

The requirements are described as follows:

Knowledge: Student possesses comprehensive and advanced knowledge of his/her field, including the critical understanding of theories, key concepts, methods and principles. Student understands the extent and boundaries of professional duties and/or disciplines.

Work methods and applications (skills): Student possesses advanced skills, which demonstrate mastery of issues, the capability to apply knowledge and come up with creative solutions, which are required in a specialized professional, scientific or artistic field to solve complex or unpredictable problems.

Responsibility, management and entrepreneurship: Student possesses the capability to manage complex professional work or projects and the capability to work independently in expert duties in the field. Student possesses the capability to make decisions in unpredictable operating environments and has the basic capability to work as an independent entrepreneur in the field.

Evaluation: In addition to the evaluation and development of his/her own competence, is able to take responsibility for the development of individuals and groups.

Key skills for life-long learning: Student possesses the capability for continuous learning. Knows how to communicate adequately verbally and in writing both to audiences in the field and outside of it. Possesses the capability to communicate at an international level and interact in one official language and at least one foreign language. (Ministry of Education 2009: 24.)

The objective of Nordpraktik is to develop all these aspects and increase the professional competence development of students. This meets the needs of the Europe 2020 strategy. Lapland University of Applied Sciences targets also to develop these aspects of students during the education and is offering student mobility programmes, development environments and projects such as Nordpraktik.

The competence-based description of qualifications is designed to support lifelong learning, improve employment prospects, increase mobility, and bridge the gap between education and the world of work. The Framework for Qualifications and Other Learning is based on the European Qualifications Framework. (Finnish National Board of Education, 2014.)

3.2 Strategic Framework – Education&Learning 2020

Concerning education and training, each EU country is responsible for their systems, so EU policy is designed to support national action and help address common challenges, such as global competition, skills requirements in the workforce and ageing societies.

“Through the strategic framework for education and training, goal is to make lifelong learning and mobility a reality and improve the quality and efficiency of education and training. Also promoting equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship as well as enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.” (EUROPA, 2011.)

Indicators of education outcomes are skills or qualifications. “New findings from the OECD’s Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) expose a weakness: the skills of Europe's working-age population are not in line with the needs and requirements of the labour market. Today Europe is facing a serious skills gap that risks hampering growth and

employment in the future; and the least skilled workers, who are in the most urgent need of up-skilling to be employable, tend not to take part in training. To close this skills gap and bring adult skills in line with the general expectations and needs of our modern economy will require substantial investment over many years.” (European Commission, 2014e.)

“Europe would benefit from overcoming remaining barriers that are due to the myriad of existing diplomas, certificates and qualifications. Despite the existence of a large number of policies and instruments, there still remain obstacles for individuals to move between countries, across different education sub-systems, and from education to work. Europe needs better transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications. Efforts towards a European Area for Skills and Qualifications will enhance the effective recognition of competences and qualifications and support the free movement of learners and workers. Another example of efficiency measures will be to link the worlds of work and education more closely, in order to curb and even prevent youth unemployment, which is one of Europe's most pressing problems. To ensure that education and training systems provide high-quality and labour market relevant skills, they have to be adjusted to respond better to economic developments; if possible, they have to detect or anticipate emerging trends in order to secure in time a stable supply of relevant skills. This helps to avoid shortages of qualified labour and skills mismatches. Also the transition from education to working life should be made less challenging.” Students with training programme experiences have easier continuation from education to working life (European Commission, 2014e.)

3.3 Key competences for lifelong learning

According to European Commission the key competences exist in the shape of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to each context are fundamental for each individual in a knowledge-based society. They provide more value for the labor market, social cohesion and active citizenship by offering flexibility and adaptability, satisfaction and motivation. This recommendation proposes a reference tool for European Union (EU) countries to ensure that these key competences are fully

integrated into their strategies and infrastructures, particularly in the context of lifelong learning.

Key competences for lifelong learning are a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. Key competences are essential in a knowledge society and guarantee more flexibility in the labour force, allowing it to adapt more quickly to constant changes in an increasingly interconnected world. They are also a major factor in innovation, productivity and competitiveness, and they contribute to the motivation and satisfaction of workers and the quality of work. Key competences should be acquired by young people at the end of their compulsory education and training, equipping them for adult life, particularly for working life, whilst forming a basis for further learning and adults throughout their lives, through a process of developing and updating skills.

Eight key competences are defined in this framework which describes the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes synthesized each of them:

Firstly communication in the mother tongue, which is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form by listening, speaking, reading and writing and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts.

Communication in foreign languages, which involves, in addition to the main skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue, mediation and intercultural understanding. The level of proficiency depends on several factors and the capacity for listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Mathematical competences and basic competences in science and technology are important meaning that mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations with the emphasis being placed on process, activity and knowledge. Basic competences in science and technology refer to the mastery, use and application of knowledge and methodologies that explain the natural world. These involve an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and the responsibility of each individual as a citizen.

The digital competence involves the confident and critical use of information society technology (IST) and thus basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT). Learning to learn is related to learning, the ability to pursue and organize one's own learning, either individually or in groups, in accordance with one's own needs, and awareness of methods and opportunities.

The social and civic competences that refer to personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and all forms of behavior that equips individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life. It is linked to personal and social well-being. An understanding of codes of conduct and customs in the different environments in which individuals operate is essential. Civic competence, and particularly knowledge of social and political concepts and structures (democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and civil rights), equips individuals to engage in active and democratic participation.

The sense of initiative and entrepreneurship is the ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. The individual is aware of the context of their work and is able to seize opportunities that arise. It is the foundation for acquiring more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance.

The cultural awareness and expression, which involves appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media; music, performing arts, literature and the visual arts.

These key competences are all interdependent, and the emphasis in each case is on critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving, risk assessment, decision taking and constructive management of feelings. (EUROPA, 2011.)

3.4 The European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)

“The aim of the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is to make it easier for people to get validation and recognition of work-related skills and knowledge acquired in different systems and countries – so that they can count towards vocational qualifications.” ECVET targets to increase the attractiveness of moving between different countries and learning environments and additionally increasing the compatibility between the different vocational education and training (VET) systems across Europe, and the qualifications they offer. Employability of VET graduates and the confidence of employers of each VET qualification require specific skills and knowledge (European Commission, 2014b.)

3.5 Polytechnic degrees

Provisions on the degrees that can be taken at polytechnics are laid down by the Polytechnics Decree (Valtioneuvoston asetus ammattikorkeakouluista 352/2003). The studies leading to a polytechnic degree comprise basic and vocational studies, elective studies, a practical training period and a thesis or final project.

The general aim of the studies leading to a polytechnic degree is to provide the student with: broad overall knowledge and skills with the relevant theoretical background for working as an expert in the field; the knowledge and skills needed for following and advancing developments in the field; the knowledge and skills needed for continuous learning; adequate language and communication skills; and the knowledge and skills required in the field internationally.

The aim of the basic studies is to provide the student with a broad overall picture of the position and significance of the field in question within society, the world of work and internationally, introduce the student to the general theoretical background and communications in the field, and to provide him/her with adequate Finnish and Swedish language skills, which are required by civil servants and which are necessary for their field; and the written and oral skills in one or two foreign languages, which are required for practicing the student's profession and for professional development.

The aim of the professional studies is to introduce the student to the key problem areas and applications as well as their scientific or artistic foundations in the professional field in question in such a way that after graduation the student is capable of independent work in expert duties in the field and as an entrepreneur, as well as able to participate in the development of the work community.

The aim of the practical training is to introduce the student, in a supervised manner, to especially those practical work assignments which are central to professional studies and to the application of these knowledge and skills within working life.

The aim of the thesis or final project is to develop and demonstrate the student's capacity to apply his/her knowledge and skills in a practical expert position related to his/her professional studies.

Persons with applicable first-cycle polytechnic degree are qualified for studies leading to a second-cycle polytechnic degree when, in addition to the qualification, they have at least three years of work experience in the field in question. Moreover, persons with an applicable first-cycle polytechnic degree are eligible for studies leading to a second-cycle university degree. (Ministry of Education 2009: 24.)

3.6 Key content of EQF

The EQF is a common European reference framework which connects various countries national qualifications systems and qualifications frameworks. Its eight reference levels span the full scale of qualifications from basic to advance. As an instrument for the promotion of lifelong learning, the EQF encompasses all levels of qualifications acquired in general, vocational as well as academic education and training. Additionally, the framework addresses qualifications acquired in basic and continuing education and training. Each level of qualification should, in principle, be attainable through a variety of educational and career paths.

The EQF reference levels are based on learning outcomes that are described as knowledge, skills and competence. Each of the eight levels is defined by describing the

learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at that level in any system of qualifications. The EQF focuses on what a person with a qualification knows, understands and is able to do on completion of the learning process. According to the recommendation, the shift of emphasis to learning outcomes enables taking various 13 European educational systems into account because comparison based merely on investments (for example, duration of studies) is difficult. The EQF is compatible with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area developed in conjunction with the Bologna Process. A common framework is based on three cycles - Degree/Bachelor, Master and Doctorate. It also encompasses a system of accumulation and transfer of credits; mobility of students, teachers and researchers; cooperation with regard to quality assurance; the European dimension of higher education.

The descriptions of the EQF levels 5 to 8 refer to the descriptions of higher education levels agreed upon as a part of the Bologna process. However, the EQF level descriptions differ in wording from the Bologna level descriptions, which have been drawn up especially for higher education needs. This is due to the fact the EQF as a framework for lifelong learning also includes vocational education and training and work environments up to the highest level. The EQF is not a substitute for national qualifications systems and/or qualifications, nor does it define them. The EQF does not describe specific qualifications or an individual's competences, and particular qualifications should be referenced to the appropriate European Qualifications Framework level by way of the relevant national qualifications systems. (Ministry of Education 2009: 24.)

The benefits of EQF

The EQF primary users are the bodies responsible for national and/or sectorial qualifications systems and frameworks. If the qualifications included in the systems are classified at levels corresponding to those in the EQF, it is easier for private individuals, employers and providers of educational services to compare qualifications gained from different countries and different educational systems. (Ministry of Education 2009: 24.)

The EQF supports greater mobility of learners and workers. It assists learners to describe their broad level of competence to recruiters in other countries. This assists employers interpret the qualifications of applicants and so support labour market mobility in Europe. (Ministry of Education 2009: 24.)

The EQF should benefit individuals by increasing access to, and participation in, lifelong learning. The EQF indicates how learning outcomes may be combined from different settings, for example formal study or work, and from different countries, and can thus contribute to reducing barriers between education and training providers, e.g. between higher education and vocational education and training, which may operate in isolation from each other. This promotes progression so that learners do not have to repeat learning. The EQF can support individuals with extensive experience from work or other fields of activity by facilitating validation of non-formal and informal learning. The focus on learning outcomes assist to assess whether learning outcomes acquired in these settings are equivalent in content and relevance to formal qualifications. The EQF supports individual users as well as providers of education and training by increasing the transparency of qualifications awarded outside national systems, for example by sectors and multinational companies. The adoption of a common reference framework based on learning outcomes facilitates the comparison and (potential) linking together of traditional qualifications awarded by national authorities and qualifications awarded by other stakeholders. The EQF assists sectors and individuals take advantage of the increasing international dimension of qualifications. (Ministry of Education 2009: 24.)

The challenges of EQF

The challenge for the European Qualifications Framework is for it to be more than just a mere technical tool for classifying qualifications. The challenge is to engage cooperation without creating pressures to harmonize education.

The challenge in drawing up national frameworks and referencing them to the EQF is to overcome traditional views separating qualifications based on systems and not on the basis of learning outcomes. A further key challenge is constructing and indicating lifelong learning paths. Clarifying the validation principles of prior learning is another challenge.

The EQF focuses attention on learning outcomes, which can provide a common language for describing qualifications and increasing the transparency and impact of qualifications. The challenge is to come up with a genuine and truthful examination of qualifications based on learning outcomes throughout Europe. There is a danger that different countries adopt the learning outcomes approach in very different ways, thus complicating the comparison of qualifications. (Ministry of Education 2009: 24.)

EQF in Finland

The Finnish National Board of Education is the National Coordination Point for the European Qualifications Framework appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The National Coordination Point supports and guides the relationship between the national qualification system and the European Qualifications Framework together with other national authorities.

The Finnish government presented its proposal for a law on National Framework for Qualifications and Other Learning to the Parliament on the 3 May 2012. The framework improves the clarity and effectiveness of the Finnish qualifications system, increase the national and international transparency and comparability of qualifications and promote national and international mobility.

The framework facilitates overall scrutiny of the Finnish education and qualifications system and other learning. It describes the learning outcomes required by qualifications, syllabi and other extensive competence entities as knowledge, skills and competences, and by defining their interrelations. The competence-based description of qualifications is designed to support lifelong learning, improve employment prospects, increase mobility, and bridge the gap between education and the world of work. (Ministry of Education 2009: 24.)

3.7 Internationalization and entrepreneurship in Nordpraktik

Two main topics seem relevant in the context of Journeyman Travel. Firstly comes entrepreneurship and business development and secondly internationalization as a form of business development. In Nordpraktik during fall 2013 the motivation of intake

group 2 students was based more on the motivation of learning project and professional development than directly establishing a business. Some of the participants were already working as sole-trade business owners and were motivated to develop their business, language and cultural knowledge. For that purpose the seminars and coaching were excellent tools. Receiving contacts was important for majority of the participants. After completing Nordpraktik one student had the courage to establish a company.

Entrepreneur is a person who has ability for capturing the opportunities comparing to massive companies which always can't do due to the multiple authorities and long decision-making process. Entrepreneurs learn as they go, and this capability to learn through practical job ensures that entrepreneurial businesses remain sustainable. Sufficient level of knowledge and skills gives confidence to establish a business and to run it successfully. Figure 5 presents the internationalization and entrepreneurship module.

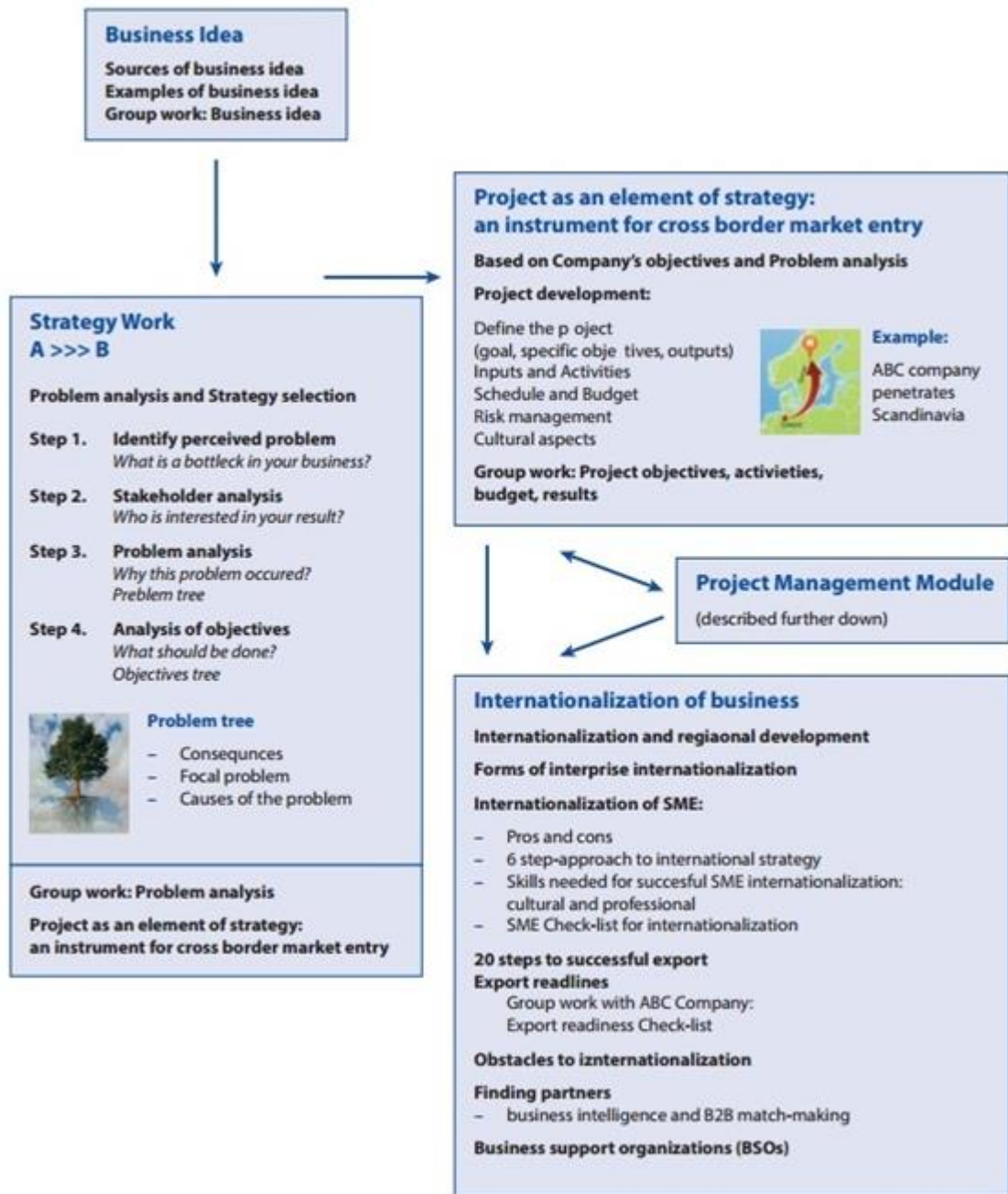


Figure 5. Internationalization and entrepreneurship module (HansaVET Journeyman Travel, 2014)

4 INTERNATIONALIZATION AND ENTREPREURSHIP EDUCATION IN LAPLAND UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

“Lapland University of Applied Sciences is a partner to anyone who wants to develop, learn and achieve something new. There is a demand for ”northernness” elsewhere too.” (Lapland University of Applied Sciences, 2014.)

Lapland University of Applied Sciences offers education and guidance in the field of internationalization and entrepreneurship already during the students study process. International study programmes and projects are major aspect in the education.

This educational institution offers various development environments to the students to internationalize and to start up a company during or after their studies. Development environments offer both study arenas for students and special facilities for Lapland UAS partner companies to develop their operations, business, processes and products.

Measurement, analysis, research, product development and other development tasks targeted for business life are usually implemented in development environments.

For students, the development environments are practical learning environments where they are able to perform practical exercises, projects and theses related to their studies. (Lapland University of Applied Sciences, 2014.)

Some of the development environments are introduced in this chapter. Brief introduction of the strategy of Lapland University of Applied Sciences is provided to support the common targets of the arctic vitality and international cooperation.

4.1 International Degree Programmes

As a student of Lapland University of Applied Sciences in the city of Tornio I completed my studies with international study group and completing my Bachelor degree in Business Management by using English as official study language. Therefore experience and interest to international atmosphere, different cultures, languages and internationalization were acquired. According to study guide for international students

for years 2010 and 2011 in Kemi-Tornio UAS the Business Management Programme (BM) develops practical and theoretical competences needed for starting and managing a company in an economically successful way through its growth in local and international business environments. ‘‘The programme focuses on the development of entrepreneurial talents and decision-making skills, and communication skills needed in international business. Using case, problem and competence based activities and work-related learning tasks in an open learning environment these talents and skills are developed in close co-operation with small and medium-sized businesses (SME’s).

Novel learning strategies such as case study writing and problem analysis writing will support the creation of the entrepreneurial mindset necessary to be able to work in SME’s in the future. After graduation students will have acquired the knowledge and skills to be able to function as an entrepreneur-owner, a manager-owner or a manager of companies or to be responsible for departments of companies.’’ (Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences, 2010, 22.) Depending of the year of the intake Lapland University of Applied Sciences offers English language degree programs with international focus also in other fields of education such as healthcare, social services, tourism, agriculture and engineering.

4.2 Projects

Lapland University of Applied Sciences has various ongoing projects during the academic year. ‘‘Young people, who benefit from entrepreneurial learning, develop business knowledge, essential skills and attitudes including creativity, initiative, tenacity, teamwork, understanding of risk and a sense of responsibility. This kind of entrepreneurial mind-set helps students as future entrepreneurs to transform their ideas into action. At the same time, investing in entrepreneurial education can also significantly increase employability.’’ (Chen, Merivirta, Smirnova, 2014.) The objective of the projects is to encourage students to develop their international and entrepreneurial competences. Usually the project seminars are held in different countries around Scandinavia or Baltic region. The participants are representing different nationalities and therefore it is an excellent way to cooperate internationally. International projects are excellent ways to develop students entrepreneurial and internationalization

competences and develop language skills to meet the requirements of EQF 6. New business ideas are created and in some cases it might lead into a establishing a new company or partnerships. Nordpraktik is concrete example of this type of project activity which support students' competence development.

4.3 General information of student mobility

According the official website of the Lapland University of Applied Sciences all students have a possibility to gain international experience abroad in both study and placement or training period. Mobility period is an effective way to develop and increase the level of language skills and cultural knowledge. Mobility period gives also a wider perspective to the studies and increase the international competence for the future career.

There are two mainly used student exchange programs in Lapland UAS known as Erasmus and Freemover. Erasmus+ Student Mobility for Study Programme is one of the biggest student mobility programmes and it enables students to have a grant for the exchange in European partner universities. Erasmus+ aims to modernize and improve higher education across Europe and the rest of the world. Freemover Study Exchange is supported with Lapland UAS grants for students with a permanent residence permit or Finnish citizenship. (Lapland University of Applied Sciences, 2014.)

4.4 Business incubators

“Business incubation programs are often sponsored by private companies or municipal entities and public institutions, such as colleges and universities. Their goal is to help create and grow young businesses by providing them with necessary support and financial and technical services.” (Entrepreneur Media, 2014.)

In Lapland University of Applied Sciences LiikeAkademia (Business Academy) education module is an example of business incubation programme. InnoMaraton (InnoMarathon) is an event organized yearly for students to cooperate with local

SME's. Students work with actual commissions and offer concrete business development ideas to companies. Activities develop students' professional competences.

LiikeAkademia (Business Academy)

Finnish word "Liike" may refer to both business but also movement. LiikeAkademia involves students from business, media and information technology degree programs who complete their studies as trainee entrepreneurs. The students are native Finnish. In practical level this means that students form their own pilot team enterprises and they complete their studies by taking commissions from actual customers and develop solutions and ideas for customers' problems. Often the customers of LiikeAkademia and commissions are coming from actual and already existing companies locally. Commissions comes' from everyday working life and from the needs of the businesses and they are considered as chargeable business activities. After the studies have a possibility to continue as entrepreneurs if the business model they have developed during their studies is functional. (Lapland University of Applied Sciences, 2014.)

Currently LiikeAkademia has no international or mixed student groups. Mainly this is due the language problems. One solution would be to offer teaching or some courses also in English but this would require more resources. Involving international students who have sufficient Finnish language skills or having some short-time commissions and projects together with Finnish students could enrich the daily class activities. This would increase the level of international cooperation. For the students studying in the campus there is a need of language and culture knowledge competences.

InnoMaraton (InnoMarathon)

InnoMaraton is an event organized yearly during January and February by Lapland University of Applied Sciences together with Lapland University. Idea is to compete against other teams and innovate new ideas for local SME's in order to develop their business activities. During the competition students establish teams including members from different units and departments in order to enrich the team dynamics. InnoMaraton has been organized since 2005 and nearly 1000 students, 30 teachers and 120 SME's

has participated. InnoMaraton is an excellent way to involve also international degree students to enrich the dynamics, international cooperation and develop competences of every team member. (Lapland University of Applied Sciences, 2014.)

4.5 Strategy of Lapland University of Applied Sciences

Lapland University of Applied Sciences targets to arctic vitality and cooperation between different parties. The mission statement refines expertise and vitality from the strengths and opportunities of a changing operating environment to meet the needs of northern people and different organizations. The vision by the year 2020 is to target in arctic expertise and to be an internationally recognized educator, developer and partner. The key values consist and are built on trust, open-mindedness and the sense of community. (Lapland University of Applied Sciences, 2014.) Figure 6 displays the profile and areas of emphasis.

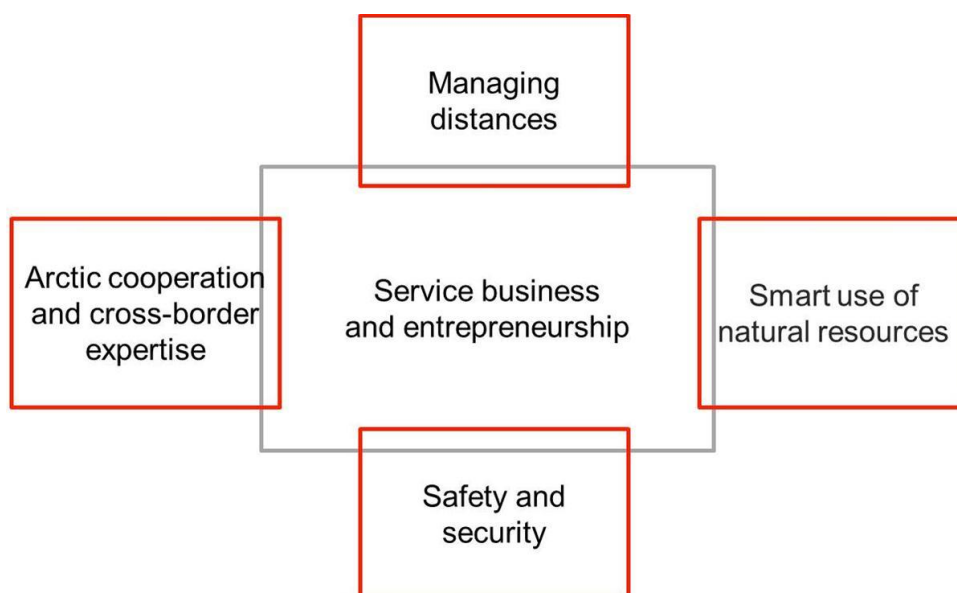


Figure 6. Profile and areas of emphasis (Lapland University of Applied Sciences, 2014)

5 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The descriptions of data collection for the purpose of this study are discussed. In addition, the survey and interview results are presented.

5.1 Description of data collection

Data collection was divided in to two phases. The first stage of data collection process was analyzing the results of the survey which participants of intake group 2 filled during fall 2013. To collect relevant data the survey was indicated to students. The survey was received after the project from the project manager specifically to support this thesis writing process. The responding rate was 9 out of 9 of the students of intake group 2 who were present in Luleå, Sweden during the Educational Module 2 after the internship period. For few students' who couldn't attend the seminar the survey was sent through email and the responses were also received through email.

The second phase was to conduct an open-ended interview to synthesize the survey results in order to receive more comprehensive general view. The selection was based on different age groups, genders, professional and entrepreneurial background, level of language skills and nationalities. The sampling of interviewees were quite narrow due to the small size of intake group 2 and contacting some of the participants' were quite challenging due to distances and the time passed.

5.2 Analysis of data

The survey was divided into eight categories. The first category is to determine how students received the information to apply for Nordpraktik. The second category determines the satisfaction towards the accommodation arrangements during the project including both seminar weeks (Educational Module part 1 and 2). The third category determines how sufficient the participants' English knowledge was due to the fact that English was the official working language. The fourth category determines how well the seminars (Educational Module 1) responded to students expectations. The fifth category

was focusing on the internship period and how pleased students were concerning the arrangements. The sixth phase was focusing on the second seminar week (Educational Module 2) and how the modules and reflections on the individual experiences from students' internships were found interesting and relevant.

The seventh category determined the importance of project coaching and if the students found it supportive and helpful. The final phase which is the eight category focusing on general improvements, students could freely express themselves how they could reform or improve the programme as a whole.

Table 1. Nordpraktik survey (Nordpraktik 2011-2013)

The survey was conducted with intake group 2 during fall 2013. The summary of the survey is based on answers of nine participants. Scale of responses was 1-5 per question. Participants had also freedom to express their opinions and comments in the open-ended sections of the survey, especially in the section 18 which is focusing on the general improvement ideas of the project. All the freely expressed comments are also included into this summary.

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
INFORMATION	
1. I received sufficient information from the Nordpraktik organization before departure from home	Average 2,9 Comments: - We knew very little when we first left from Tornio - More information needed - More information is needed - More information about accommodation and so on for the first week. Must be easier to receive info about everything and send out, otherwise you'll have to answer so many questions.
2. I received sufficient information on my arrival in Luleå	Average 3,6 Comments: - More precise information - There were very few things that we knew - Yes, Anders told this meaning in a clear good way
ACCOMMODATION	
3. I am satisfied with the accommodation during the first part of the education in Luleå (Sunderby folkhögskola)	Average 4,7 Comments: - That was great! - Only bad thing was location - It was fantastic - It was really bad that the Sunderby hotel didn't make space for the spare bed
4. I am satisfied with the accommodation during the internship	Average 3,9 Comments: - Park hotel was nice for few days in between of Sunderby folkhögskola and City Sleep - Park hotel was good but City Sleep room was too small for three persons - It was okay, good central place but no windows, bunker like. - It was really nice! (Hostel Santa's Rudolf)

5. I am satisfied with the accommodation during the second part of the education in Luleå	Average 3,6 Comments: - Awful to spend almost two weeks in a room that hasn't even a window and three girls in a same tiny room.
LANGUAGE	
6. My knowledge of English was sufficient to cope with the programme	Average 3,4 Comments: - I'm too shy and unsure to talk - Would be better
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME – PART 1 (first 5 days)	
7. The seminars did respond to my expectations	Average 3,5 Comments: - It was better than I thought - We were said that the whole time would be practical training, but it was not - Culture Intelligence was too long. It would been enough with four hours - Basically I didn't know what to expect, but was positively surprised, there were good seminars
8. The theme "The North Calotte - industrial development and business structure today" (Anders Bergström) was interesting and relevant	Average 4,0 Comments: - Good, short and clearly - I didn't know that much about the North Calotte before, so it was very interesting!
9. The theme "Cultural intelligence" (Anastasia Nekrasova) was interesting and relevant	Average 4,0 Comments: - Good presentation about culture - No, too long time, four hours had been enough - Same as above, I found the subject very interesting
10. The theme "Entrepreneurship and internationalization" (Anastasia Nekrasova) was interesting and relevant	Average 3,6 Comments: - She should have more practical examples - Very interesting subject
11. The theme "The historical development of the North Calotte region" (Kjell Lundholm) was interesting and relevant	Average 2,8 Comments: - I didn't understand almost anything. - I didn't understand that because presenter spoke only Swedish. - I didn't get why it was so related to the program. - Should have spoken English - I liked it, but I felt kind of sorry of the

	others who didn't know Swedish.
12. The theme "Project planning and management"(Joonas Koivumaa) was interesting and relevant	Average 4,3 Comments: - It was helpful - Very relevant for business - He has very interesting way to teach - It was of course relevant, but I also felt I could have gotten even more out of it, if I could have prepared myself before. Now it was basically writing on the project like mad every night after classes
13. The theme "Presentation techniques" (Joonas Koivumaa) was interesting and relevant	Average 4,0 Comments: - There wasn't any? We stopped the day many hours earlier than we should - His lessons were more relaxed because I know him pre-existing - Yes - Wish we could have had a longer course for this one, for us who doesn't do this at school all the time as the students from Tornio
INTERNSHIP	
14. The internship did respond to my expectations	Average 3,9 Comments: - I got the information I needed - Great opportunity to make new contacts - I was kind of surprised that they didn't know that I was there with a business plan, but after getting over that my visit was over my expectation! Because I had to explain it when I got there we actually lost precious time from the short trainee period!
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME – PART 2 (the final days)	
15. The debriefing of the educational modules and reflections on the individual experiences from your internships was interesting and relevant	Average 3,6 Comments: - I was expecting Joonas here because he had some tips for me - I liked hearing about everybody else experiences. I just thought the whole day working with our projects was so rushed
16. The group presentations of the co-operation projects was interesting and relevant	Average 4,1 Comments: - Interesting to hear

PROJECT COACHING	
17. I found the project coaching helpful	<p>Average 3,3</p> <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joonas was away all my two weeks and I would needed his help and coaching - More project coaching

GENERAL IMPROVEMENTS:

18. How would you reform or improve the programme as a whole?

Comments:

- Tell students that they should also find themselves internship places and more information about practical things.
- Give out more exact information before the programme starts.
- Students should receive practical information a week or two before. They can also look for practical training companies.
- Great project but my coach was away and I felt that too many people were confusing.
- Especially for us doing a presentation at our final seminar, I basically had to change my whole presentation and having maybe a few hours on Sunday night rehearsing it, felt like I didn't get a chance to prepare that much.
- Longer training periods. It would be beneficial to promote Nordpraktik to other students and companies.

As presented in the sub-chapter 1.3 the main objective of this research is to analyze how Journeyman Travel supports students' competence development in Nordpraktik during fall 2013. The second objective is to analyze the possible benefits and drawbacks of Journeyman Travel. Suggestions for improvement are presented and identified on the basis of the analyses and evaluations conducted. To answer the research questions of this research work based on my practical experience as a participant, the analyses of the survey and the interviews, findings are categorized and presented as follows.

Development of business knowledge

The findings indicate that the benefits of the Journeyman Travel in Nordpraktik are the strong reflection to practice, actual internship and focusing to students own specialty development. This offers authentic learning experience.

Based on interviews with other participants, survey results and reflecting my own experiences the content of the seminars during Educational Module 1 and coaching held in Lulea, Sweden were good. They offered new information about the history and industry of North Calotte. Unfortunately one lecture content was only in Swedish and some participants were lacking Swedish skills as mentioned in the survey. The lectures concerning entrepreneurship and the process of establishing business had informative content. Together these elements offered very good learning outcome combined together internship of two weeks. Additionally some participants proposed even longer internship periods. The students would even include more coaching to the programme and would like to contact coaches during the internship. Overall opinion of the Educational Module 1 was very positive. Interviewee 2 especially was pleased to receive concrete practices and knowledge concerning the business field due to the unfortunate fact that the home educational unit offers very few courses in the field of marketing, sales, entrepreneurship and internationalization. This is interesting fact because one of the targets for graduates is to establish their own company already during the study process. Interviewee 1, 2 and 3 highlighted the importance of new contacts they received through the internship. Due to my studies in the field of business the professional competences development were acquired. Firstly gaining more knowledge and completing school projects were a part of Business Management study curricula. Participation to study curricula included and volunteer projects gave confidence to apply for Nordpraktik. Personal studies were at the stage when completing compulsory internship was required. During internship period in Norway I gained more knowledge about the business and industry structure of Finnmark and I learned new skills related to my own professional field.

Development of language and culture knowledge supporting internationalization

The findings present the results concerning language and culture knowledge development. Together the findings support students' internationalization competences development.

Majority of the students expressed their insecurity concerning their English language competences at the beginning of the project. As the project proceeded the students became more confident about their language skills. Nordpraktik offered possibility to use English, Finnish and Swedish languages daily. Because the participants were mainly from Sweden and Finland they had ability to interact and develop their language skills. Due to the knowledge of languages there were not that many language barriers to cross. The cultures have similarities and often Finnish and Swedish have ability to converse fluently as participants experienced. Additionally Interviewee 1 was surprised how different Finnish and Swedish architecture is. The aim of Nordpraktik is that students complete their internship period outside of their home country which supports internationalization competences development. Internship company where the researcher of this study completed the internship period was very multinational. The company consists of employees from Norway, Australia, Sweden, Russia, Poland and Finland. During the internship the researcher had ability to speak multiple different languages and see how employees from very different cultures were able to communicate and work together as a balanced team. Based on the interview results Interviewee 1 had planned exchange studies and compulsory internship abroad before participating to Nordpraktik. After Nordpraktik participation Interviewee 1 felt more confident to apply for the programmes.

Development of entrepreneurial skills

As discussed previously in North Calotte region the need of maintaining the already existing businesses and establishing new companies is important in order to secure the arctic vitality of the region. Findings indicate the development concerning entrepreneurial skills.

Based on the interviews, my personal educational background in the field of international business, Nordpraktik survey results and discussions with recently started entrepreneurs there is a clear prejudice and insecurity concerning the process of establishing a business. The common prejudice especially among students is that establishing and running own business is nearly useless from financial perspective, involves high risk and is very challenging due to the legislation. In fact in North Calotte region entrepreneurship is quite safe and in various cases even the government supports especially new entrepreneurs. Interviewee 2 and 3 were running already small business activities and they wanted to develop their businesses and in addition, explore for new markets. After completing Nordpraktik the attitude towards entrepreneurship was changed among several participants. One notable fact is that after participating to Nordpraktik Interviewee 1 had enough confidence to establish a sole-trade enterprise.

Benefits of Journeyman Travel

The findings present the benefits of Journeyman Travel from students' perspective. The benefits of Journeyman Travel assist students to learn and to develop their competences.

Information received from discussions and interviews conducted shows that the Nordpraktik is excellent way to familiarize with foreign languages and cultures especially if the experience abroad is the very first for the participating student. Accommodation, transportation and some meals were covered on behalf of the project and based on the survey results the students were very pleased. These aspects received very high rating in the survey and interview results were positive. The support of the group of students as well as coordinators and coaches was very valuable. The final seminar was also excellent way to meet the project staff and other students and to discuss and hear about the interesting experiences and present individual learning outcomes.

Drawbacks of Journeyman Travel

After considering the project experience as a whole, analyzing the documentation, survey results and interview findings the results are synthesized to present the existing drawbacks of the Journeyman Travel.

During the project it became obvious that it is crucial that the coordinator of the destination country is active and represents a training institution so that the tutor knows the students and is able to assist better when help is needed. Active contact and support during the internship period was also found important. The application process and tutoring practices should be integrated into the study units of the students and the tutors should be given enough time and resources so that the tutor is able to guide the students. By this it would be easier to prevent unsatisfactory internship experiences if the coordinator contacts and explains the purpose of Nordpraktik to the case company representative. The both parties should have clear understanding of what they are supposed to expect from the internship period. Interviewee 2 faced this type of problems.

For the students it would be beneficial to prepare their own project ideas well before the application in order to receive the best possible match together with suitable internship company to support beneficial training outcome. Based on the discussions there were different opinions whether the student should find the potential internship company independently. The argument for this was mainly the fact that after graduation it is each own responsibility to search and find employment. Same practice concerns finding the compulsory internship placements during education in Finland. Second opinion was that the assistance of finding the internship placement belongs to the coordinators. Especially with the students who are going abroad for the first time this is intelligible. As a compromise I would suggest that students who are willing to search independently and if the coordinators can rely on the participants' language skills and professional approach and accept the proposed placement, student could apply first independently but partially under supervision and guidance.

Based on the interviews of other participants as well as reflecting personal experiences there are different opinions whether it would be beneficial for a student to have some

pre-contact with the company representative before the internship. This includes variable such as length of the internship meaning if the student is visiting several companies or spending the whole time with the same company.

Students who spent longer period of time with the same company felt the importance of pre-contact with the internship company. The second important variable was if the student is travelling alone or with other students. The importance of pre-contact was highlighted among the students travelling alone to destination country for internship. This would prevent the risk of misunderstandings and false expectations for both parties. Brief introduction between student and employer would break the ice and reduce the insecurity before travelling.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The discussions of the study are presented in this chapter. In addition, the objectives of the study, the methodology, the restatement of the research questions and conclusions of the research findings are discussed. Finally suggestions for improvement are provided based on the critical analyses and evaluations of the data collected.

6.1 Discussion

The study was conducted from the perspective of students and how they perceived their competence development in Nordpraktik during fall 2013 based on the Journeyman Travel. The first objective of this research was to analyze and evaluate how Journeyman Travel support students' competence development in Nordpraktik during fall 2013. The second objective was to analyze what are the possible benefits and drawbacks of Journeyman Travel.

Qualitative and quantitative research approaches were used as a single case method in this research. The research techniques used for data collection were a survey, documentation analysis and interviews. This research is focusing on students' perspectives of competence development in Nordpraktik and the Journeyman Travel.

During the study the concepts of National Qualifications and European Quality Framework requirements for level 6 were analyzed. Level 6 refers to competence and skills requirements for Bachelor level of studies. European Commission addresses that there is a need of skills and competences. Skills and competences are the factors determining Europe's success. Europe 2020 aims to tackle the current economic crisis and unemployment in order to achieve more competitive Europe. Education and Training 2020 proposes that student mobility abroad should become more the rule than the exception. Key skills for life-long learning include that student possesses the capability for continuous learning. Additionally student knows how to communicate adequately verbally and in writing both to audiences in the field and outside of it. Student possesses the capability to communicate at an international level and interact in one official language and at least one foreign language. The findings indicate that

entrepreneurial and internationalization education should be integrated as a part of study curricula to meet these objectives.

As the various category of education based activities and programmes that support students' entrepreneurship and internationalization in Lapland University of Applied Sciences introduced in Chapter 4, shows that internationalization and entrepreneurship should be included as a part of everyday studies. In current labour markets these competences have become crucial especially based on the constant need of equipped people with language, culture, and entrepreneurship knowledge. Participation in student mobility programmes and projects is recommended.

This study provides the suggestions for improving the Journeyman Travel. In addition suggestions for student recruitment are provided in sub-chapter 6.3.

6.2 Conclusion

The findings in this research concerning students' competences development through Journeyman Travel and Nordpraktik indicate positive responses. In addressing the objectives of this study, two research questions were formulated. The research questions are as follows: How does the Journeyman Travel support students' competence development in Nordpraktik during fall 2013? What are the benefits and drawbacks of Journeyman Travel? The analysis and evaluation conducted identifies students' competence development in Journeyman Travel concerning fields of business, language and culture knowledge and entrepreneurial skills providing concrete and positive results for this study.

The entrepreneurship has advantages due to the fact that North Calotte needs more entrepreneurs and new companies need to be established. For some individuals entrepreneurship comes naturally but entrepreneurship can also be learned through education. Through the help of project management in Nordpraktik the idea becomes more clear and practical. Additionally students receive practical information concerning establishing business and SME internationalization process in North Calotte. The findings indicate that contact and support during the internship period was found

important. As discussed previously, application process and tutoring practices should be integrated into the study units of the students and the tutors should be given enough time and resources so that the tutor is able to guide the students and to be able to focus on students' personal interest and specialization.

Lapland University of Applied Sciences contributes the internationalization and entrepreneurship competences development and NFQ 6 requirements by offering international degree programmes, student mobility programmes and international projects as Nordpraktik. This increases the level of international cooperation. It would be beneficial to introduce these topics to the students who are searching their future career options. This could be the right time to get them interested in entrepreneurship and international working environment as a way of their future career.

People with right skills and competences have qualifications to proceed after education to working life which reduces the unemployment. Based on these findings participation to mobility programmes and projects is highly recommended and has beneficial outcomes for the students.

6.3 Suggestions for improvement

Based on the findings the suggestions for improvement are presented. The interview and survey results and own personal experiences indicate the importance of students' own pre-contact with internship company, introducing the business plan and receiving information well beforehand of the beginning of the project was highlighted. Informing the internship company before the student arrival about the objectives of Nordpraktik is crucial in order to avoid misunderstandings and false expectations of behalf of both the trainee and the business owner. Additionally the ability for students to participate actively and affect the selection of internship company and destination country in Norway, Finland or Sweden would be beneficial for the student to support their personal interests. To succeed this would require active project coordinator activities and cooperation in both students' domestic country and the internship destination country. Active contact and support during the internship period was also found important. As discussed previously, application process and tutoring practices should be

integrated into the study units of the students and the tutors should be given enough time and resources so that the tutor is able to guide the students.

Mainly the information and recruiting of the projects was received through email. Unfortunately not all the students follow their school email and even some cases the content of email might be only available in Finnish or English.

At the beginning of Nordpraktik application process a former Nordpraktik participant studying Business Management delivered information and shared her experiences during lecture visits to other students. As a final aspect I would like kindly suggest a different approach what comes to marketing and recruiting of students for projects and student mobility programmes. The best promoters are former student participants who have gained positive experiences and are willing to share the information, answer to questions, inspire and encourage other students. Individuals who received concrete benefits such contacts, internship placement and/or thesis commission through participation would be attracting aspects in student marketing and recruitment. Concrete presentation with photo and video material combined with inspiring and enthusiastic presenter would impact the audience. The audience members in this case are the potential students for applying to the mobility programmes and projects. These aspects could possibly reduce the threshold of applying to mobility programmes and projects in the future.

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APPENDIX

The interview questions for Interviewee 1, 2 and 3.

Did you receive any competence development through Nordpraktik concerning your language skills and cultural knowledge?

Did you receive any new perspectives what concerning entrepreneurship?

How did you feel about your Nordpraktik internship?

Did you have any information concerning your internship placement beforehand?

Would you have liked to have some pre-contact to your internship place beforehand?

In your opinion was the duration of Nordpraktik convenient? If not, could you please tell me why?

Did you learn anything new concerning North Calotte region and your destination country where you completed your internship?

Would you see yourself living and running a business outside of your home country and especially in the North Calotte region? If not, could you please tell me why?

Have you participated in any student exchange programmes or completed compulsory internships abroad? Would you like to? If not, please explain why?

Any comments, ideas or feelings related to Nordpraktik?