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INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
Into the Degree Programme in Industrial Management
and Ylivieska unit

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ABSTRACT

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Name of thesis INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS INTO THE DEGREE PROGRAMME IN INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT AND YLIVIESKA UNIT		
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<p>The Objective of the thesis was to get up-to-date information about the integration of international students into Ylivieska unit and the degree programme of Industrial Management. Two research questions were: 1. How have the international students of Centria University of Applied Sciences Ylivieska unit integrated into degree programme? and 2. How could Centria University of Applied Sciences contribute to improving the integration if problems have risen among the international students?</p> <p>The research method of the thesis was quantitative and the research data was gathered by form questionnaire implemented via Webropol program. Complete sample of the research was 100 and a total of 44 students responded to the questionnaire making the response rate 44%.</p> <p>Introduction to Industrial Management degree programme and theory of integration were presented in a theoretical context supporting the topic. The research results indicated that the integration of international students into Centria University of Applied Sciences Ylivieska unit and the Degree Programme in Industrial Management has been at least relatively successful in several sectors. However some clear improvement needs were also identified. The respondents wished that University would further support the interaction between Finnish and international students. Likewise more support from University was expected in acquiring of a job or a training place in Finland.</p>		
Key words Degree Programme in Industrial Management, integration, international student		

ABSTRACT

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1 INTRODUCTION

In a current globalizing environment Finland cannot succeed alone anymore. As any country, Finland must be capable of international co-operation in the field of economy and several other sectors of society. Internationalization should not be seen as a threat for Finland or Finnish lifestyle but as an opportunity. It is in Finland's best interest to keep on track with for example various international economic development projects. Educational exchange is one method to share high quality vocational know-how and thus participate in economic development. In this task educational institutes such as Centria University of Applied Sciences have an essential role.

International educational exchange should not be seen strictly as sharing of educational competence. Educational exchange is also natural method to create new relationships and international work life contacts. Offering the possibility for international education is always a way to promote Finnish know-how around the world. Therefore it is essential for educational institutes to ensure that reputation of Finland and Finnish education stays intact among international students.

Developing the Degree Programme in Industrial Management has also significant local impact. In the current economic climate it is increasingly important to invest in quality and high graduation rates of degree programmes. The situation is especially sensitive for Centria University of Applied Sciences Ylivieska unit now when a part of Ylivieska unit operations and degree programmes are being transferred to another unit. According the current knowledge Degree Programme in Industrial Management is one of the study programmes staying in Ylivieska unit which significantly increases its role in the future of the unit. (Notification for students by Pekka Hulkko, Principal of Centria University of Applied Sciences.)

2 OBJECTIVES OF THE THESIS AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

The objective of this thesis was to acquire up-to-date information about the integration of international students into Ylivieska unit and the degree programme of Industrial Management. Practical application of the thesis was to help Centria University of Applied Sciences to evolve and overcome potential issues revealed in the study. The purpose of the thesis was to research what kinds of challenges students have faced during their studies and how Centria University of Applied Sciences could improve its procedures to expedite the progress of studies and graduation.

2.1 Research problems

The research problems of the thesis were:

1. How international students of Centria University of Applied Sciences Ylivieska unit have integrated into the degree programme?
2. How could Centria University of Applied Sciences contribute to improving the integration if problems have risen among the international students?

The integration of students has become a current topic due the economic decline of Finland. With governmental support under the cut it has become increasingly crucial for universities to expedite the graduation process. The key factor in efficient graduation process is strong integration of students in the degree programme and study unit.

The research problems of this thesis cover the key questions of integration of international students into Centria University of Applied Sciences Ylivieska unit.

To support the integration as well as possible it is essential to have up-to-date research data about the current situation of Ylivieska unit international students.

2.2 Previous studies

The integration of international students in Finnish study programs has been researched in various theses made in several different universities of applied sciences. In this context some of those that are most crucial to this thesis and topics revolving around it are introduced.

In Centria University of Applied Sciences, at the time Central Ostrobothnia University of Applied Sciences, students Miia Mikkonen and Anna Salonpää have written a thesis called WELCOME TO YLIVIESKA: Kotoutumiskurssi kansainvälisille opiskelijoille. It was written in 2011. The purpose of the thesis was to promote the acculturation of international students of Centria University of Applied Sciences to Ylivieska. The core part of Mikkonen' and Salonpää's thesis was planning and execution of a social integration course. The course were implemented as four separate gatherings during which the participants were familiarized with the aspects such as Finnish social habits, operating in the Finnish society as well as general knowledge of Finnish culture, nature and religion. Mikkonen and Salonpää conclude that the course did somewhat enhance the integration and improved the unity of international student group. This conclusion was also supported by feedback from international students who took part in the course. (Mikkonen & Salonpää 2011.)

Anssi Kemppainen from Kajaani University of Applied Sciences wrote a thesis Kehittämistutkimus: Kajaanin ammattikorkeakoulun ulkomaalaiset tutkinto-opiskelijat in 2010. In his thesis Kemppainen searches methods to improve the

processes and operations involving international degree students of Kajaani University of Applied Sciences. The objective of the thesis was to bring forth possible needs of improvement based on international students' own experiences and opinions. Kemppainen's study was quantitative and the material was acquired via a questionnaire sent to students by email. In his study Kemppainen did not find any major flaws in the processes or operations but a few minor issues were brought up. International students experienced it especially challenging to learn Finnish language and to find practical training place in Finland. (Kemppainen 2010.)

In her thesis *Kulttuurien kohtaaminen: Vaihto-opiskelijana satakunnan ammattikorkeakoulussa* (2009) Piia Bränfors from Satakunta University of Applied Sciences addressed the life of an international exchange student in Finland. The purpose of Bränfors' thesis was to find out what kinds of challenges international exchange students face when they come to study in Finland, specifically in Satakunta University of Applied Sciences. The thesis was constructed around a quantitative research which Bränfors implemented by an electrical questionnaire directed to international exchange students of Satakunta University of Applied Sciences. (Bränfors 2009.)

Those exchange students who took part in Bränfors' study saw communication with other students as relatively smooth and easy. In addition the level of university staffs language skills was considered satisfactory. Most of the exchange students had got acquainted with Finnish students. However many indicated it to be relatively challenging. (Bränfors 2009.)

In 2011 Centria University of Applied Sciences, at the time Central-Ostrobothnia University of Applied Sciences, student Péter Rumanóczy wrote a thesis about the integration of international students in Ylivieska region. His thesis was titled

as: How to integrate international students into private and business life in Ylivieska area. As his thesis project Rumanóczy translated into English language a Finnish website www.settinetti.fi. Settinetti is a website intended to provide youth between 13 and 29 with all the necessary information about life in Ylivieska region. The aim of the project was to provide international students of Ylivieska area with the same information that was already available for Finnish people in order to help the students to integrate into the society. (Rumanóczy 2011.)

Rumanóczy concludes in his thesis that it is indeed possible to integrate foreign people into Finnish society, stating himself as a living example. However, it is a long and slow process and often requires assistance from various individuals and officials. (Rumanóczy 2011.)

3 INTEGRATION

Education has many responsibilities towards society one of which is integration into a member of society. Other social responsibilities of education are for example developing qualifications and selection to social positions. Developing qualifications means generating knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and values needed to operate in the labor market in various positions, and as a citizen in democratic society. The selection to social positions can be interpreted as providing equal educational opportunities and renewal of social layers i.e. children settle in at least similar social position in labor market as their parents. Integration is strongly related to securing the continuity of society and socialization of individuals. The duty of school is to provide individuals with at least certain necessary skills with which an individual is able to operate as a functional part of society. (Antikainen, Rinne & Koski 2013, 158, 166, 171-172.)

Integration as an objective is based on democratic ideals. It can be conceived as a qualitative dimension of a development process. In a sense it is a way to reach outcome opposite to segregation. According to Ingemar Emanuelsson, the concept of integration does not necessarily address what should be done to so-called outsiders as much as what should be done to society so that the normal differences between individuals can be naturally accepted. (Emanuelsson 2001, 127-128.)

In this thesis the term integration is comprehended as Susanna Lähteenoja defined it in her doctoral dissertation *Uusien opiskelijoiden integroituminen yliopistoon. Sosiaalipsykologinen näkökulma*. Lähteenoja defined integration as kind of social and academic interaction which by nature is apt to support and expedite a student's educational ambitions and commitments (Lähteenoja 2010). Similarly to Lähteenoja, in this thesis I am investigating the procedures aimed towards

improving commitment in the studies as well as improved realizations of educational goals and ambitions. How these procedures can be implemented and what kind of methods can be exploited to further the interaction among the students themselves and between students and the educational institute.

In 2001 published study *Experiencing Studies at University of Joensuu*, Juhani Rautopuro and Pertti Väisänen addressed similar themes of social and academic integration and their effect on study achievements and graduation as handled in this thesis. The research provided plentiful information about the impact of integration on study progress and satisfaction. Rautopuro and Väisänen concluded that integration especially at the beginning of studies hold major significance. Bad experiences both social and academic when experienced at the beginning of studies do not encourage students to commitment or continuation of studies. The research revealed that also the students' background characteristics had an influence on the level of social and academic integration. According to the results, good social and academic integration has a grade improving effect on the student. Integration into study program had an impact on the successfulness of studies as well as on decisions of continuation and dropping out. The reasons for dropping out were varying between the different stages of studying. At the first year the reason was usually related to social integration i.e. social relations, background characteristics and living conditions. In the second and third year the reasons for dropping out were more related to academic integration such as teaching and the content of studies. (Rautopuro & Väisänen 2001, 29-30, 60- 65.)

4 INTRODUCTION OF DEGREE PROGRAMME

Centria University of Applied Sciences has facilities in three towns: Ylivieska, Kokkola and Pietarsaari (Centria University of Applied Sciences 2015a). Centria University of Applied Sciences offers engineering studies in English in Kokkola and Ylivieska units. Engineering studies qualify one for using the title Bachelor of Engineering. In Kokkola unit the available degree programmes are Degree Programme in Information Technology and Degree Programme in Environmental Chemistry and Technology. In Ylivieska unit it is possible to study in Degree Programme in Industrial Management. (Centria University of Applied Sciences 2015b.)

Degree Programme in Industrial Management started in autumn 2007. Altogether 220 students have since begun their studies in the program. By January 2015 43 of them had graduated with an average study time of 4,7 years. The dropout rate in the degree programme was 28%. (Centria University of Applied Sciences, Student Affairs Office 2015.)

Degree Programme in Industrial Management currently has students from 14 different countries divided around the continents of Africa, Asia and Europe. Most different nationalities come from Europe, next Asia and least different nationalities come from Africa. (Centria University of Applied Sciences, International Relations Office 2015.)

The duration of Degree Programme in Industrial Management is 240 credits. The target length of the degree is four years of full-time studies. The degree consists of basic studies, professional studies and specialization studies. Specialization lines available in Degree Programme in Industrial Management are Supply Chain

Management and Global Marketing and Management. (Centria University of Applied Sciences 2015c.) Each student will also complete practical training worth of 30 credits as employees in real companies. Students will independently apply for practical training in companies best suited for their interests. At the final stage of the studies students will complete a thesis worth 15 credits. The thesis is an extensive, practically oriented research commonly executed in liaison with industrial companies. The thesis often works as a passageway to the student's first professional job. (Centria University of Applied Sciences 2015d.)

5 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

The subject of this thesis was the integration of Centria University of Applied Sciences international students' into Ylivieska unit and Degree Programme in Industrial Management. The research method of the thesis was quantitative. Although in quantitative research the purpose is to investigate the causality of a matter through numbers, the numbers themselves are not intrinsic value but it is essential to understand how these numbers have been acquired and what they reveal. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2004, 130; Töttö 2012, 10).

The method of the thesis research was a form questionnaire implemented via Webropol program. The questionnaire form contained closed multiple choice questions, questions based on Likert scale and a few open questions.

The research subjects were the students of the Degree Programme in Industrial Management of Centria University of Applied Sciences. The sample size of the research was a complete sample, meaning that the questionnaire form was sent to all subjects of research (Hirsjärvi etc. 2004, 168). In this case the complete sample equaled all those Industrial Management students who had started their studies between 2010- 2014 and were still enrolled at the beginning of research.

The questionnaire was sent via email as an open link to Webropol program. In an annex letter of email it was stated that the nationality of participants will be inquired and hence the survey will not be completely anonymous. It was however emphasized that results will be interpreted and reported in the way that no individuals can be recognized.

The results from the closed questions were statistically analyzed in by Webropol program. In analysis of the open questions essential was the content of the answers and the themes that were brought up. Crucial in the forming of conclusions was the logical use of the research data in order to maintain the objectivity of the research.

The authenticity of research results can be evaluated by examining the reliability and validity of the research. Reliability means that the research measurements can be repeated; ergo, another researcher would end up in same conclusions or that same subject would be examined at different time and results would be same. Validity indicates qualification meaning that the chosen indicator is measuring what it was intended to. Indicators do not always measure what the researcher has aimed for because subjects could e.g. comprehend a question differently than the researcher has intended. (Hirsjärvi etc. 2004, 216-217.) To guarantee the validity of this thesis, all the question forms in the survey were carefully considered to avoid misunderstandings.

6 RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The total number of research subjects i.e. Industrial Management students of Centria University of Applied Sciences Ylivieska unit who had begun their studies 2010-2014, was 100. The research questionnaire was sent to all hundred students. In total, 44 students responded to the questionnaire making the response rate 44%. The questionnaire was open for the last two weeks of January 2015. During that time students received one reminder email in addition to the initial opening invitation email.

The questionnaire consisted of 19 questions in total, some of which included several sub-questions. Part of the questions were closed multiple choice questions, some questions were based on Likert scale and a few questions were open. The open questions were voluntary. The questionnaire utilized Likert's 4-stepped scale where the response options were 1 = Disagree completely, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Agree completely.

6.1 Students' background

In the respondent group there was a wide representation of students with different starting years of studies, nationalities, and educational backgrounds. From the students 16% had begun their studies in 2010, 23% in 2011, 14% in 2012, 18% in 2013, and 29% in 2014. (FIGURE 1)

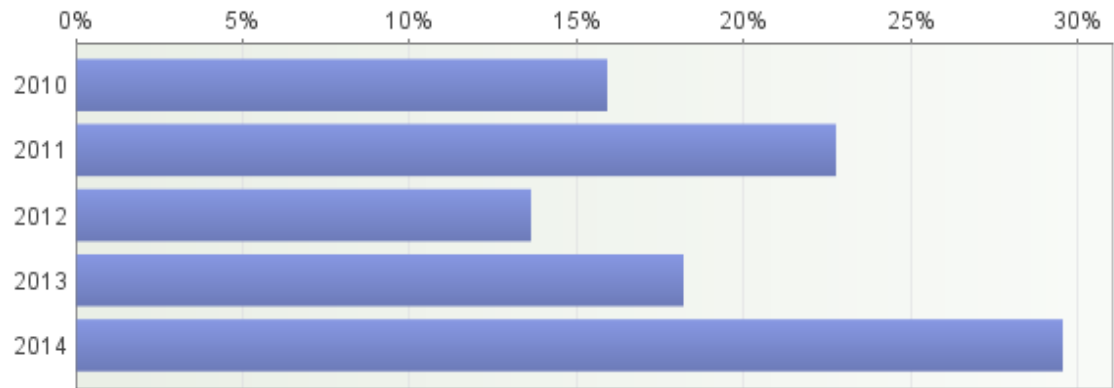


FIGURE 1. What was the starting year of your studies? (n=44)

The largest representation of students came from China (16%) and Vietnam (16%). The third most students were from Poland (14%), next Finland (11%), Russia (9%), Estonia (7%) and Bangladesh, Hungary and Nepal (5%). The least number of students were from Algeria, Cameroon, France, Nigeria and Pakistan from where each came just one student (2%). One respondent (2%) stated his nationality as "Other".

The majority of students (64%) reported their previous education level as "High school (or similar)". Altogether 23% of the respondents stated having "Higher education (bachelor's degree)" and 2% "Higher education (master's degree)". A total of 11% of the respondents reported their previous education as "Other".

Considering the diversity of the answers it was beneficial that the respondent group had a wide representation of students with different backgrounds. Students undergoing different study years may have diverging views and experiences concerning the questions raised in the questionnaire. Those still in the beginning of their studies will remember better how it felt to begin studies in new a university and degree programme. Students that have progressed further with their studies in turn possess more empirical knowledge about e.g. the quality of teaching and the implementation of degree programme.

The nationality of the student could have an effect on how the student has personally experienced various factors contributing towards integration. Typically individuals will unconsciously reflect their thoughts and behavior through their own cultural background (cf. Rautopuro & Väisänen 2001). Since the degree programme in Industrial Management has students with several nationalities and cultural backgrounds, it was beneficial for the versatility of the answers that the respondent group of the research had a wide spread representation of different national backgrounds.

Altogether 64% of respondents informed their educational background as “High school (or similar)”. This means that for approximately two-out-of-three respondents Industrial Management study programme is the first university degree and potentially the first vocational degree as well. Ylivieska unit of Centria University and Industrial Management degree programme hence has a major role on what kind of a first impression it provides for students concerning studying in a university and for a vocational degree. Approximately one fourth of the respondents had experience from earlier higher education studies, and they in turn will bring different baseline to this research.

6.2 Acquiring of information according students’ experiences

The research participants were asked whether they felt that they received enough information about the studies during the application period. A total of 11% of the respondents completely disagreed with the statement and 18% somewhat disagreed. Half of the students (50%) somewhat agreed with the statement and 21% agreed completely.

In all 73% of the respondents somewhat or completely agreed that they had received enough knowledge and support from the University concerning tutoring of their studies. In total 27% of the students somewhat or completely disagreed on the sufficiency of their tutoring. Altogether 13% of the students had received enough knowledge concerning Finnish school policies and half of the students (50%) somewhat agreed. However 32% somewhat disagreed and 5% completely disagreed with the sufficiency of shared knowledge. A total of 68% of the students somewhat or completely agreed that they had received enough support on learning Finnish language, and 25% chose to somewhat disagree, 7% disagreed completely. (TABLE 1)

In all 34% of the students completely agreed on having received enough support concerning accommodation and half (50%) somewhat agreed. Only 16% of the respondents somewhat or completely disagreed. Altogether 21% of participants completely agreed and 27% somewhat agreed that the knowledge and support concerning interaction with local officials had been sufficient. However 36% were somewhat unsatisfied and 16% completely disagreed with the statement.

(TABLE 1)

TABLE 1. I have received enough knowledge and support from University concerning. (n=44)

(1=Disagree completely, 2=Somewhat disagree, 3=Somewhat agree, 4=Agree completely)

	1	2	3	4
a) Tutoring of my studies	9%	18%	55%	18%
b) Finnish school policies	5%	32%	50%	13%
c) Learning Finnish language	7%	25%	39%	29%
d) Accommodation	9%	7%	50%	34%
e) Interaction with local officials	16%	36%	27%	21%

In total 50% of the students somewhat agreed that the internal web pages of Centria University of Applied Sciences provided enough information about studies, the amount of completely agreeing students was 25%. In all 18% of the participants chose to somewhat disagree with the statement and 7% disagreed with it completely. A vast majority of the students (93%) somewhat or completely agreed with the claim "I know whom to ask for help in problem situations". The amount of those somewhat disagreeing was 5% and the percentage of those who completely disagreed was 2%.

Every fifth respondent felt that information supply during the application period was completely sufficient, and half of the respondents found it somewhat sufficient. More information about potential studies would have been needed by 29 percent of the respondents, which in this research equals to 13 students. Especially in today's tight economic climate every educational institution surely wants that their study units and degree programmes have the highest possible graduation rate and minimal number of drop-outs. Adequate information during the application process both by amount and quality would help to ensure that the "right individuals" apply to the study program to begin with and that the expectations of potential students correspond to the actual realities of studies.

The beginning phase of studies has a significant impact on students' integration into the educational unit and degree programme (Rautopuro & Väisänen 2001), and students foreknowledge upon future studies naturally affects how the beginning of studies is experienced. Non-realistic expectations could hinder the students' motivation to complete their studies.

Comprehensive tutoring and providing sufficient information about Finnish school policies greatly improves students' possibilities to integrate in new surroundings. According to Antikainen, Rinne & Koski (2013), one of the school's

core duties is to provide the student with at least certain necessary skills needed to operate as part of society. Coming from a foreign country it is impossible for a student to be aware of all Finnish school policies, even if they might seem self-explanatory for a native Finn. Considering the importance of the matter, it is positive to see that well over a half of the respondents had experienced the level of tutoring (73%) and informing about the Finnish school policies (63%) as at least quite sufficient. On the other hand, approximately every fourth respondent had been unsatisfied with the level of tutoring, and approximately every third respondent with the information about the school policies.

Slightly over two thirds of the respondents indicated that they had received enough support concerning the learning of Finnish language. This is a relatively good result considering that learning the language of the surrounding society is a major factor in a successful integration into part of society. Finnish being a relatively rare language only spoken by a few million people it could be difficult for foreign students on their own to find learning material and teaching in language they can understand. While Finnish courses in English are often readily available in local community colleges, it could be challenging for a student to find proper courses and frightening to participate without any basic skills. Therefore it is highly essential that the University continues to provide good and comprehensive Finnish courses for international students.

Finding accommodation is one of the most significant practical matters for students. Success or failure in finding satisfying accommodation is either strength or might even prevent beginning or continuation of studies as Rautopuro and Väisänen established in their research (Rautopuro & Väisänen 2001). A foreigner moving to Ylivieska might struggle with finding a proper apartment without local assistance. Therefore it was great that a half of the respondents somewhat agreed

and 34% completely agreed that University had provided enough knowledge and support concerning accommodation.

The University's informing policy concerning the interaction with local officials appeared to be in need of improvement. Over a half (52%) of the respondents were at least somewhat unsatisfied with the knowledge and support they received from the University concerning interaction with Finnish authorities. When the University offers foreigner a study place in Finland it would be essential to make sure that the student has sufficient knowledge to operate in Finnish society (cf. Antikainen, Rinne & Koski 2013).

Based on the students' answers, the internal web pages of Centria University appeared to have succeeded well in providing information about studies. Three-out-of-four respondents either completely or somewhat agreed that Centria web pages offered enough information about their studies. Every fourth respondent expressed that the web pages did not succeed to provide information as well as needed. At the end of the research questionnaire students had an opportunity to bring forth development or improvement ideas, but none of the answers were related to improving the internal web pages. Since it is so important for students to be able to acquire all the necessary information about their studies, it could be beneficial to inquire students about the improvement ideas for example in the form of follow-up-research or during tutoring.

6.3 Satisfaction with teaching and communication

A total of 13% of the respondents completely agreed with the claim "I have been satisfied with quality of teaching". In all 55% of the students somewhat agreed with the argument, while 23% chose to somewhat disagree. More over 9% of the respondents disagreed completely. In total 32% of the students informed being

completely satisfied with the content of the degree and 45% were somewhat satisfied. However 16% somewhat disagreed being satisfied with the content and 7% completely disagreed.

When asked about difficulties in communication due to language barrier, 9% completely agreed and 25% somewhat agreed with the statement about having difficulties communicating with teachers. In all 21% of the students somewhat disagreed and for 45% the language barrier with teachers had not caused difficulties at all. Only 5% of the students completely agreed and 29% somewhat agreed that the language barrier had caused difficulties in communication with other international students. In all 25% somewhat disagreed and 41% of the respondents completely disagreed with the claim. A total of 16% of the respondents completely agreed that they had difficulties in communicating with Finnish students, 29% were somewhat agreeing and 16% somewhat disagreed. In total 39% of the respondents did not find communication with Finnish students problematic due to language differences. (TABLE 2)

TABLE 2. Language barrier causes difficulties in communication with. (n=44)

(1=Disagree completely, 2=Somewhat disagree, 3=Somewhat agree, 4=Agree completely)

	1	2	3	4
a) Teachers	45%	21%	25%	9%
b) Other international students	41%	25%	29%	5%
c) Finnish students	39%	16%	29%	16%

The quality of teaching and the content of the degree are some of the most crucial factors contributing to the satisfaction with one's education. In chapter 3 "Integration" research made by Rautopuro and Väisänen about students study experiences and integration in university of Joensuu was introduced (Rautopuro & Väisänen 2001). The research revealed that drop-outs during the second and

third year are often related to academic integration i.e. teaching and the content of degree (Rautopuro & Väisänen 2001).

From the students' viewpoint it is understandable that finding motivation to continue studies might be hard if the quality of teaching or the content of the degree does not correspond to one's expectations. One of the key purposes of education is developing qualifications (Antikainen, Rinne & Koski 2013, 158), and achieving vocational competence naturally is the main reason for a student to apply to the chosen educational degree, and to complete studies. Of the Industrial Management students 13% were completely satisfied with the quality of teaching and 55% were somewhat satisfied. Slightly more than two thirds of the respondents thus had experienced receiving at least reasonably quality teaching, which is not bad result. However since this is one of the key factors for the whole degree programme and all students, University should also pay attention to the number of those students unsatisfied with the quality of teaching (32%) and try to investigate whether the quality could be somehow increased.

Students' satisfaction rate towards the content of the degree was slightly higher than the satisfaction with the quality of teaching. In all 32% of the respondents were completely satisfied and 45% somewhat satisfied with the content of the degree. Slightly less than one fourth of the respondents thus were completely or somewhat unsatisfied with the content of the degree. The reason for dissatisfaction is discussed later in this research in chapter "6.6 General satisfaction to chosen educational field and location", in which the topic is addressed more thoroughly. However, in brief the dissatisfaction with the content of the degree was largely based on elimination of one of the specialization lines of the degree programme.

Successful communication is essential so that a student can operate smoothly in a new environment and integrate into the school community. In Finland every child

studies English during almost the whole 9-year basic education period, and every student that continues studies to the secondary level will also continue studying English in upper secondary school. Finnish teachers and students should hence have good a basis for communicating in English. According to the answers Industrial Management students mostly were at least relatively satisfied with communication with teachers. The results are also in unison with data Bränfors acquired in her research (Bränfors 2009). Bränfors indicated that the exchange students of Satakunta University of Applied Sciences taking part in her research also evaluated the language skills of University staff as satisfactory (Bränfors 2009). Every fourth of the respondents experienced communicating with the university staff relatively challenging. Considering the data gathered from the previous studies and the knowledge on Finnish educational system it is justified to question whether the students' own language skills in part are making communication challenging.

As with teachers, students did not experience major challenges in communication with other international students. Communicating with Finnish students however was considered as slightly more challenging. Nearly a half of the respondents (45%) expressed that communication with Finnish students was at least relatively challenging. Based on my own experiences and observations I believe that one of the main reasons is Finnish people's shyness toward speaking foreign languages, while most of the Finnish students would actually be able to communicate in English on a decent level.

6.4 Practical training and working in Finland

A vast majority of the students (89%) completely or somewhat agreed when asked whether working in Finland during studies interests' them. In all 9% of the

respondents somewhat disagreed with the claim and 2% disagreed completely. (FIGURE 2)

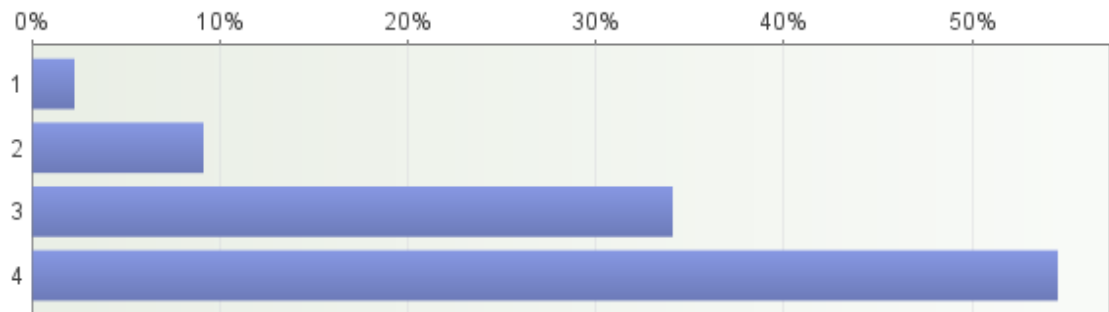


FIGURE 2. Working in Finland during my studies interests me. (n=44)

(1=Disagree completely, 2=Somewhat disagree, 3=Somewhat agree, 4=Agree completely)

A half of the respondents (50%) completely agreed with the statement concerning their wish to complete their practical training in Finland. In all 23% were somewhat agreed with the claim and 16% somewhat disagreed. The percentage of those completely disagreeing with the statement, being interested to complete their practical training in Finland, was 11%.

The claim that finding a job in Finland is difficult was completely agreed by 64% of the respondents. Altogether 23% of the students somewhat agreed with the statement. In all 7% somewhat disagreed and 2% of respondents did not consider finding a job in Finland difficult at all. (FIGURE 3)

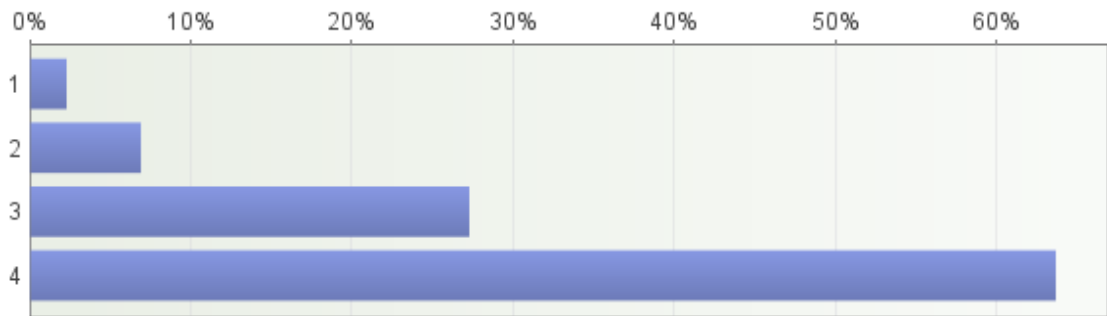


FIGURE 3. Finding a work (also for training) in Finland is difficult. (n=44)

(1=Disagree completely, 2=Somewhat disagree, 3=Somewhat agree, 4=Agree completely)

The respondents' interest towards working and completing practical training in Finland appears to be very high. Problematic with this result is that at the same time 64% of respondents completely agreed and 27% somewhat agreed that finding work in Finland is difficult. Only 9% of respondents thus had experienced that finding work in Finland is very or relatively easy. In this case it is fair to point out that the percentage of native Finnish students among the respondents was 11%. Kempainen drew similar conclusions in his research about international students of Kajaani University of Applied Sciences, according to which students experienced finding a job in Finland similarly challenging (Kempainen 2010).

The University's possibilities to help finding a job are limited, but there are some ways the University can expedite the job acquiring process. A student coming from a foreign country naturally cannot have very good knowledge of the local labor market and one of the tasks of the University is to inform students about the possible working opportunities. Furthermore, it is essential that the University has the best possible networks with the local companies, and promotes international students as potential workforce. When asked for improvement ideas at the end of questionnaire a few answers from the students were related to the difficulties of finding a job. These answers will be further addressed in chapter "6.7 Students'

vision on improving the integration of Industrial Management students of Ylivieska unit”.

6.5 Finnish language, social relations and free time

A half of the students (50%) completely agreed with the statement about being interested in learning Finnish language. In all 25% somewhat agreed and 20% somewhat disagreed, while 5% of respondents stated they were completely disinterested in learning Finnish.

The students were asked how they experienced forming new relationships. A total of 45% completely agreed that it had been easy for them to form relationships with other international students. Altogether 39% somewhat agreed with the claim while 11% of the respondents somewhat disagreed. Only 5% of the students completely disagreed it being easy to form relationships with other international students. In all 16% of the respondents found it easy to form relationships with Finnish students and 21% of the students somewhat agreed. In total 36% somewhat disagreed and 27% of the respondents completely disagreed with the statement about it being easy to form relationships with Finnish students.

(TABLE 3)

TABLE 3. It has been easy for me to form new relationships with. (n=44)

(1=Disagree completely, 2=Somewhat disagree, 3=Somewhat agree, 4=Agree completely)

	1	2	3	4
a) Other international students	5%	11%	39%	45%
b) Finnish students	27%	36%	21%	16%

When asked about racism 54% of the students completely disagreed with the statement concerning having encountered racism either by University staff or

other students and 18% somewhat disagreed. However 23% of the respondents somewhat agreed having encountered racism and 5% agreed completely. In all 21% of the students completely agreed that University had provided them with enough information about local free-time activities. A half of the students (50%) somewhat agreed while 27% somewhat disagreed. Amount of students completely disagreeing was 2%.

The international students who participated in the research appear to have significant willingness to learn the language of the current surrounding society. Three out of four respondents either completely or somewhat agreed the claim concerning their interest to learn Finnish language. The curriculum of International Industrial Management students includes 6 credits of compulsory Finnish language studies (Centria University of Applied Sciences, Student Affairs Office 2015). Practical and motivating execution of the courses has a major role on how encouraged the student will be to practice his or her Finnish skills in real life situations.

One of the best ways to learn Finnish would be to have a possibility to speak it with native Finnish students. Since Finnish students are often too shy of speaking English on their own initiative, interaction between two student groups would benefit both parties if discussions were held combining English and Finnish.

Industrial Management students indicated that getting acquainted with other international students has been much easier than with Finnish students. In all 84% of the respondents somewhat or completely agreed that forming new relationships with other international students had been easy. The corresponding ratio concerning the relationships with Finnish students was just 37%. Well over a half of Industrial Management students (63%) thus had experienced forming new relationships with Finnish students at least relatively challenging. In Bränfors'

research about the exchange students of Satakunta University of Applied Sciences, the results concerning forming new relationships were slightly more positive but otherwise similar with my results (Bränfors 2009). The majority of Bränfors' research subjects had got acquainted with Finnish students however 60% expressed it to be at least relatively challenging (Bränfors 2009).

One of the reasons why international students have better relationships with other international students might have something to do with local living arrangements. In Ylivieska the majority of international students live on accommodation arranged for them, and owned by the city of Ylivieska. As a result most of neighbors and roommates of students are also foreigners and thus students' interaction with Finnish students is limited to school time and free-time activities. These conclusions are also supported by Bränfors' research, in which she reported that 64% of exchange students of Satakunta University were living with other international students and only one respondent was living with just Finnish students (Bränfors 2009).

It could be interesting to carry out minor research on how Finnish students experience the interaction with international students. Would they be willing to get acquainted with international students more than they currently have and how would the requirement of using English language affect the willingness to communicate? Both Finnish and international students could benefit if the University would arrange some sort of mutual activities where the familiarization process could start. One natural option could be arranging combined English courses with Finnish and international students.

According to the research by Rautopuro & Väisänen, dropping-out from studies during the first year is often related to issues with social integration e.g. forming social relations (Rautopuro & Väisänen 2001). Therefore it would be essential that

every international student would manage to form new relationships if not with Finnish students at least with other international students.

The research participants were asked whether they have experienced racism during their studies either by the University staff or other students. Slightly over a half of students (54%) completely disagreed with the claim. The result is good but it is important to remember that racism should not be accepted by anyone at any case and therefore the percentage of “completely disagreeing” respondents could have been even higher. At the same time it must be speculated whether it is realistic to achieve a situation where no-one from various different cultural backgrounds at some point would feel discriminated, for example due to some misunderstanding caused by language or culture differences.

However, when compared to the results that Bränfors got in her research Ylivieska unit appears to be significantly more racist than Satakunta university. Where 54% of international students of Ylivieska unit stated they had not experienced racism at all, the same ratio in Bränfors’ research was 68%. The number of those indicating just minor occurrence of racism was fairly similar in both research with just 3% difference. However in Bränfors’ research 7% of students had somewhat experienced racism whereas in this research the percentage was 23% which can be considered as a significant difference. (cf. Bränfors 2009.)

To be able to effectively root out all kind of racism it is essential that both students and University staff are genuinely willing to get familiar with different cultures and habits. It is also important to create atmosphere where international students can if necessary bring out the negative experiences whether they are caused on purpose or are unintentional misunderstandings.

Nearly three fourths of the respondents expressed that the University had provided information about local free-time activities at least relatively well. Slightly over one fourth of the students would have wanted more effort from the University concerning informing about free-time activities. Finding meaningful free-time activities expedite the students' integration into a new country, city, and school. Different hobbies are often a good and natural way to form new relationships. At the beginning of studies a foreign student may struggle in finding information about different local free-time activities, therefore it is important that the University informs student about different possibilities.

6.6 General satisfaction with the chosen educational field and location

The students were asked whether they had been satisfied with coming to study in Centria University of Applied Sciences Ylivieska unit. In all 39% of the respondents indicated being completely satisfied to decision and 48% somewhat agreed. Altogether 11% of the students somewhat disagreed being satisfied and 2% disagreed completely. The open question "If you have not been satisfied to your decision, why?" received 13 replies. In the open answers two themes rose above others. Students expressed that it was really hard to find work, which made living difficult. The students also experienced that the quality of teaching was not on a satisfactory level and the course content of degree programme was eliminated too much.

I would like to apply for a part time job but it really difficult to find out one.

There is no opportunity for work so it's hard for to live here if I were offered a job I would never leave this school until completion of my course.

Logistic specialization has disappeared. Some classes once in two years, that causing overlaps of subjects.

– One of the specialization for our degree programs was closed

The level of teaching is poor –.

The degree programme generally seems to have managed to achieve students' satisfaction. Altogether 87% of respondents stated being at least somewhat satisfied with their decision of coming to study in Centria University of Applied Sciences Ylivieska unit. The result is principally excellent but it is important to also pay attention to those not satisfied. Leaving abroad to study is a significant investment for a student both mentally and economically therefore it is essential that the University manages to offer value for that investment. It is also a very unpleasant situation for the University if the reputation is negative or the drop-out rates are high, especially so in the current economic atmosphere where governmental support rates and the overall success of educational institute is measured by number of graduated students.

The cross tabulation of the answers did not reveal any clear connections between students' satisfaction with their study place and the beginning year of studies. Clearly over a half of the students of each year's class were either completely or somewhat satisfied with the fact that they had come to study in Centria University of Applied Sciences Ylivieska unit. In addition, the number of unsatisfied students was evenly divided for each year. Even though the distributions between the beginning years were fluctuating slightly there were no clear signs that progressing in studies would have an effect on the satisfaction rate.

In comparing the respondents' nationalities to the satisfaction with the study place, no obvious trends were emerging either. The satisfaction rate of each nationality was relatively equally distributed in relation to overall distribution of

the sample. At least a half of the students participating in the research from each country were either completely or somewhat satisfied with their decision to study in Centria University of Applied Sciences Ylivieska unit.

An interesting statistic is that 67% of completely or somewhat unsatisfied students came from European countries. That is 8% of all respondents (n=44). A student arriving in Finland from another European country could be beforehand assumed to have the best social and cultural qualifications to integrate in Finnish society and education system (cf. Rautopuro & Väisänen 2001). Due to the relatively similar cultural background it could be assumed that European students have a better starting position to successful integration compared to students coming from Asia or Africa. Therefore it was interesting to notice that almost 70% of unsatisfied students were indeed European. Due to the social "higher ground" it could be expected that the dissatisfaction of European students is more closely related to academic integration i.e. the content of the degree and the quality of education. This conclusion was somewhat supported by the research results when the respondents nationalities were cross tabulated with the questions related to students satisfaction. In question "8. I have been satisfied with; a) Quality of teaching, b) Content of the degree" and question "18. If you have not been satisfied to your decision, why?" the majority of negative answers and complaints related to the quality of teaching or the content of the degree came from European students.

When students were asked about their reasons for dis-satisfaction in a question "18. If you have not been satisfied to your decision, why?" two clear themes emerged. Out of the total of 13 answers 38% were directly related to academic integration (cf. Rautopuro & Väisänen 2001). Students, above all, stated that quality of teaching had not always been on the level they had expected. Several answers also criticized the excessive elimination of the content of the degree

programme. Especially troubling were seen the disappearance of logistics specialization line. Since academic integration has a major effect on students' motivation to continue studies, especially in the middle and end phase of their studies (cf. Rautopuro & Väisänen 2001), it would be fundamentally important that the University would be able to provide the best possible conditions to progress in studies. That would also act for the University's benefit since graduation rates are a significant factor when institutions economical preconditions are considered.

Another clear theme that students considered to be the reason for their dissatisfaction was the difficulty to find work in Finland. This was already made obvious in the research question "12. Finding a work (also for training) in Finland is difficult", in which 91% of respondents stated that finding work in Finland is at least somewhat challenging. Moreover, in research made by Kemppainen about international students of Kajaani University of Applied Sciences, the respondents similarly indicated that finding a job or training place in Finland was difficult (Kemppainen 2010).

International students' willingness to work in Finland was significantly high (89%) as was revealed in question "10. Working in Finland during my studies interests me". Therefore it is unfortunate that the supply and demand of working places does not seem to correlate at all, especially so since getting extra income from work or finding a training place related to study programme could be an imperative for continuation of one's studies, both economically and as a motivational factor.

Unfortunately the Universities' possibilities to impact on students' employment are fairly limited. It would however be essential to investigate possible ways to ease the employment for example via close co-operation with local companies or

some kind of internship network. Foreign students' knowledge of local labor market and policies cannot be expected to be in the same level with native Finnish students. In addition the lack of mutual language with possible employer during the work application phase can become an obstacle, even if it did not have an effect on the actual execution of work tasks later on. Therefore it is clear that University must be able to provide enough support in employment and especially for international students in order to be able to convincingly promote itself for international students.

Additionally, the respondents wished for more interaction and events with Finnish students. A few students stated their dis-satisfaction to stem from personal reasons. A few respondents had possibly missed that the question was voluntary. Their answers did not contribute to the objective of the research.

6.7 Students' vision on improving the integration of Industrial Management students of Ylivieska unit

The last question of the questionnaire was "How in your opinion University could ease the integration of international students in Ylivieska unit?" It was an open question and was answered by 23 students. From the answers two clear themes could be seen. The students indicated an acute need for more support when finding a job or a training place in Finland. According to the students it was difficult to find work that was related to their field of education. The students also wished for more social events that were organized by the University. It was seen especially important that Finnish students should be included in the social events of international students. It was also suggested that Finnish students could be obliged to have courses together with international students. Two answers indicated the need for increased tutoring in general as well as Finnish speaking

tutor. In one answer it was expressed that teachers should be specialized better in order to properly teach students.

University could arrange at least one interview system in a year for the graduated students to provide the job.

Help to find connection with companies or offer for Traineeship that are sure, because somehow it is hard to be admitted for in a Finnish company with just a few Finnish vocabulary.

The study program is really good probably the best but the school should arrange factory work especially for the international students since our degree program requires industry work and it is so very hard to find industry job by ourselves so the school must find some place where we can practically implement the outcome of our learning.

Provide integration events more often, preferably involving both Finnish and international students. Forcing the two group to perform activities with each other rather than within their own group

I think that there should be more integrating student meetings. And I don't mean just typical party, but more student days with competitions which will give us fun, for example choosing Miss And Mr. of Centria, some music competitions like every group have to prepare some song and present it. There is a lot of opportunities to help people with integration, but in Centria we don't have anything like this. If something is going on I see only Finnish students in some funny trousers and I have no idea what is the reason of that.

Having Finnish speaking tutor students help them

First things that teacher should be specialize in particular subject. He/she should be masters in that subject. So he can teach the student well.

While the students were principally satisfied with the current situation research also revealed some demand for improvements. This was revealed by the fact that over a half (52%) of the students answered to a voluntary open question "19. How

in your opinion University could ease the integration of international students in Ylivieska unit?”. As the most distinct separate improvement idea students wished for more social interaction and mutual organized social events with Finnish students. Furthermore students wished for more help in acquiring of job or training place and increased amount of tutoring.

Citing Antikainen, Rinne & Koski, one of the key responsibilities of education is integration into a member of society (Antikainen, Rinne & Koski 2013). University therefore has major part in integration of international students. University already is supporting students in several different ways and students are generally satisfied to amount of support as was revealed e.g. in question “5. I have received enough knowledge and support from university concerning”. However according to Ingemar Emanuelsson integration is not so much about accustoming outsiders as achieving the understanding and acceptance in surrounding society (Emanuelsson 2001). Therefore it would be essential that University would invest even more into familiarizing Finnish students to foreign students and cultures.

Open question provided this topic with many solutions. Students suggested that University could organize more playful competitions, such as Mr. & Ms. Centria, some kind of musical competitions and sports events between international and Finnish students. University already has sport day organized twice a year and this kind of events respondents wished more. In answers it was however pointed out that even if there were organized events they wouldn't expedite integration as long as international and Finnish students participate them in their own groups and not together. Therefore it is important that University strives to decrease Finnish students' threshold to invite international students in a same group. During the sports day every team participating to competitions is usually required to have at least one female team member. One method to expedite the integration

could be to evaluate whether the teams could be required to have at least one international student as a member.

The students also wished for better informing policies on organized events. The respondents pointed out that while events such as parties are organized international students does not participate in them, partly because the information does not reach them and partly because the purpose of event is not always understood. Hence it could be beneficial if international students would have a native Finnish student tutor whom could familiarize students with Finnish student traditions and possibly act as an escort to new events so that foreign students do not have to go alone to new situations.

The respondents hoped that the University would strive for eradicating the language barrier between Finnish and international students as well as possible. It is obvious that without a mutual language it is challenging to form new relations and to integrate naturally in the local student community. Finnish students' English language skills however are principally very good and based on my own empirical observations the major issue is the Finnish students' unrealistic expectations about the skill level required for comprehensible communication. A solution to this could be partial combination of Finnish and international students' curriculum for example by sharing the English courses. This way both parties would get a realistic impression on opposite's skill level, and in addition more courage to communicate with each other. Shared courses are a natural way to get acquainted with other students and to form new social relationships.

Another topic that collected a significant number of improvement ideas was working in Finland. Especially students desired for more support from the University in creation of working life contacts. Equipped with inadequate language skills and local knowledge it is significantly challenging for a student to

form new relationships on labor market without support and recommendations of higher authority i.e. the University. Therefore it would be an imperative that the University would begin to promote international students as possible labor force more aggressively than before. It could be seen as the University's social responsibility as an educational institute. As Antikainen, Rinne & Koski stated, education has many responsibilities towards society such as integration into a member of society and renewal of social layers (Antikainen, Rinne & Koski 2013). Without work experience gained during studies and related to educational objects, it is nearly impossible for a student to integrate in society as functional part or to reach that social position expected based on educational background.

A few respondents wished for the increased level of tutoring, especially the students were hoping for a Finnish speaking tutor that could help them in the learning of Finnish language and local habits. One respondent wanted teachers to specialize more deeply in their subjects in order to improve the quality and content of teaching.

6.8 Summary of conclusions

The purpose of this thesis was to get up-to-date information about the integration of international students into Centria University of Applied Sciences Ylivieska unit and the Degree Programme in Industrial Management. Answers to the research topic were sought through two research problems. The research problems were: 1. How international students of Centria University of Applied Sciences Ylivieska unit have integrated to degree programme, and 2. How could Centria University of Applied Sciences contribute to improve the integration if problems have risen among the international students? A questionnaire consisting of a total of 19 questions was composed in order to get most comprehensive answers for the research problems. Previously in this chapter the research results were presented

and my conclusions and analyzes. In this context I will once more revise the most relevant results.

The research reached a versatile respondents' group which increases the reliability of research by bringing forth differing viewpoints. For social and academic integration into an educational institute it would be highly essential that the University would manage to provide students with necessary support and knowledge so the student has the right conditions to adapt to surroundings. This could be even considered as the University's social responsibility to society (cf. Antikainen, Rinne & Koski 2013). Therefore it is good that at least slightly less than two thirds of the students had received enough knowledge and support concerning Finnish school policies. However, the number of unsatisfied students was significantly high (37%) and could be necessary to consider if the information policy on topic should be enhanced in future.

Over a half of the respondents were also unsatisfied with the guidance they had received about the interaction with local officials. Foreign students' assumptions about the interaction with law enforcement and other officials could significantly differ from Finnish customs. Especially at the beginning of studies the University could be students' only real contact to foreign culture. Therefore it is important that the University provides students with good understanding of local norms.

Even rudimentary understanding of the language of the surrounding society gives a student much better preconditions to social integration. Therefore it was great that over two thirds of the students experienced they had received enough support in learning Finnish language. However slightly over one fourth of students would have wanted more support. Considering the importance of the matter and international students' significantly high (75%) willingness to learn Finnish, it would be necessary to evaluate whether the amount of support should

be increased or enhanced somehow. One effective method could be bringing Finnish speaking tutor students to international students support.

The University appears to have managed relatively well in providing information about the studies during the application phase. For students' motivation and academic integration it is essential that the students get a comprehensive and realistic impression on the studies already in the application phase. For smooth continuity of studies it is necessary to have sufficient information available throughout the studies. This topic revealed the possible need for improvement when one fourth of the students indicated that the internal web pages of Centria University of Applied Sciences had not managed to supply necessary amount of information during their studies.

Smooth and perceivable communication is essential to a student for undistracted execution of studies. The ability to communicate is also a requirement for social integration i.e. forming new social relations. Therefore it is great to notice that for two thirds of the respondents' language barrier has not caused difficulties in communication with teachers or other international students. Communicating with Finnish students was considered slightly more challenging. Slightly less than half (45%) of the students responded that communicating with Finnish students was at least somewhat challenging. Similar results were received when the students were asked about their success to form new social relationships. In total 84% of the students had experienced forming new relationships with other international students at least somewhat easy, however only 37% considered it easy to form relationships with Finnish students.

This topic was also addressed by the students in the open answers. One of the most notable improvement topics brought up by the students was the increasing of interaction between Finnish and international students. This could be pursued

by increasing the number of mutual social events and especially by encouraging to interaction during studies for example by partially combining curriculums. From the integration viewpoint it would benefit both Finnish and international students by giving more courage to communicate, and a natural way to form new relationships.

The content and quality of teaching are a central part of students' academic integration. The motivation to continue one's studies could be challenging to find if the content of the studies does not correspond with the students' expectations. Hence it was encouraging that over two thirds of the respondents were at least somewhat satisfied with the quality of teaching and the content of degree. The satisfaction rate towards the content of degree was slightly higher than the satisfaction with the quality of teaching. The majority, nearly 90% of the students were also satisfied with their decision of coming to study in Centria University of Applied Sciences. However, when students were asked about improvement ideas and their reasons for dissatisfaction, insufficient quality of teaching and excessively eliminated content of degree were both among the most popular topics. An interesting statistic was that the dissatisfaction to the quality and content of teaching seems to be more common among European students. Especially the cancellation of another specialization line was brought up several times.

The international students' willingness to work and complete their training in Finland was significantly high. Unfortunately 91% of respondents also expressed that finding a working or training place in Finland was challenging. This was also one of the most popular topics for improvement. The students wished that the University would offer more support in finding work both during studies and immediately after graduation. A foreign student does not necessarily have same kind of governmental support as Finnish students have and being able to work

during studies could be financial necessity. It is also important that a student has opportunities to apply the learned skills in praxis already before officially entering working life. Hence it could be necessary to evaluate whether the support from the University could be increased or enhanced somehow.

To sum up the research revealed several factors supporting students' integration both socially and academically. However, the research also brought up some topics where improvements might be advisable. In the end, it will be the University's responsibility to take action accordingly.

7 DELIBERATION

The topic of this thesis was the integration of international students into Ylivieska unit and the degree programme of Industrial Management. The idea for the thesis came from one of my teachers. The topic interested me because I myself am studying the same degree and have had the opportunity to become acquainted with students from various different cultures and observe the integration of international students from the viewpoint of a Finnish student. Many situations self-explanatory for a Finnish student can cause confusion among international students at the beginning of their journey in Finland. Therefore it is important to investigate how the integration of international students could be expedited in Centria University of Applied Sciences Ylivieska unit.

Analyzing the research results I felt that the questionnaire provided answers to my research problems comprehensively. The research results gave extensive information about the factors affecting the integration such as living conditions, free-time activities, social relationships and satisfaction to the quality and content of teaching. The research also provided information for my second research problem which addressed the possible improvement ideas emerged among the international students.

The authenticity of research is measured through the concepts of reliability and validity. Reliability means that the research results are repeatable and consistent (Hirsjärvi etc. 2004). Every phase of the research was documented and conclusions are justifiable and based on theory base. Validity means that research is measuring what it is meant to (Hirsjärvi etc. 2004). The research gave me comprehensive answers to both of my research problems and therefore the research can be considered valid. The results were also in cohesion with the results from previous

studies which in part supported the validity. The respondent group reached by the questionnaire consisted of 44% of the complete sample and the respondents were fairly equally divided through different beginning years and nationalities which ensured the comprehensiveness and diversity of answers.

The research provides up-to-date information about the integration of international students in Ylivieska unit. The University can use this knowledge for operational improvements in order to guarantee the best possible conditions for students for successful execution of their studies. Integration has a significant impact on students' mental wellbeing and in that way on academic success (Rautopuro & Väisänen 2001). Therefore it is beneficial for both the student and the educational institute that the highest possible level of integration is achieved. The research revealed topics which students themselves considered to be the biggest obstacles for effective integration, and are hereby a logical starting point in the University's aspiration to improve integration.

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COVER LETTER

Hi,

I'm student from IM10 group. I'm doing a thesis about integration of international students to Degree Programme in Industrial Management and Ylivieska unit.

I would appreciate if you could fill this questionnaire for my thesis research. It should only take few minutes to do it. Link is public so please just answer the questionnaire once.

The questionnaire will ask your nationality but answers will be interpreted and reported in the way that no individuals can be recognized.

Regards,

Teemu Mäenpää



Questionnaire for International Students: Integration to Degree
Programme in Industrial Management and Ylivieska unit

Choose the correct answer for questions 1-3

1. What was the starting year of your studies? *

- 2010
- 2011
- 2012
- 2013
- 2014

2. Where are you from? *

- Algeria
- Bangladesh
- Cameroon
- China
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Hungary
- Nepal
- Nigeria
- Poland
- Pakistan
- Russia
- Vietnam
- Other

3. What is the level of your previous education? *

- High school (or similar)
- Higher education (bachelor's degree)
- Higher education (master's degree)
- Other

Choose the most suitable option for the following statements.

1=Disagree completely, 2=Somewhat disagree, 3=Somewhat agree, 4=Agree completely

4. I received enough information about the studies during my application period *

- 1 2 3 4

5. I have received enough knowledge and support from University concerning *

1 2 3 4

- a) Tutoring of my studies
- b) Finnish school policies
- c) Learning Finnish language
- d) Accommodation
- e) Interaction with local officials

6. Internal web pages of Centria University of Applied Sciences provide enough information about my studies *

- 1 2 3 4

7. I know whom to ask for help in problem situations *

- 1 2 3 4

8. I have been satisfied with *

1 2 3 4

- a) Quality of teaching
- b) Content of the degree

9. Language barrier causes difficulties in communication with *

1 2 3 4

- a) Teachers
- b) Other international students
- c) Finnish students

10. Working in Finland during my studies interests me *

1 2 3 4

11. I want to complete my practical training in Finland *

1 2 3 4

12. Finding a work (also for training) in Finland is difficult *

1 2 3 4

13. I am interested to learn Finnish language *

1 2 3 4

14. It has been easy for me to form new relationships with *

1 2 3 4

- a) Other international students
- b) Finnish students

15. I have encountered racism either by University staff or other students *

1 2 3 4

16. University has provided enough information about local free-time activities *

1 2 3 4

17. I have been satisfied of coming to study in Centria University of Applied Sciences Ylivieska Unit *

1 2 3 4

18. If you have not been satisfied to your decision, why?

19. How in your opinion University could ease the integration of international students in Ylivieska unit?
