Finland as a higher education destination for Vietnamese students

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Abstract

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Finland has been known as a country with the world's top-notch quality of education. Although the number of Vietnamese students here is significant, there is a sign of decreasing. The objective of the thesis is to provide an insight into their motivations to study abroad and satisfaction about Finnish education and life in Finland. It is essential to understand Vietnamese students' behaviours and the process of selecting an education destination to establish an effective marketing strategy. The thesis is commissioned by Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences.

The research was conducted in quantitative and qualitative approaches. Firstly, an online survey was designed and distributed through the Facebook group "Welcome to Finland" of Vietnamese students as well as authors' personal connections. Secondly, semi-structured interviews were implemented with four Vietnamese students. Some of the students are currently working and living in other countries rather than in Finland.

The survey collected 134 responses. The certain differences between the opinions of students who came to Finland before and after 2017 were discovered through the results. Moreover, open-ended questions present in-depth perspectives and genuine opinions of students were revealed.

In conclusion, the motivations of Vietnamese students are categorized into push and pull factors. The satisfaction is assessed based on education quality and living quality. Despite challenges, students found ways to adapt and enjoy life in Finland. Furthermore, marketing approaches to promote higher education are discussed and suggested.

Keywords

Higher Education, Education destination, Finland, Vietnamese students, Marketing, Motivations.

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

In recent years, aside from the prominent nature and famous Nokia, Finland has been globally renowned for its top-notch education. According to Worldwide Educating for the Future Index (2019), Finland's leader position remained unchanged based on three categories: policy environment, teaching environment, and socio-economic environment (The Economist 2019, 6). Moreover, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD Better Life index 2020) stated that, in Finland, "88% of adults aged 25-64" have finished higher education; meanwhile, while the average of the OECD is 78%. The current Finnish Government established an ambitious vision. By 2025, Finland will have become "a country where everybody wants to learn more all the time". (Education Finland 2020).

Some of the best academic performers in Southeast Asia are Vietnamese students. Vietnam's average scores in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) test transcended OECD countries and the US in 2018 (Crawfurd, Hares, Minardi & Nestour 2019). According to UNESCO, in 2016, Vietnam's expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP was 4.34% (UNESCO institute for statistics 2020a). In addition, approximately USD 4 billion foreign investment was implemented for 455 educational projects in 2018. On the other hand, it was predicted that roughly 300,000 out of 2 million Vietnamese students ought to search for other academic institutes rather than universities because of the capacity's overload. Students have the alternative of choosing domestic community colleges and international universities or studying abroad. Consequently, there is a growing tendency and potential opportunities in the Vietnamese educational market. (BMI 2020a.)

Indeed, Vietnamese students play an essential role in Finland's higher education section. A report of the Finnish national agency for education (2018) shown that 45% of international students in higher education institutes in Finland come from Asian countries. Especially the number of Vietnamese students augmented sharply over the past few years. However, in 2017, there was a decrease of 586 students from Vietnam in both Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences (Finnish national agency for education 2018). It may be the result of Finland's tuition fee policy for non-EU students since 2017.

The thesis is commissioned by Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. Haaga-Helia is strongly business orientated UAS, which steered and co-funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. In addition, it is a member of the Finland Pathway program organized in Vietnam by Finnish Consortium. The program aims at Vietnamese students

who would like to study bachelor's degree programmes in English at Haaga-Helia or JAMK UAS. (Hagaa-Helia 2020a; Haaga-Helia 2020b.)

1.1 Objectives and research question

As mentioned above, Vietnam is a potential market, but there are limited sources providing researches about the behaviours of Vietnamese students in Finland. In addition, since 2017, the number of incoming students has decreased dramatically. Understanding "target customers" is essential to investigate for an improvement. Hence, the thesis's objective is to furnish insight perspectives toward Finland as an educational destination for Vietnamese. It explores the motivation and satisfaction of Vietnamese students in terms of education and life in Finland as well as practical marketing approaches. The research subjects are students who were or had been studying in Finnish higher education institutions. The thesis should be beneficial to developing strategies of those institutes, for instance, market expansion project or plan of improving educational experience, etc. Moreover, this is possibly used as reference material for overseas education consultants and students intending to pursue studies in Finland. Finally, it is vital to include suggestions for future strategic approaches.

The thesis results should also give answers to the research questions:
1. What are the factors that motivate Vietnamese students to study in Finland?
2. What is the level of Vietnamese students' satisfaction while studying/studied in Finland?
3. What are the intentions of the future career of Vietnamese students after experiencing higher education in Finland?
4. What are the effective ways to attract more Vietnamese students?

The process of writing a complete thesis is affected by some limitations. Firstly, the interviews are conducted in Vietnamese, which is interviewees and interviewers' mother tongue. The transcripts of interviews were translated according to the authors' English fluency. Thus, the attitude, tone, and exact meaning of words cannot be exact. In the online interview, authors supposed to compare the results between students who experienced education before and after the tuition fees policy was applied. However, the question asking about which year the respondents started their studies can only define before-2017 and from-2017-onwards students, while non-EU students officially paid the tuition fee in Autumn 2017. Consequently, the comparison would be affected.

1.2 Outline of the thesis

The thesis comprises seven chapters. The introductory chapter provides a general background and context of the topic. Simultaneously, the current situation is mentioned in order to identify the importance of the study. Afterward, the aims and objectives are stated, along with research problems and questions. The second chapter concentrates on analysing the segmentation of Vietnamese students. It covers culture, the educational market in Vietnam, and students' behaviours toward studying abroad. In chapter three, the analysis approach is applied to depict Finland as an educational destination from the international students' point of view. In addition, the information on some components that contribute to Finnish education is presented. Marketing theories, specifically, marketing in education, are examined in chapter four. The fifth chapter illustrates chosen methodologies: quantitative and qualitative approaches, as well as the data collection methods. Besides, limitations, reliability, and validity are discussed in this part of the thesis. Chapter six renders findings and results from the empirical study in the previous chapter. Finally, chapter seven comprises the authors' conclusions, suggestions, and own learning.

2   Vietnamese student analysis

Market research plays a crucial role, which is defined by Phillips (2007, in Bont & Hamersveld 2007, 37) as "a way of investigating and answering questions about human behaviour". This process includes collecting information about the target market. In this context, Vietnamese student is regarded as target customers whose behaviour need to be studied.

2.1   Vietnamese culture

The subchapter aims to compare cultural characteristics and the core values in the society between Vietnam and Finland. Hofstede's 6-D model is exercised in this part.

Hofstede (1980, in Hofstede Insights 2020a) declares that "Culture is a collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others". The culture of Vietnam and Finland is evaluated through six dimensions as follows.
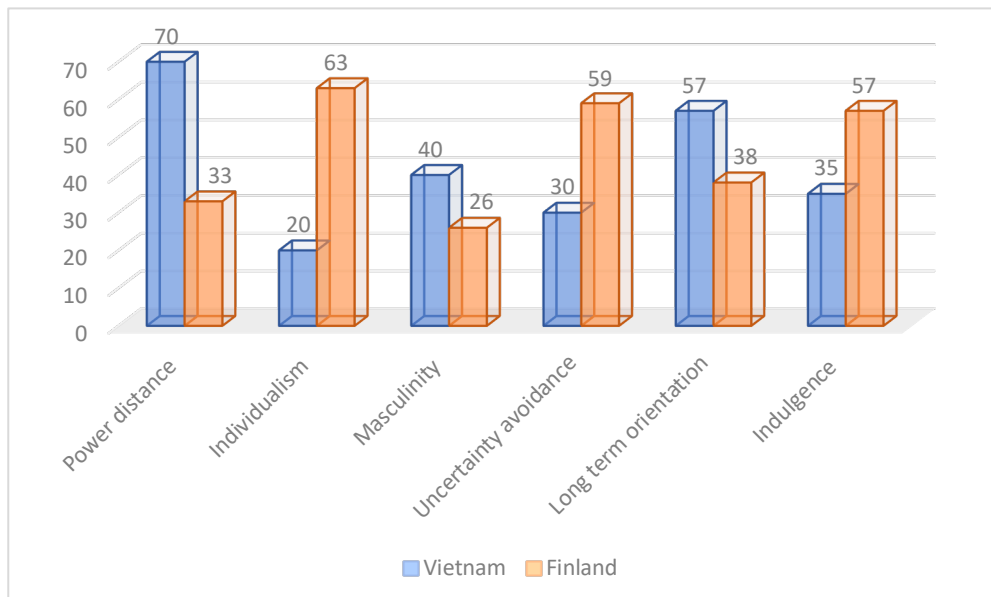
Figure 1. Hofstede culture comparison between Vietnam and Finland. (Hofstede Insights 2020b.)

Power distance is described as "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally." Vietnam has a high score of 70, which means the hierarchical order is unconditionally accepted. It relates to social inequalities and status distinction. Centralization is popular, resulting in the passivity of subordinates and the autocrat of

seniors. Finland stands at the opposite position on this dimension (score of 33), where independence, empowers, and equal rights are embraced. An informal attitude towards managers is accepted. For example, in Finland, students can address teachers by their first names.

Individualism is defined as "the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members." Vietnam's score on this dimension is the lowest one (20) out of six dimensions. It denotes a collectivist society in which loyalty is dominant "most other societal rules and regulations." Everyone in this society belongs to "in-group" and be responsible for members of the group. It emphasizes strong relationships, external social pressure, saving face, and group management. On the contrary, Finland is considered an individualist society. An individual takes care of herself or himself and direct family only.

Masculinity and femininity refer to "what motivates people, wanting to be the best (Masculine) or liking what you do (Feminine)." With a score of 40, Vietnam is considered a feminine country. Quality of life, equality, solidarity, and sentimentality is vastly appreciated. Conflicts can be solved by agreement and negotiation. In addition, people in this society value welfare rather than success. On this dimension, the feminine culture is also applied to Finland with a lower score of 26.

Uncertainty avoidance is "The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these." Vietnam scores 30; consequently, it adopts a more relaxed attitude. For people in low UAI society, rules should not be more than is required but can be abandoned if they do not work. Thus, improvement and innovation can be implemented. Moreover, work ethnic focuses on flexibility and harmony rather than punctuality. Meanwhile, high UAI is used to describe Finnish society with a strict attitude towards "unorthodox behaviours and ideas." Features such as precision and punctuality are custom of Finnish while in Vietnam, they are not common practice.

Long term orientation represents "how every society has to maintain some links with its past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future". Based on the score (57), Vietnam is regarded as a pragmatic culture. It cherishes thrift and exertions in modern education to prepare for the future. Truth is believed to be contingent upon situations, time, and context. In contrast to normative societies in which time-honoured traditions and norms are preserved, traditions of pragmatic societies are adjustable according to changed conditions, if necessary. Normative traits can be seen in Finnish culture. A

salient feature of normative countries is the societies established based on "absolute truth".

Indulgence and restraint describe "the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses." The low score (35) denotes that Vietnamese culture is Restraint type (relatively strong control). "Cynicism and pessimism" are the salient tendencies of these societies. Social norms govern people's actions while indulging is not valued. In contrast, Finland has an indulgence culture where work-life balance is enhanced. People have an optimistic attitude and appreciate leisure time to enjoy their life.

Vietnamese and Finnish cultures hold different characteristics (five out of six dimensions are opposite), which may result in Vietnamese students' culture shock while living and studying in Finland. (Hofstede Insights 2020b.)

Four principal precepts in Vietnamese culture are allegiance to the family, the concept of good name, love of learning, and respect. Firstly, it is undeniable that family is the most critical value in Vietnamese society. As mentioned above, Vietnam has a collectivist culture; thus, an individual's success or delinquency represents the face of his/her family. Filial piety is placed in the centre of this tenet. The foster care of parents is considered a debt that their children are expected to return by sacrifice for their parents' sake and have a responsibility to take care of their parents when they reach adulthood. Consequently, family, including relatives, has strong influences on a person's decisions. Secondly, Vietnamese treasures "a good name," which means "a good reputation." A person can obtain a good name "either by heroic deeds, by intellectual achievements, or by moral virtues." Hence, an individual's educational achievement may become the pride or shame of not only himself/herself but also the family. Studying abroad can be regarded as a triumph to be proud of. Thirdly, learning and erudition are respected and more precious than material success. The motivations of pursuing knowledge are to enhance social status, better job opportunities, and gaining prestige. Finally, a unique concept in the culture presented through manner, behaviours, and language is respect. Vietnamese show veneration to the elder, teachers, senior employers, and people in high positions. The ways to acquire respect are the same as "good name." (Vietnam culture 2020.)

2.2 Higher education in Vietnam

Love of learning and the importance of education in Vietnam's society and culture are described in the previous chapter. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistic (2020a), the Vietnamese government's expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP

in 2018 was 4.17%. In recent years, the share of education in GDP reaches 20%, which was equal to EUR7.7 billion (2017). The importance of education in Vietnam was manifested through the public expenditure on education and training on Vietnam's GDP in 2016, which surpassed many countries in the ASEAN region (EVBN 2018). The subchapter aims to represent the Vietnamese higher education system and development as well as the favourable socio-economic environment.

2.2.1   Vietnamese higher education market

Before investigating the current situation and opportunities of the Vietnamese market, it is essential to understand the education system.

It is compulsory for children from 6 to 11 years old to attend Primary schools (Tieu Hoc), which lasts for five years. Foreign language and computer training are introduced in the third year. Afterward, they move to Lower Secondary schools (Trung Hoc Co So) for ag-es 11-15. Later they can choose to continue to Upper Secondary education (Pho Thong Trung Hoc) or enrol in Secondary vocational education (Trung Hoc Chuyen). The entrance exam is obligatory for students to attend higher education (NUFFIC 2015). Vietnamese higher education degree system comprises Junior College Graduation Diploma (2-3.5 years), standard bachelor's degree (4 years), master's degree (2 years), and Doctor of Philosophy. Meanwhile, there is a range of higher education institutions (HEIs) such as junior colleges, mono-specialized universities, multi-disciplinary universities, and postgraduate research institutes. (WENR 2017.)

According to Hayden and Lam Quang (2017), "the education business is booming" in Vietnam. In 2015, the number of public universities and colleges was 375, which tripled compared to 1987. At the same time, private HEIs grew from 0 in 1987 into 88 after three decades (WENR 2017). However, the demands for higher education surpass the current system, which leads to an overcrowded situation. BMI's report stated that Vietnamese universities could receive merely 1.7 million out of approximately 2 million students. Those remaining students may have other options, such as studying in community colleges and international universities or going abroad. (BMI 2020a.) Thus, the private HEIs sector has continuously developed over the past few years, which is expected to alleviate the state's financial encumbrance and solve the overloaded issue. The reform agenda for higher education suggested that by 2020 the enrolment for non-public HEIs (private) should account for 40% of total enrolments (Hayden and Lam Quang 2017). However, the tertiary education enrolment for the 2018/2019 school year in the private sector accounted for merely 14%, which was approximately 244,000 students (BMI 2020a). Some observers

have trepidations about private higher education (PHE) in Vietnam. Nguyen (2016, in WENR 2017) commented that Vietnamese private schools are "demand-absorbing". In the same paper, the interviews were conducted in which most board members of the institutions "prefer their universities to be driven by profit, to attract more investment and increase their investment returns" (Nguyen 2016). In addition, the Government of Canada's report mentioned: "qualifications awarded by private universities are currently not regarded as prestigious as those awarded by public universities" (Foreign affairs and international trade Canada 2012). The figure below summarises the development of the Vietnamese's higher education market from 2000 to 2018/2019:
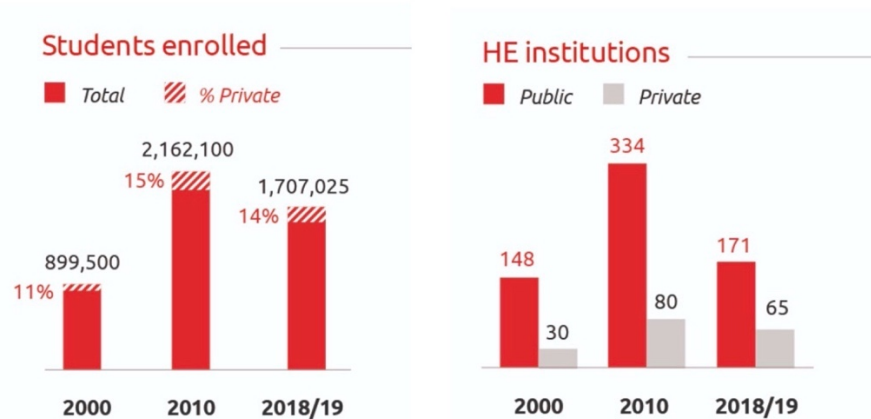
Figure 2. The number of HEIs and students' enrolments in Vietnam from 2000 to 2018/2019. (BMI 2020a.)

In recent years, the strategy for Education Development concentrates more on Internationalization and international cooperation. Transnational education (TNE) is developing. Prominent examples are Australia's RMIT University Vietnam and the British University Vietnam, which are foreign branch campuses in Vietnam. Moreover, there are "foreign-backed" universities such as the Vietnam German university, Vietnam Japan University, and the Fulbright university. (WENR 2017.) The number of joint and twinning programmes is currently over 300. Those programmes offer "certificates or degrees in cooperation with 32 countries". (Tran and Marginson 2019.) In addition, most of the Vietnamese public universities developed "high-quality programmes". The comparison between four kinds of education programmes in HEIs, including description, tuition fee, and certificate, is attached in the Appendix 1.

A key piece of information contributing to educational market segmentation is the majors' structure in Vietnam. Subsequently, product development, market opportunities, or marketing strategies can be enhanced. The structure is divided into seven groups,

presented in figure 3 below.

Figure 3. Higher education majors' structure in terms of students, 2017. (EVBN 2018.)

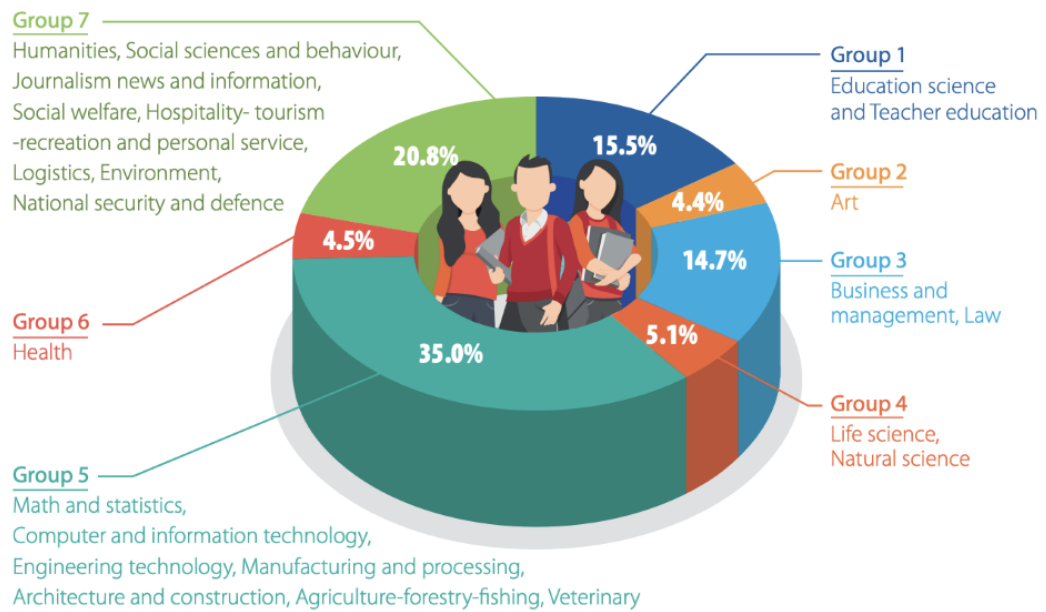The number of students majoring in group 1 is relatively significant because the government sponsors the tuition fee of Education major. On the other hand, Business Administration, Health, Law, English, Information Technology, Automotive Engineering, or Pre-primary Education are popular majors in Vietnam. (EVBN 2018.)

2.2.2 Socio-economic environment

According to UNESCO (2020a), in 2018, Vietnam had over 94 million residents, of which the under-25 group occupied approximately 38.5%. However, the rural population makes up 65% of the total. Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi (capital) are the two most crowded cities with 8.6 million and 7.5 million inhabitants, respectively (GSO 2020). Ho Chi Minh City, also known as Saigon, is "the country's largest city and the commercial hub." It was predicted that by 2030, HCM City would be responsible for 23% of the Vietnamese urban population. Thus, this is an up-and-coming market. Moreover, HCM city and Hanoi have the highest average expenditure of EUR125 and EUR100 per child each month, respectively. The average spending on education of urban areas (EUR110/child/month) is 2.7 times higher than in rural cities (EUR41/child/month). (EVBN 2018.)

After a century of opposing imperialism and war, since the 1908s, Vietnam's economy has recovered remarkably. It has been considered "one of the most dynamic emerging countries in the East Asia region." During the period between 1990 and 2016, the

country's GDP sharply increased by 3.303 percent, which was the second-fastest growth rate worldwide (after China). In 2019, the GDP reached USD 261.637 billion GNI per capita was USD 2700. (The World Bank 2020.) Moreover, the General Statistics Office of Vietnam (2016, in BMI 2020b) reported that the monthly average incomes of Vietnam were nearly 6 million VND (about USD 257.4). Meanwhile, the middle class can earn USD 714 a month or more. They accounted for one-third of the population, around 33 million people between 2014 to 2020. It was expected that the middle class might reach 44 million by 2030, resulting in median income should be raised by over USD 7,000. (BMI 2020b.) Besides, Boston consulting group (2018) forecasted that the affluent mass population in Vietnam might grow from 5% to 16% by 2030. According to Foreign affairs and international trade Canada (2012), this urban middle class tends to invest in education for their children.

The economic tendency of the country may influence education selections or employment orientation. Here are Vietnam's top ten export categories in 2018: (1) Tele-phones and accessories, (2) Garments and textiles, (3) Computers and electronic products, (4) Machinery and equipment, (5) Footwear, (6) Wood and wooden products, (7) Fishery products, (8) Transportation vehicles, especially motorcycles, (9) Cameras and accessories, (10) Iron and steel. In particular, the demands for Scientific research, Design, Marketing and market research, Finance, Insurance, Telecommunications, Hospitality, and tourism in the service sector are relatively high. (BMI 2020b.)

2.3   Behaviours of Vietnamese students toward studying abroad

The outbound mobility sector in Vietnam thrives in the last few decades. Indeed, internationalization in education is considered "one of the eight fundamental initiatives" (Tran and Marginson 2019). The number of outbound Vietnamese degree students in 2016 was 63,703, which dramatically augmented by 680% compared to 1999 (UNESCO Institute of Statistics 2020b). In 2017, Vietnam ranked first among ASEAN countries in the amount of overseas tertiary-level students (82,160 students) (Diep 2019). The U.S was the most popular educational destination among Vietnamese students. One of the reasons could be that students have many relatives in the U.S because of immigration after the Vietnam War. Nonetheless, the trend has been shifting since Japan became the number one destination due to the massive opportunity of international retention after graduation, affordable tuition fees, etc. (EVBN 2018.) Top 10 destination countries of Vietnamese mobile students abroad are displayed below:
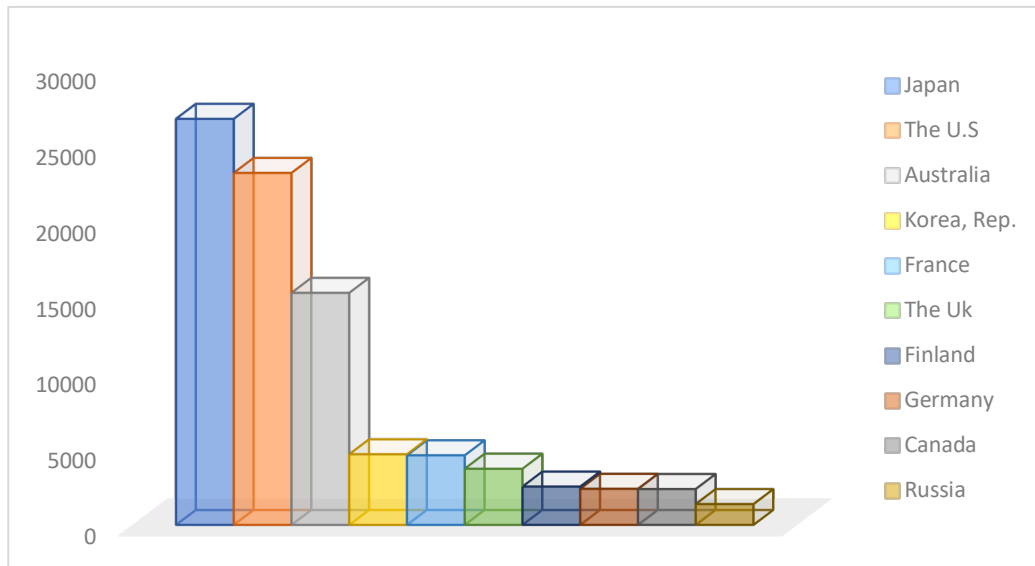
Figure 4. Top 10 destination countries of Vietnamese mobile students abroad. (UNESCO.)

According to Vietnam Net (2016), in 2015, the government offered scholarships to merely 5% of outbound students, and around 95% had other sources of funding (i.e., self-funded). The middle class in Vietnam emerges rapidly, begetting the outburst of studying overseas. In 2013, Vietnamese parents spent a total of EUR1.5 billion abroad studying. After two years, the number increased by 1.6 times (EUR 2.4 billion). On the other hand, the tuition fee in the U.S is more expensive compared to other destinations. The average private tuition fee charged by tertiary institutions to full-time foreign students in 2016 of the United States was EUR23,680. Meanwhile, this number in countries such as Singapore and Australia were estimated EUR8000-8500 or EUR6500-7000 in South Korea and Japan. (EVBN 2018.)

2.3.1 Motivations of studying abroad

Fejes (2008) states that "Motivation is what cause behaviour". It is what triggers a person to do something. Cherry (2020) added that motivation is the process of commencing, guiding, and maintaining "goal-oriented behaviours". In terms of mobility, Lee's migration model (1996, in Faridi 2018) represents the push and pull factors of emigration and immigration. Push factors associated with the place of origin urge people to leave, while pull factors associated with the area of destination are what retain or attract them to an area. The figure below illustrates push (negative) and pull (positive) within two areas. There are Intervening Obstacles in between origin and destination, for example, distance, culture, language barrier, personal factors, etc. Personal factors are defined as an individual's assessments of what are "pull and push forces." Hence, the motivations of international students can be divided into two categories: push and pull factors. Moreover,

neutral factors are the indifference of people toward immigration, which will not be analysed in this paper.
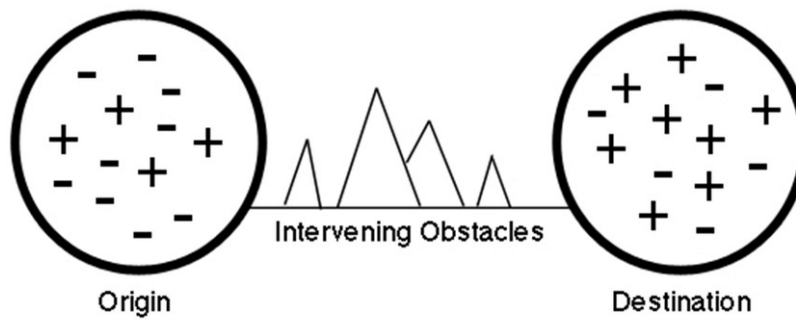

Figure 5. Lee's push-pull migration model. (Lee 1966, in Mlambo & Mpanza 2019.)

Besides the Push and Pull theory, there is an instrument called Motivation to Study Abroad (MSA) developed by Anderson and Lawton (2015), which delivers similar conclusions. Researchers classified motivation into four dimensions: World enlightenment, Personal growth, Career development, and Entertainment. The obtained results show that students with high motivation for entertainment are expected to select "less challenging destinations than those motivated to learn about the world or seek personal growth." (Anderson & Lawton 2015.)

Vietnamese students' motivations to study abroad are identified in Le and Tran (2018). The top five factors are: to want to develop professionally, to improve English, to look for better educational quality, to earn a higher return on investment when studying abroad compared to studying in the home country, and to earn a degree that is for a better career opportunity. Students are most motivated by the first two reasons. Indeed, the fluency of English is vital as it is an international language and can be an advantage in the employment profile. Tran (2019) used the "pull and push" approach to investigate the factors that influence Vietnamese's decisions of studying abroad. The three most influential pull factors are improving the chance of employment internationally, improving foreign language competence, and obtaining international experience. Meanwhile, most of the push factors relate to Vietnamese higher education, such as poor educational quality, avoidance of corrupt practices in Vietnamese education, unavailability of the desired program, and competitive entry to Vietnamese universities. The similarities are shown in those researches.

According to Lee (1996, in Faridi 2018), stages of the lifecycle of an individual may affect the perception and definition of positive and negative factors between the place of origin

and destination. The final decision is determined by not only the balance of negative and positive factors but also the possibility of surmounting intervening obstacles.

2.3.2   Factors affecting the selection of an educational destination

The subchapter aim is to delineate the factors that influence the choice of study destination of international students in general and, in particular, Vietnamese students.

The decision-making process of international students to study overseas comprises three stages: (1) the decision of studying internationally, (2) the choice of a host country, and (3) the selection of HEIs. Further study indicated six factors that affect the choice of country in the second stage. They are knowledge and awareness of the host country, personal recommendations, cost issues, environment, geographic proximity, and social links. On the other hand, stage one is generated by push factors partly analysed in the previous chapter. Finally, the institution's quality; its links or alliances with other institutions familiar to the student; high-quality staff; the institution's alumni base and word of mouth; the number of institution's student enrolment; and whether an institution is willing to recognize students' qualifications impact on the choice of HEIs. (Mazzarol & Soutar 2002.) Family and friends play an essential role in the student's decision to study overseas and the host country and host institute's selection. (Bodycott, 2009; Carter & Maringe 2007; Mazzarol & Soutar 2002; Pimpa 2003.) In addition, the related financial issues such as living costs, scholarship, tuition fees, etc. also have significant effects on the decision-making process. (Pimpa 2003; Bodycott 2009; Eder, Smith & Pitts 2010.) It is reasonable because self-funded (family) is a popular form of resources for undergraduate international students (Kakkad & Nair 2015). Other factors include the language of study, duration of the program, the image of the country or city, environment, culture, institutions, and education quality, visa application, safety, and living standard. (Bodycott 2009; Carter & Maringe 2007; Kakkad & Nair 2015; Maringe 2006; Mazzarol & Soutar 2002; Soo & Elliott 2008.)

Foreign affairs and international trade Canada (2012) conducted a survey on the higher education market in Vietnam, in which 380 respondents from Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City participated. It revealed essential factors to Vietnamese students when considering a destination to study abroad in terms of educational conditions, the host country itself, and personal factors.

Table 1. The factors influencing the Vietnamese students' choice of study destination country. (The Foreign affairs and international trade Canada 2012.)

	Factors (ranked in order of importance)
Educational conditions	(1) Assured quality education system (2) Diploma/Degrees of the university have international recognition (3) Affordable tuition fee (4) Wide variety of majors and institutions (5) The entrance's requirements are not too difficult (6) Excellent support for overseas students
Destination	(1) Safety (2) Cost of living (3) Tuition fee (4) Opportunity to earn money when studying (5) Prospects for permanent residence (6) The Vietnamese community in the country (7) The Requirement to demonstrate possession of funds (8) Geographically close to Vietnam (9) Process of applying for a visa
Personal factors	(1) Prestige associated with studying overseas (2) Scholarship available for overseas students (3) Opportunity to learn language from native speakers (4) Employment prospects in Vietnam after completing the study (5) Relatives are living in the country (6) To challenge myself/personal growth (7) Friends are living in the country (8) Great place for travel

Later research of Dao and Thorpe (2015) answered by 1124, respondents suggested factors related to the marketing aspect. Nine critical factors affecting student choices are arranged in order of importance is presented in the figure below.
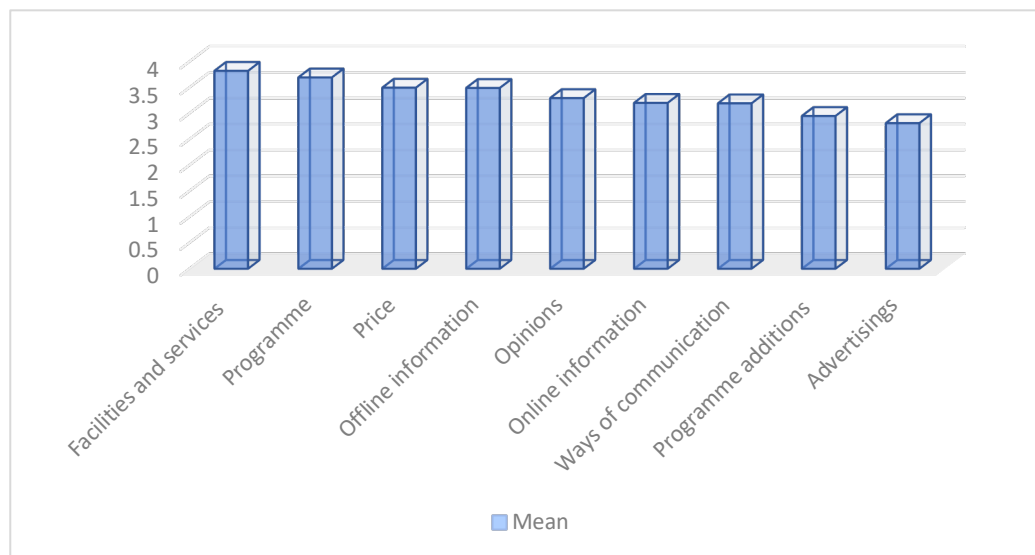

Figure 6. The factors influencing Vietnamese students' choices of a university. (Dao & Thrope 2015.)

In conclusion, the motivations of studying abroad and the factors affecting educational destination selection are intertwined. An insight into these components provides necessary materials for the strategic marketing plan.

3   Finland as an educational destination

Educational destination depicts places that are considered for the purpose of studying, from short educational trips to full-time degree programmes abroad. Decisions for future study become one of the most crucial and challenging tasks for any student, from choosing their suitable programmes to investing for institutions and desired educational destinations. For several years, educational providers have developed their educational systems to adapt to the growth of student mobility and transnational students. Therefore, the rapid increase of international students has promoted the development of educational systems and the equality of education as a priority.

For the past 40 years, statistics have shown positive numbers of international students for tertiary education worldwide (Beine, Noel & Ragot 2014). From 2000 to 2010, European countries have received high numbers of international students, with a significant increase of 114% (Maslen 2014). In order to attract more international students for higher education, in 2015, the European Commission has been established as a source of information and benchmarks of the learning mobility in higher education. Besides, the European Higher Education Area and the EU agenda also set the core goal of improving student mobility within the EU, which can bring many advantages for young talent generations. (Barrioluengo and Flisi 2017.)

According to the European Commission (2015), learning mobility has been defined as "the physical crossing of national borders between a country of origin and a country of destination, and subsequent participation in activities relevant to tertiary education." Besides, two types of student mobility that have been studied, including "degree mobility" and "credit mobility." In particular, the concept "degree mobility" refers to travels for studying purposes (full degree program at the higher education) in other countries as the study destinations, which require the students' presence during the teaching courses. Meanwhile, the "credit mobility" term relates to shorter studying travels as "study-related traineeship abroad" with the connection between the home institution and the partner institutions abroad. (Barrioluengo and Flisi 2017; UOE 2019.)

The beneficial values of student mobilities make local educational providers search for ways to develop the educational systems and engage international students. Positive effects for host/ receiving countries can be listed as the contributions to the local economy (from tuition fees, living expenses), professional research, documents, and skilled international labours and business connections with students' home countries in the long-term. (Docquier & Lodigiani 2010; Flisi & Murat 2011; OECD 2016.) Therefore, since

2000, the European Council has built strong legislation, policy, and benchmarks for international student mobility.

Benefits from international students can be seen as their contribution to the career enhancement as well as later job mobility (Parey & Waldinger 2010). The stay and work rate of international students in the host country is estimated at around 15% - 35% (OECD 2009, 40-45). There are several "push and pull" factors that might affect foreign student mobility. Meanwhile, the pull factors contribute as references that attract students to choose the country among several other destinations. These can be the university characteristics as the institution's attractiveness and the characteristics of specific destinations. (Beine, Noel & Ragot 2014.)

3.1 Factors defining institutional attractiveness

To define factors effects student mobility at the institutional level, Eurostat (Directorate – General of the European Commission) and OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) has adopted the calculation of the share of inward degree mobile students as the learning mobility benchmark. In particular, according to the UOE data (2019), the indicator is calculated as:

$$\text{"Share of degree mobile student} = \frac{\text{Number of mobile student}}{\text{Number of mobile student} + \text{number of resident student}}\text{"}$$

where the resident students are those who receive the degree education at the same country. (Barrioluengo & Flisi 2017, 11-12.)

According to Baryla and Dotterweich (2001), universities' nature and quality are the main factors that constitute institutional attractiveness. Student mobility at an institutional level might contribute to the improvement of higher education institutions (HEIs), including the learning systems, reputation, and revenues as well as talent recruitments. (Beine, Noel & Ragot 2014; Lepori 2016.) On the contrary, students search for better HEIs in terms of learning activities and teaching quality that can encourage them to study in another country. In order to analyse the teaching quality, in 2007, Agasisti and Dal Biaco introduced the "student-teacher ratio or the teaching load" as the measurement (in Barrioluengo & Flisi 2017, 35). In particular, the fewer students per unit of academic staff, the more concentrations and improvement of teaching activities might be spent on the individual students. Therefore, the teaching quality will also be leveraged, which can attract more mobile students. The formula of the student-teacher ratio is calculated as:

$$\text{"Teaching load} = \frac{\text{Total student ISCED5} + \text{Total students ISCED6}}{\text{Academic staff}}\text{"}$$

ISCED or International Standard Classification of Education, including eight levels from level 0 to level 8 (according to the ISCED 2011, increases two levels, compared to the version from 1997). (Check the ISCED levels in Appendix 3.) In particular, the ISCED 5&6 were mentioned include Short-cycle tertiary education and Bachelor or equivalent. (UNESCO-UIS 2012.)

One of the other factors that drive students' choices is the fees, which can be considered as the basis of the investment. Particularly, the mobility of international students tends to be influenced by the costs, when costs for moving and future of earning and opportunities will be considered. When the benefits and value are more potentials than the fees paid, there will be more chances for people moving. (Gozález, Mariel & Mesanza 2010.) As the results, when the fees for the particular institution (costs for education) are high, students are likely to spend more in total for their studying abroad, which can be a barrier for their mobility. However, there is no clear evidence for this relationship, especially when the tuition fees might reflect the educational quality as a definite connection between the fees and student mobility. (Beine, Noel & Ragot 2014.)

In order to define the effects of this factor, the formula for student fees has been calculated as:

$$\text{"Student fees} = \frac{\text{Student fees funding}}{\text{Total students}}\text{"}$$

Meanwhiles, the "student fees funding" combines all types of fees that student have to pay during their education period, including the households, fees for their institution as well as other additional fees (UOE 2019). The paid costs for their higher educational institutions will include tuition fees and for institutional services (educational services, welfare services, and others) (Barrioluengo & Flisi 2017, 35-36).

As mentioned above, the university's quality is one of the crucial factors shaping institutional attractiveness, particularly prestige and reputation. Meanwhile, based on academic works and researches, the international ranking contributes as an indicator of the reputation of HEIs. The Times Higher Education (THE) World University Ranking (2019) delivered 13 evaluation criteria for institutional rankings, which are divided into five main groups as teaching (the learning environment); research (volume, income, and reputation); citations (research influence); international outlook (staff, student and research); and industry income (knowledge transfer). Those performance indicators have

been qualified and widely used by academics, governments, and university leaders around the world. (The Times Higher Education 2019.)
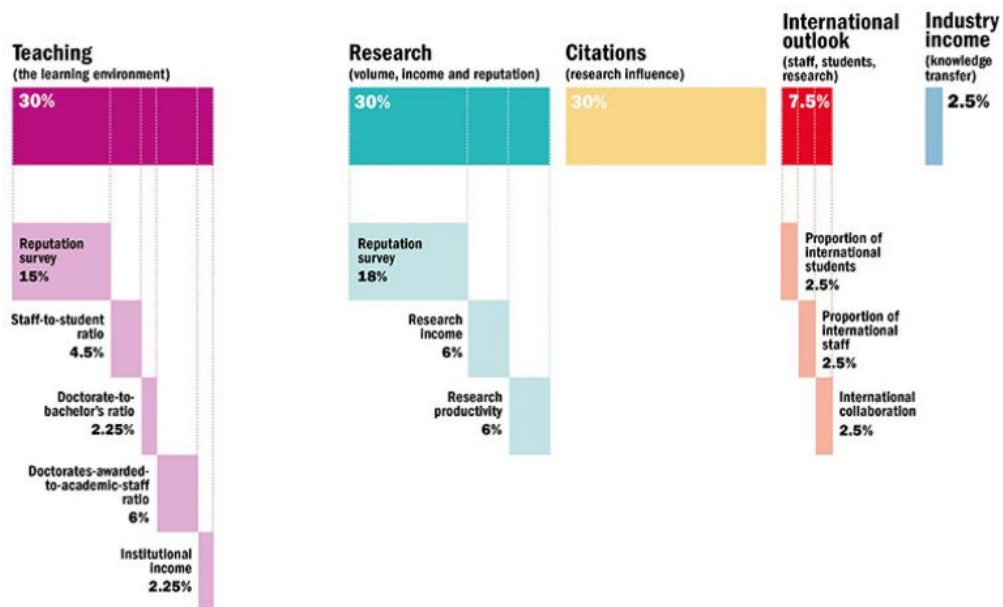

Figure 7. Criteria for university rankings. (The Times Higher Education 2019.)

Besides, some other dimensions can be considered when measures institutional attractiveness as the size, decentralization, legal status, and funding of the university. Meanwhile, the total number of students represents the size. Decentralization is covered as in NUTS3 classification (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics – used for member states of the EU). (Agasisti & Bianco 2007; in Barrioluengo & Flisi 2017.) The legal status defines general policies and activities toward the institutions for all types of universities: public, private, and private government-dependent institutions. Each institution will have different types of funding from government, funding for researches, and tuition fees. (Barrioluengo & Flisi 2017, 37-38.)

3.1.1 Finnish education quality

Consistently on the top of the world for education, in 2018, Finland again has been ranked as the 5th in the world, and as the 1st in the European Union according to the PISA rankings. Nine Finnish Universities also are listed in the top 1000 best universities in the world. (QS Top Universities 2020.) However, the Finnish educational system seems to be different from other high-ranking study destinations in Asia (for example, Japan, South Korea, or Singapore), when students can enjoy happiness with their education. Less stress and aggressive competitions for merits but still earning adequate knowledge and practical skills are advantages that students can receive from the education of this

country. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2020a.) In addition, the Finnish education quality and system from universities are also recognized at "equal operational conditions with world-class universities", while universities can enjoy their freedom of research, art, and teaching (Ministry of Education and Culture 2009). Distributing the significant structural reform since 2005 for the dual system of higher education, Finland aims to become a "home of high-quality education" for researches and sciences in 2025 that can attract more international mobility students. (Angelis & al. 2015, 6.)

No matter what kind of sex, financial situation, or native language people use, in Finland, everyone can still receive equal chances for their education (Edunation.co 2020). The quality of polytechnic sectors (known as Universities of Applied Sciences) has been under development with a two-stage reform since 2011. The Polytechnic Act (in 2013) and the New Polytechnics Act (in 2015) are released as regulatory amendments to boost the pace of the reform. There is a drop in the number of higher education institutions since 2009 because of the consolidations between institutions for more durable units and better quality and cost-efficiency profiles. (Angelis & al. 2015, 7.) Therefore, Finnish higher education can be more effective in delivering high-quality programmes and knowledge to students, as well as to adapt the regional intentions to create the "internationally competitive centres for science and technology" (European Commission 2016, 5).

More than 20,000 international students chose Finland as their education destination thanks to its world-class education system. Most of the international students in Finland for both universities and universities of applied sciences come from Russia, Vietnam (in total as 2447 in 2017), China, Nepal, and India. They account for 6.8% of students in the UASs system and 7% in universities. There is a significant decrease in Vietnamese students with new policies in tuition fees compared to years before 2017. (Finnish National Agency for Education 2018, 2-5.) However, the number of applicants from Vietnamese students is still being considered with high numbers in those recent years for various fields such as business, administrations, technology, ICT, and natural sciences. In 2019, the foreign applications mostly came from Bangladesh, Nigeria, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Ghana, and Vietnam (Finnish National Agency for education 2020a.)

Many English programmes for different fields and majors are offered for both Finns and international students (Edunation.co 2020). Although there was a slight decrease in the number of applicants for English teaching programmes from international students during the period 2016-2017, since 2018, the number has increased remarkably again. There are more than 25,000 applicants from abroad in 2019. (Finnish National Agency for education 2020a.) Despite the tuition fees, Finland is still being considered as an ideal study

destination. At the same time, its education system emphasizes equality, freedom, and flat hierarchy, which ensure each student receives equal chances to develop themselves. Modules are built based on the considerations for developing personal skills and knowledge, while students are encouraged for self-study, self-development, critical thinking, and problem-solving. (Educations.com 2019.)

EUR 6.8 billion budget is planned to invest in the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2020, which can be utilized to enhance the quality of education and increase wellbeing. Meanwhile, EUR 60 million will be reserved to support the core financing for higher education and EUR 337 million for research activities. Besides, there is also an increase in supported budget for student financial aid (being proposed at 618 million EUR) as student loan compensation expenditure and study grants. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2019.)

3.1.2   Education system

The Finnish national qualification framework consists of eight levels. Notably, its educational system respectively includes "early education and care", "pre-primary education", "primary education", "general upper secondary education", "vocational education", "higher education", "master's degree" and "doctoral degrees/ licentiate degrees". Compulsory education is made for children from 6 to 16 years old. Meanwhile, the 6-year-old students will have one-year pre-primary education and nine-year for primary education for children from 7 to 16 years old. There are three years later for the post-compulsory education based on student choice as the general upper secondary, vocational education, and the training. Respectively, the general upper secondary education will lead to the matriculation examination, vocational leads to the specialist vocational qualifications. (Finnish National Agency for education 2020b.) From 2021, compulsory education will be extended to the minimum aged 18, with the support from government reserved budgets (Ministry of Education and Culture 2019).

The education system for tertiary education in Finland is unique, comparing to many other countries when it combines two types of higher education: the universities and universities of applied sciences (UAS). Two types of higher education will engage in different learning activities, which leads to additional requirements for the later master's Degrees in both types of university. To be more specific, the universities engage more in education and scientific research. In contrast, the universities of applied sciences engage in applied research and development with the multi-field institutions of professional tertiary

education. The universities also have the right to award doctorates based on scientific research projects. (Vuorinen 2020.)
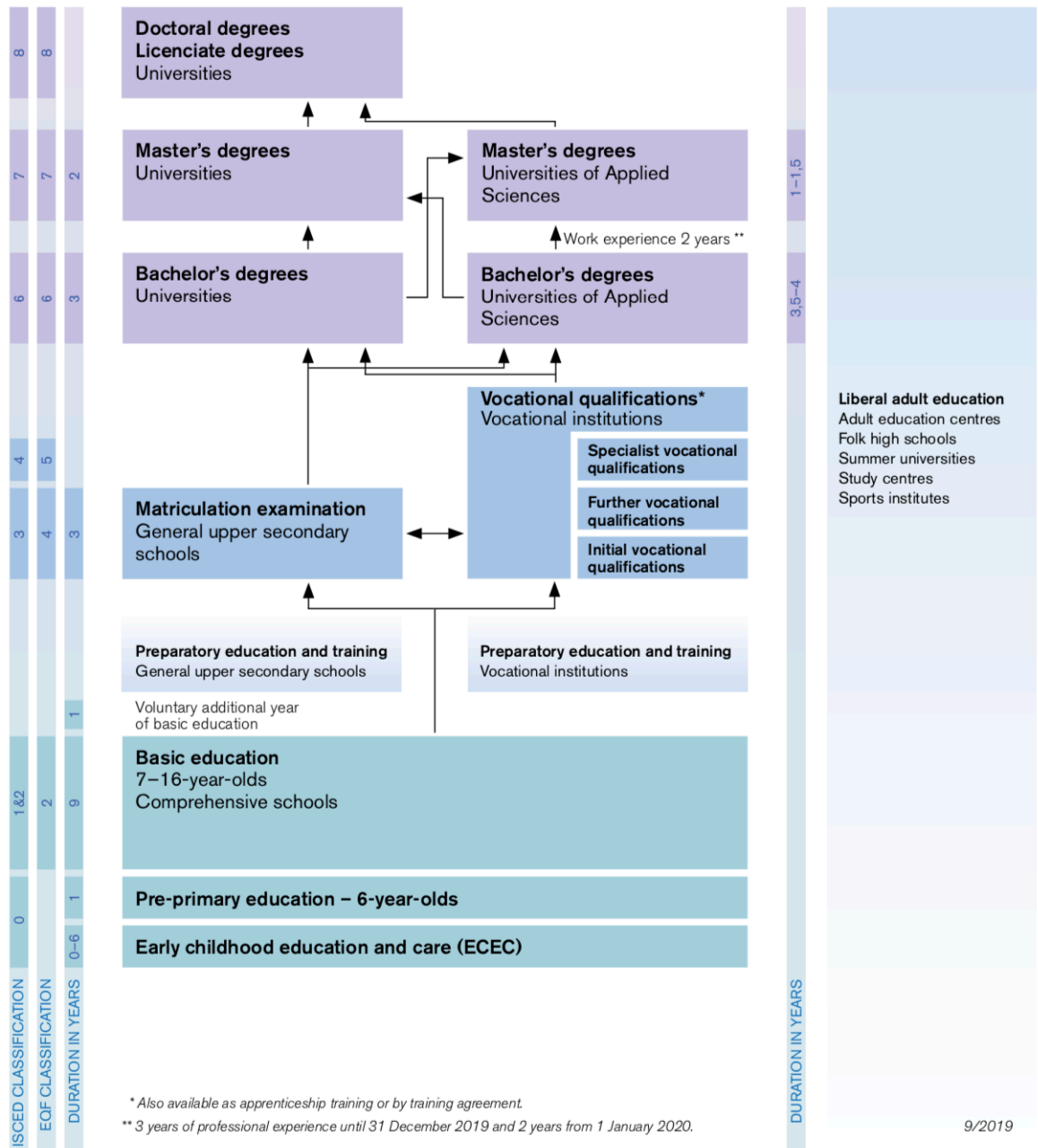
Figure 8. Finnish Education System. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2020b.)

In general, Finnish higher education consists of 13 universities and 22 universities of applied science (with a drop in the number of universities and UAS since 2009). Furthermore, Högskolan på Åland (Åland University of Applied Sciences) and the Police University College are the two new universities of applied sciences which are mandated by the Ministry. Universities are operated by the Ministry of Education and Culture's administrative branch under public law (except two corporations under the Foundation Act). Universities and universities of applied science are independent of their internal

administration's decisions and legal entities. (Kosunen 2020.) (Higher Institutions in Finland: Appendix 2).

The studying workload of tertiary students is calculated based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ETCS) with 1600 hours of studying, equivalent with 60 credits per academic year for the full-time study (Finnish National Agency for education 2020a). The universities and universities of applied sciences might offer the Bachelor's, Master's Degree as well as academic, artistic, and third-cycle postgraduate degrees for higher education with various and abundant professional programmes and degree modules. There is also professional education as open university programmes and other non-degree studies. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education and Culture takes responsibilities for activities, policies, implementation, and decision for the higher education system as well as contribute as a supporter of research activities. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2020c.)

For the citizens of European Union member states, the tertiary education is free of charge while the tuition fees are applied for those who do not belong to the EU, EEA or Switzerland, since August 2017. Some other exceptions will also be applied for those who hold the fixed resident permit or EU blue card. Meanwhile, different tuition fees are delivered by each university based on its policy for qualified candidates. A variety of scholarships and funding are offered for international students, who can adapt requirements for valid certifications and academic merits each year. Specific higher institutions with different degree programmes will require different annual tuition fees as well as various scholarship programmes. (Edunation 2020; Vuorinen 2020.)

Students can take the master's degree after the Bachelor' Degree or equivalent studies and continue for Doctoral and Licentiate's Degree after graduation. Since the beginning of 2020, two years of working experience will be required to continue for the master's degree at Universities of Applied Sciences. (Vuorinen 2020.)

3.1.3 Education facilities

In order to support studies and researches from institutions, libraries system has been established, including the National Library of Finland, the libraries of universities and universities of applied sciences, and also specialised libraries. In particular, the National Library of Finland, as a part of the national research structure, takes responsibility for the national publication heritage as well as the online library services for all library sectors. The National Library of Finland is connected with the University of Helsinki. University

libraries are supported and funded by the state; university libraries are public research libraries independent in making decisions relating to their financial situation. Each university owns and manages their libraries as well as information services. The last one is the specialised library as the library of Parliament, the Library of Statistics and libraries at research places, government agencies, and museums. (Vuorinen 2020.)

On many campuses, world-class laboratory systems and other modern technologies are offered to boost the effectiveness of research activities. Besides, leisure activities are also promoted as free member accesses to the institutions' amenities such as gyms, gaming clubs, swimming pools, and other leisure facilities. There are also discounts from the cafeterias and campus canteens for student membership with various options in food and beverage. (Finland University 2020a.)

3.1.4 Admission Process

The process from choosing the university to applying to the desired tertiary institutions might depend on students, while each of them experienced different ways to get knowledge about Finnish schools and degree programmes. In general, there are several portal sites where students can check references and research for admission information. For example, "Studyinfo.fi" site is quite common for international students, where they can access information about universities, their scholarships, tuition fees, degree programmes as well as requirements and period of applications. As a next step, all of the applications will be submitted and validated through a centralised system. (Edunation 2020; Studyinfo.fi 2020a.)

In order to start the online application, several required papers and documents need to be prepared, such as language certifications (IELTS and TOEFL are recommended), diplomas, and other official and valid translations for all certifications. Two types of applications can be chosen, in particular, the "joint application" with six study programmes option (one form) and the "separate application" with unlimited study programmes, but separate forms for each program and institution. International students (those who have to pay tuition fees) can also apply for the scholarship at the same time with their admission application. During the time of application, admission schedules and deadlines should be focused carefully. In addition, students might be required to take the entrance exam and also other aptitude tests. Therefore, preparations for this step are crucial to compete with other candidates for the study place. (Edunation 2020; StudyinFinland 2020a; Studyinfo.fi 2020a.)

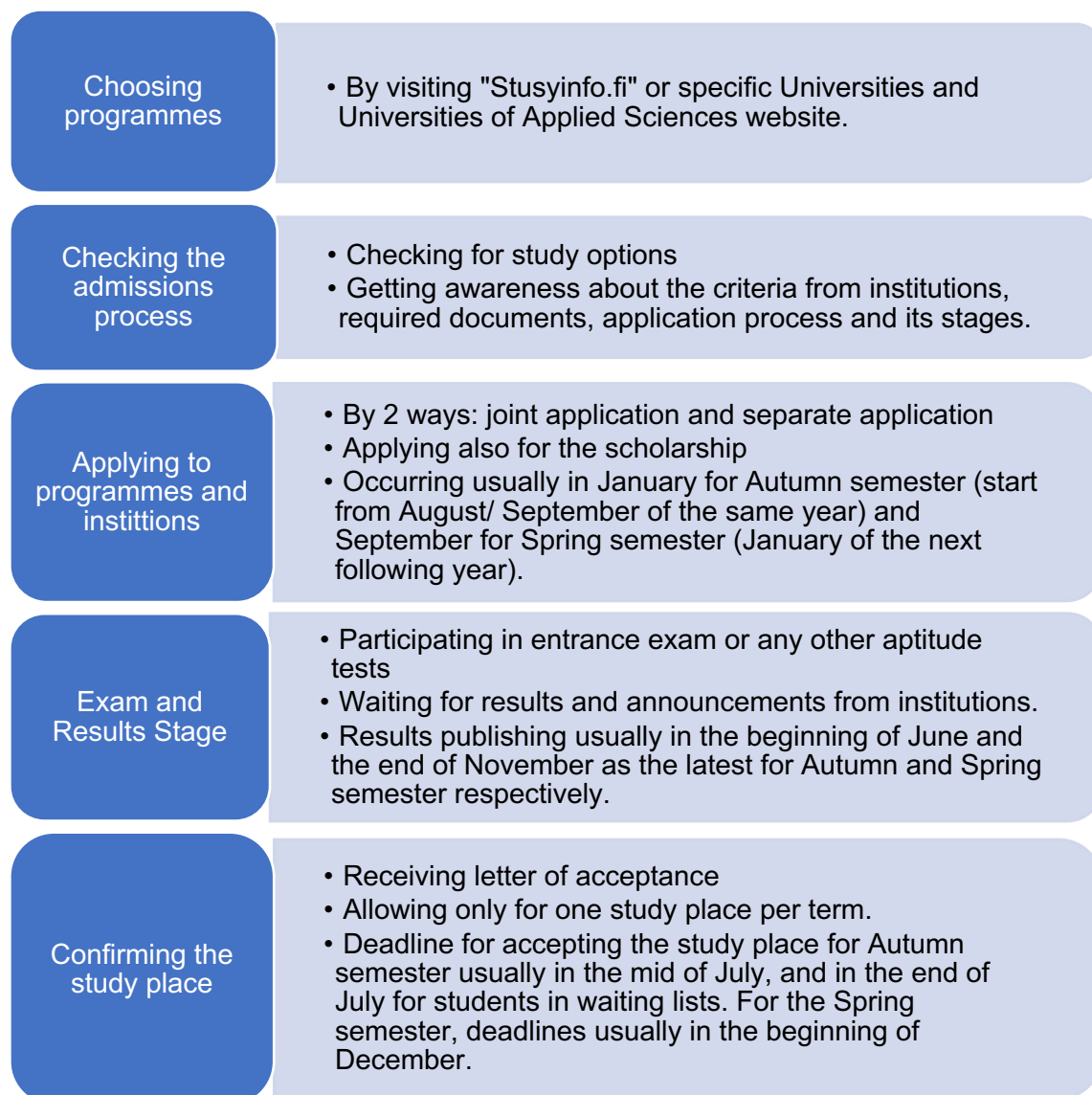|	
Choosing programmes	• By visiting "Stusyinfo.fi" or specific Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences website.
Checking the admissions process	• Checking for study options • Getting awareness about the criteria from institutions, required documents, application process and its stages.
Applying to programmes and instittions	• By 2 ways: joint application and separate application • Applying also for the scholarship • Occurring usually in January for Autumn semester (start from August/ September of the same year) and September for Spring semester (January of the next following year).
Exam and Results Stage	• Participating in entrance exam or any other aptitude tests • Waiting for results and announcements from institutions. • Results publishing usually in the beginning of June and the end of November as the latest for Autumn and Spring semester respectively.
Confirming the study place	• Receiving letter of acceptance • Allowing only for one study place per term. • Deadline for accepting the study place for Autumn semester usually in the mid of July, and in the end of July for students in waiting lists. For the Spring semester, deadlines usually in the beginning of December.

Figure 9. The common steps in admission process for English program in Finland and its timelines. (Studyinfo.fi 2020b; StudyinFinland.fi 2020a.)

Every year, there are several applications to both universities and universities of applied sciences in Finland. Meanwhile, only one-third of applicants are accepted based on strict requirements in language skills and other certifications. (Foreigner.fi 2019a; OECD 2019.) Students might be required to take the entrance exam and also other aptitude tests if needed. When the institutions accept students, the confirmations for the study place is needed before moving to the next step as submitting a mobility notification and applying for the student residence permit and starting a new journey in Finland. Students are allowed only one study to place confirmation between several offers. Therefore, when considering many programmes and institutions, students should wait for all of their results before making their decision. Deadlines should also be focused to avoid the late confirmation and the loss of study place. (Educations.com 2020; StudyinFinland 2020a.)

3.2 Factors associated with student mobility as regional attractiveness

Regional factors and characteristics should also be studied when considering the reasons why mobile degree students were attracted by their study destinations. Attracting international students at regional levels increases the number of skilled workforces, contributes to the country's growth with scientific achievements, professional researches, documents, and developments of the region. In addition, business networks and relationships between the two countries also have been consolidated. (Abella 2006; Docquier & Lodigiani 2010; Flisi & Murat 2011; Kuptsch & Pand 2006; OECD 2016.)
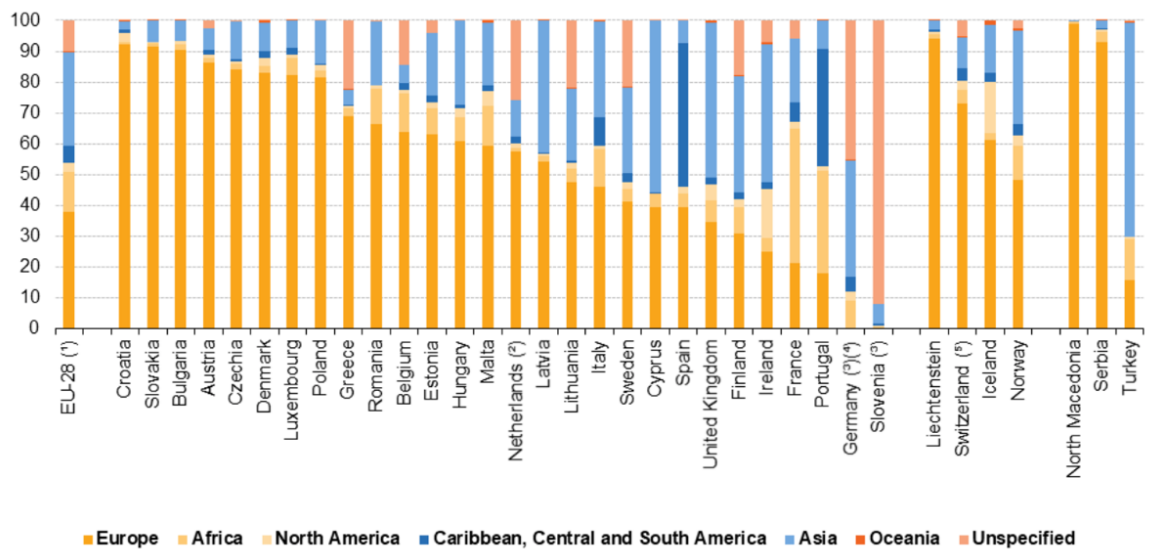

Figure 10. Share of tertiary education student from abroad by the continent of origin 2017, (Eurostat Statistics Explained 2020.)

Geographical factors that engage student mobility are also formed from two main reasons as the investment choice and consumption choice at regional aspects. The investment choice or human capital is considered when students move to another country to study. In this case, the cost of living will be added up to the total costs that students have to spend on their academic year in host countries. Besides, the cost of living will also demonstrate the socio-economic characteristic of the countries/ regions. According to Usher and Cervenna (2005) as well as Beine, Noel and Ragot (2014), international students have to spend a certain amount of money on accommodations and food service activities.

The cost of living, firstly, is affected by the population, density, and urbanization. Particularly, in the real world, statistics have shown that regions with high population density and more urbanization might lead to a higher cost of living. However, students tend to move to more urbanized regions where the infrastructure, transportation, and amenities and social activities are more convenient and vibrant for the lifestyle of young

people. In addition, big cities also bring more chances and job opportunities, which are expected to create more positive effects on students' mobility. The population or density of a region is calculated as the number of people per km2. (Barrioluengo & Flisi 2017, 38-39.)

Another factor that might influence the student decisions for their future study place is their future job opportunities and future income, especially for tertiary students. Besides improving their language skills, looking for a job in foreign countries is one of the main reasons international students are studying abroad. (European Commission 2016.) According to Barrioluengo and Flisi (2017, 39-40), the two main variables to evaluate future employability are the employment rates of graduated tertiary students (after graduating 1-2 years and no longer in any other education) and their expected earnings.

The education system at regional levels will be taken into consideration when students choose their study destination. Regions with high tertiary graduated rates, therefore, can engage more international mobile students. In addition, the two characteristics to examine the education systems are the number of top universities (based on THE ranking in specific region/ country) and the median level of the tertiary educational attainment. (Barrioluengo & Flisi 2017.)

Last but not least, the destination climate is also a factor that determines if study destinations are attractive enough or not. Harsh climate regions might affect student experiences during their studies, such as students' emotions, moods, and motivations. Potential students may take a deep analysis and research on the climate condition in their future host countries. Many pieces of research also depicted that warmer countries usually attract more students and migrants. For example, in 2010, Gozález, Mariel and Mesanza, showed in their research that there is a connection between the weather condition and students' choices for study destination. In particular, Erasmus students prefer Mediterranean countries for studying abroad than continental and oceanic ones. (Barrioluengo & Flisi 2017, 43; Study International 2018.)

3.2.1 Finnish culture and society

As a part of Northern Europe, Finland possesses both the wild beauty of nature and modern beauty from development. The native languages that are mostly used in Finland are Finnish and Swedish. However, the third unofficial language is English, that most Finnish people can communicate efficiently. (Edunation 2020.) Thanks to the high quality

and great educational system, Finland has become a popular destination for international students.

Meanwhile, geographical factors play an essential role in attracting international students, especially while Finland is considered one of the most peaceful countries in the world with a low crime rate and happiness index. In March 2020, Finland again surpasses other countries with a three-peat to become the world's happiest country, even though it does not have the highest GDP among countries. It can be said that social safety net, personal freedom with the work-life balance, and excellent well-being benefits are the main factors that made Finland a better place to live. (Aknin & al. 2020; Broom 2019; Educations.com 2019; Edunation 2020.) Recently, the Finnish government also concentrate more on improving higher well-being and healthcare standard by encouraging leisure and social activities, as well as the active lifestyle, especially for the young generation. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2019.)

Finland is well known as a quite introverted society where small talk is not considered, and silence in conversation is something not rare. Finns are shy and reserved but warm and friendly inside when people can gain trust and confidence with each other. People from different regions are respected to practice their beliefs, even though religious activities are usually private and invisible in daily life. Traditional cuisine is also distinctive with various Finnish dishes and feature ingredients. Cafeteria from universities is usually affordable for students to enjoy with abundant choices. Morover, mentioning the clean and fresh country, the Finnish tap water can be seen as the purest in the world. (Finland University 2020b.)

3.2.2 Living costs and amenities

In order to apply for the student visa, students (those come from non-EU/EEA countries) need to prove their financial resources and the means of support during the period of living. In particular, while nowadays the resident permit is valid for two years (except some other reasons for a shorter period), applicants need to have 13,440 EUR at the bank account (as at least 560 EUR per month for the cost of living) as well as the funds/ grants to cover the tuition fees. Moreover, insurance is also required to cover costs for medical and pharmaceutical expenses during the time staying in Finland (which can cover up to 40,000 EUR per year). After receiving the official letter of confirmation from the institution, students are recommended to apply as soon as possible for the resident permit, arrange suitable insurance policy, prove the financial situation, grants, and funds as well as start the housing application. (migri.fi 2020; StudyinFinland 2020a.)

Firstly, mentioning the living budget and monthly spending for an international student in Finland is about 700 – 1000 EUR. The costs will be spent on food and accommodations, transport as basic usages and for entertainment and leisure activities. For the first time in Finland, the costs will be added up more as a settling budget, while students have to spend more on essential items, to start their new journey in a new country. For housing and accommodation, the rent may be about 300 – 600 EUR for student housing and around 500 – 800 EUR for private housing. The average amount of spending money on food will range from 200 – 300 EUR and costs for transportations is at 60 EUR. Free/ low study materials can be seen as a big advantage for students when studying in Finland while borrowing from the national library system or institutional libraries. (Haaga-Helia 2020c.)

However, during the study, the cost of living might be cheaper for students, while there are many policies as student discounts. In particular, owning a student card or international membership cards (for example, Erasmus cards) will allow students to get discounts for buying stuff, and meal discounts at student restaurants or partners of those organizations. The cost of transportation will also be cheaper when students sign up for monthly travel cards (depending on specific regions, and as a 50% discount in the Helsinki metropolitan area). Payments are mostly made by cards while stores accept international card payments such as Visa, Mastercard, and debit card. It is also easy for international students to create a Finnish bank account with various brand choices as Aktia, Nordea, OP-Pohjola, and Danske Bank. (Haaga-Helia 2020c; StudyinFinland 2020b.)

In the period 2020-2023, the Government will also invest additional financing for the national digital system (around 1.2 million EUR) in order to facilitate the civil works in the new digital era (Ministry of Education and Culture 2019).

3.2.3 Job opportunities

Considering part-time jobs, they can assist students in covering part of the cost of living in Finland. According to the law, why studying in Finland, international students are allowed to work part-time jobs during the period of studying (as resident permit type B). On average, students can work a maximum of 25 hours per week with a high-paid range of salary. Meanwhile, during the vacation, students are allowed to work for full-time jobs (for example, in the summer holidays). Besides, services offices of Finnish universities also provide career services, job searches, or connections with work providers that can help

students in finding even a student job or full-time positions after graduating. After graduating, international students can have chances to look for a job or start their own business in Finland with an extended one-year job-seeking visa. (migri.fi 2020; infofinland.fi 2020a.)

The language might be a significant obstacle for international students when seeking a permanent job in the country. However, there are more and more jobs without any requirements for Finnish and Swedish language skills. The statistics in June 2019 depicted that, in Finland, 27.3% foreign workforce is unemployed, while the national unemployment rate is 6.2%. Meanwhile, foreign workers usually focus more on three central provinces, such as Uusimaa or Helsinki region, Southwest Finland or Turku, and their surroundings; Pirkanmaa or the Tampere area, where the highest number is in the Uusimaa region. (Foreigner.fi 2019b.) However, there are also much assistance from Finnish government service websites for information about job opportunities as well as services for job seeking. In particular, The Finnish labour administration websites provide employment information, labour-management services, required licenses, training tips, and various employment opportunities. Some website services can be listed as the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment website, Job in Finland, EURES Portal, TE Services, etc. (Finland University 2020a; infofinland.fi 2020b.)

3.2.4   Challenges

Studying abroad and starting an independent life for the first time will be a great experience for anyone, but it also contains many difficulties for young students. According to Wendoff (2013), the top five challenges that international students have to deal with include the feeling of left out, the language barriers, difficulties in managing the financial situation with the difference in currencies, cultural misunderstanding, and living without familiar support network (as also homesickness). Another research from Gebhard (2013) also pointed out that EFL learners (English as Foreign Language), especially Asian students usually have to deal with the differences in linguistics, cultural shock, and social rules for interacting. In particular, cultural shocks might lead to various negative emotions and behaviours as loneliness, disorientation, and also isolation with other people. In addition, psychological factors are also considered, as students also need to handle stress, anxiety, depression, and other emotional problems. (Gebbrad 2013, 3; Wendroff 2013.)

In 2020, Finland has been placed on top "Good Country Index" with a high score in various metrics, from science & technology, culture, planet & climate to health &

wellbeing. In particular, surpassing other candidates, it became a winner in many categories as press freedom, cybersecurity, foreign direct investment (FDI), and especially their contribution to humanity. (The Good Country 2020.) However, in the category "Easy of settling index" for expats, Finland is not quite a country for socializing and making friends, especially with local people. Finns people are also known as the most "rational and distant" among European countries. Besides, leisure and recreational activities are still insufficient and quite expensive, which may affect social interaction in general. (Helsinki Times 2019.)

4 Marketing in higher education

Nicolescu (2009) stated that in many countries, including Finland, education is a non-profit sector; thus, the marketing concepts may act differently from the business sector. Maringe (2005) proposed the CORD model (Contextualization, Organization, and co-ordination, Research and Development) designed for higher education marketing strategy. (Maringe 2005 in Gibbs and Maringe 2008).
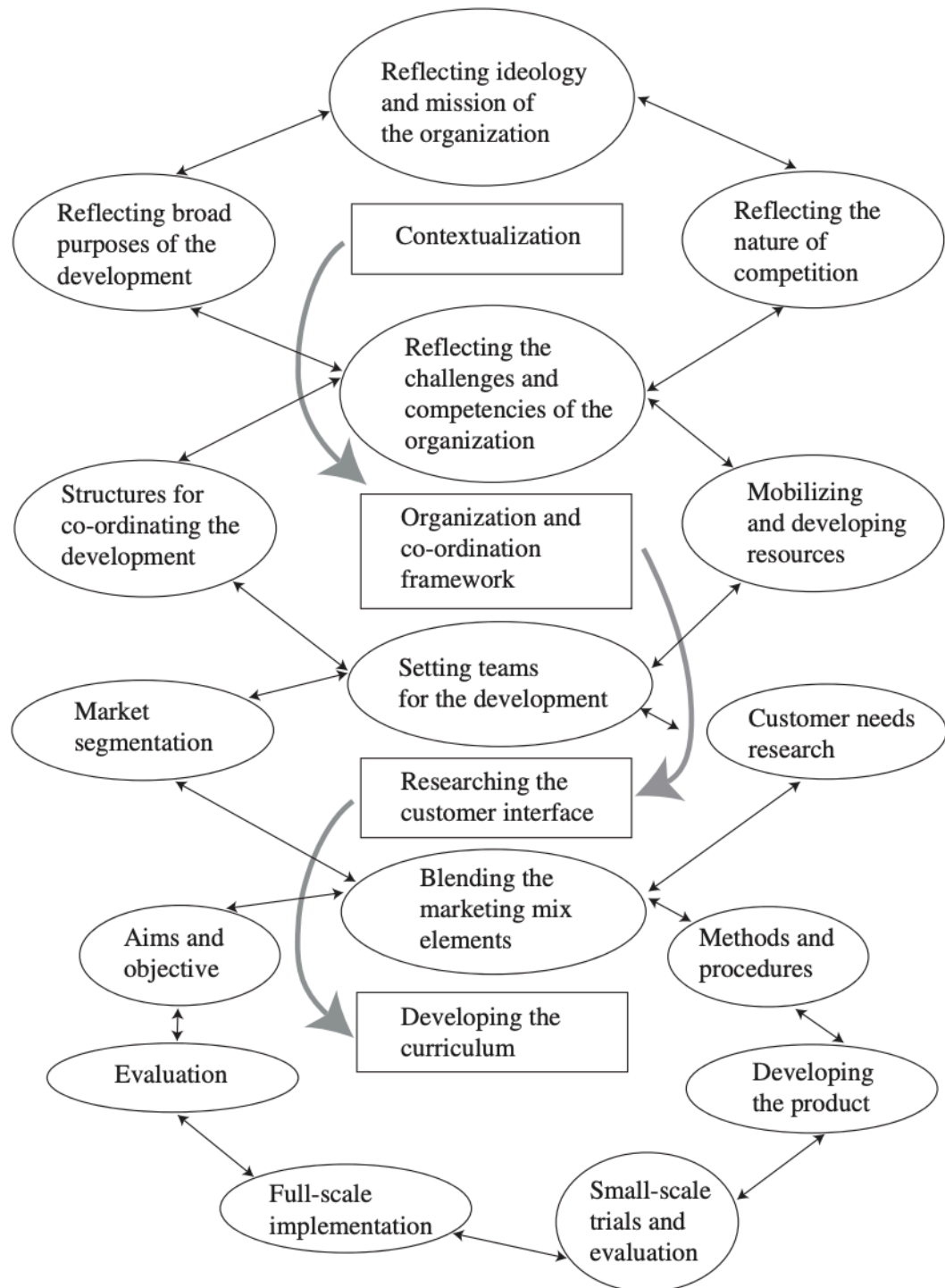

Figure 11. The CORD model of marketing strategy. (Gibbs and Maringe 2008.)

Contextualization is the initial step of the process, which provides "a deeper understanding and appreciation of the relevance of any proposed solutions." The phase comprises four aspects: Reflecting the broad purposes of development, reflecting on the ideology and mission of the organization, reflecting on the challenges and competencies of the organization, and reflecting on the nature of competition.

Organization and co-ordination framework aim to "strengthen the frail organizational framework for marketing" and "to give the marketing function a more conspicuous presence than it currently possesses."

Researching the customer interface introduces three key questions to obtain customer satisfaction in tertiary education: "Who are the customers? Which customers are we going to serve, and why? How best can we meet the needs of these customers?"

Developing the curriculum is "the core business of the university." It is the issue raised by the question of how best we can meet the needs of customers.

4.1 B2B Marketing

Various marketing strategies have been applied to promote the universities' images and awareness, not only for students from the host countries but also for international students worldwide. Different from the B2C method, while tertiary institutions can focus directly on their prospective candidates, the B2B method can assist universities through the co-operation with other partners to promote themselves. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017.)

Even though the Finnish education quality is at a high-level, it is still necessary to enhance the visibility and export its competences internationally through joint marketing. In particular, in order to expand the networks, Finnish educational parties planned for co-operation with other research institutions and partners in terms of education, researches, and innovation as joint sciences and researches projects. Therefore, it can assist in building the Finnish higher education's reputation and boosting its position in the global market. Currently, existing networks have been established between Finland and some other regions such as the United States, China, India, Japan, Vietnam, Singapore, Korea, and other countries from southern/ western regions. Connecting and maintaining with Finnish alumni or Finnish experts living abroad also encourage the connections and co-operations with other administrative branches. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017.)

The use of higher education agencies also becomes popular recently. Even though each institution has its marketing department, it is still complicated to manage in different markets, especially when attracting international students in various countries. Meanwhile, oversea agents can also provide adequate information for parents and students while they usually lack knowledge about international education as well as processes and requirements for applications. Paying an amount of money for agents, therefore, becomes a good solution. (Obaje 2014.) On the contrary, universities can build the relationship with local agencies with legal contracts and commission agreements, that can help them approach more international students through various marketing methods (based on the agencies and the local tastes). However, the reputation of agents might affect the candidates' confidencs and trust as well as their overall experience of studying abroad. (Obaje & Vaan-Cauter 2014.)

Several Vietnamese agencies are promoting about Finland, the Finnish education and its higher institutions to Vietnamese students, such as INEC, Edulinks, Taaleed, Visco, New Ocean, etc. Tertiary institutions in Finland also cooperate with specific agencies to optimize their recruitment process, for example, Haaga-Helia UAS and its partner – Edulinks (Haaga-Helia 2020d). In addition, there are also connections with Vietnamese universities for jointly bachelor's degree programmes as well as increase the Finnish presence to broader students. Besides, Finland Pathway is a new program with the participation of Haaga-Helia UAS and Jyvaskyla (JAMK) UAS, together with Van Lang University in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. (Haaga-Helia 2020b.) This kind of program allows students to study for one year in their home country three years later in Finland, which will let them adapt better with Finnish education and prepare well for studying abroad. Therefore, it is also a way to introduce more about Finland as well as turn Finland become an option in the Vietnamese students' list of considerations for their study destination.

Other projects were launched by Finnish institutions to enhance the partnership and co-operation with schools and associations in Vietnam. For instance, the BOOST project from JAMK University of Applied Sciences, HAMK UAS, and partners in Vietnam (Jamk.fi services 2020.); and the tailor-made programmes offered by Tampere University and the collaboration with member universities (Tampere University 2019.). Besides, another marketing method is applying by institutions such as the use of student testimonials. In particular, students create blog posts and videos to share their studies and life in Finland as well as experiences and tips for the newbie. Therefore, potential students can have a

big overview and gain knowledge of their desired study major, institutions, and amenities in Finland. (Haaga-Helia 2020e; University of Tampere 2020; Karelia 2020.)

4.2 B2C Marketing

The authors propose several B2C marketing concepts for HEIs based on the analysis in chapter two about the push and pull factors of studying abroad of Vietnamese students as well as the information collected from Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Finland.

One of the biggest concerns of Vietnamese students in selecting the universities is the financial problem, for instance, tuition fees, scholarship, and living costs. Thus, value-pricing strategies and branding proposition should be incorporated. It is essential to understand the relationship between price and value from students and their families' perspectives. Gibbs and Maringe (2008) proposed a matrix revealing that most institutions offer the balance of price and value, exclusive of other factors. While the government usually determines the cost, "the value of good higher education" can be defined by HEIs themselves. Students are willing to disburse for "what they perceive as quality and better job prospects". The importance is how to shape and deliver the idea of a relative quality image to consumers. According to Gibbs and Maringe (2008), a competitive price does not help draw students internationally in terms of the higher education sector. Hence, branding strategies are adapted to attract students and build loyalty (Nicolescu 2009). A typical example is the German education branding proposition, which focuses on the quality of study programmes; good value for money and not cheap study programmes, reliability, personal success, and individualism, modern but not trendy. A well-branded institution is more outstanding than competitors and may have "a barrier to entry". It means that the pricing policy of the institution can be more flexible. (Gibbs and Maringe 2008, 120-133.) On the other hand, multiple stakeholders of a higher education organization can create a challenge for branding strategy because of the inconsistency of brand images (Nicolescu 2009).

Hall and Witek (2015) suggested that social media plays an important role among universities' inbound marketing instruments. They are considered "key components of the university communication with stakeholders". Besides, social media is an effective tool to connect with students due to the high intensity of usage among this age range. The number of platforms can be at least three (Clark, Fine, & Scheuer 2016). Many universities are using different platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, to gain popularity. (Clark, Fine, & Scheuer 2016; Brech, Ivens, Messera, Scheeb,

Rauschnabel 2017.) There is a reciprocal relationship between universities' reputation or brand image and the size of followers on social media (Brech et al.). It was reported that in 2017, 62 million Vietnamese were active on social media for an average time of 2.5 hours and had approximately ten accounts (BMI 2020c). Facebook users in Vietnam were predicted to reach 45.3 million in 2019 (Statista 2019). On the other hand, the number of people can be reached via ads on Instagram, on LinkedIn, and on Twitter were 6.2 million, 2.6 million, and 684,500, respectively. Notably, 71% of users watch videos on a daily basis (BMI 2020c). Consequently, HEIs need to develop social media marketing and select the appropriate channels and contents to attract students.

5   Research Methodology

In this chapter, research methods will be selected to serve the thesis' aims. The research procedures, questions' constructions will also be referenced based on experts' recommendations and guidelines.

5.1   Research paradigms

Quantitative research aims to provide an objective depiction of phenomena in which the researcher's biases are eliminated (James, Taylor & Williams 2010, 52). Andreas (2012, 1) claims that small-scale surveys can be used to study the behaviours of a specific group. However, James, Taylor and Williams (2010, 52) added that quantitative methods "cannot address the full range of problems in the behavioural sciences." Meanwhile, the open questions in interview methods can furnish the detail of interviewees' experiences, opinions, and personal perspectives, which may fill the missing data in a survey (Rubin & Rubin 2012, 3). Hence, the integration of qualitative and quantitative paradigms is applied in this paper.

5.1.1   Qualitative research method

According to Trumbull and Watson (2010), the qualitative method is inductive and aims to depict multiple realities, human experience, develop the insight of an issue or the perspective of participants. The study focused on the full context and implemented interactively with the participants. The data is collected face-to-face from participants, which is predominantly interpretative and descriptive. (Trumbull and Watson 2010, 62-65).

There are four data-collecting approaches in qualitative research: 1) Participant observation, 2) documentary analysis, 3) in-depth interviews, and 4) conversational and narrative analysis. In particular, the interview method comprises four categories, which are focus group, internet interviews, casual conversation, and in-passing clarifications, semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Rubin & Rubin 2012, 26-31). Patton (2002) suggested that interviews can obtain the experiences, points of view, feelings, and comprehension of respondents (Patton 2002 in Trumbull and Watson 2010, 63). Thus, in this paper, authors select an in-depth interview method, specifically, semi-structured interviews.

5.1.2 Quantitative research method – Survey Method

Quantitative research has been used to examine phenomena in a measurable way, associated with testing theories and hypotheses based on deductive methods. The data itself has been demonstrated in the form of numbers and statistics, while the research finding will be presented in statistical language from the large population attendants. As a consequence, it may miss contextual detail, but avoiding personal bias influences (J James, Taylor & Williams 2010, 52.) In other words, the quantitative research approach interprets the relationship and correlation among and between internal and external factors (as variables) as well as how they can control the phenomena. Quantitative researches can be distributed by surveys that are being created by a structured questionnaire from closed-ended to forced-choice questions to a large group of people. (James, Taylor & Williams 2010 52; Kananen, 2013.)

The quantitative research method can assist researchers in delivering objective measurements with relevant statistical numbers and hard data as well as testing hypotheses and explaining variables. A list of behaviours that need to be observed and measured will be predetermined and administered with procedures and scales for observations as instruments to access. In addition, researchers also need to familiarize with the paradigm of the quantitative research, including (1) defining the research problem as well as questions and scales for observation, (2) collecting data in the form of numerical statistics, (3) analysing data by using coding process /or the mathematical process, and (4) explaining and evaluating statistical terminologies. (Creswell 2012, 13-16.) As the primary purpose of any research, data collection should be objective, and conducted measures should adopt the expected research topic while ensuring validity and reliability. (Creswell 2012; Golafshani 2003.)

5.2 Data collection methods and their constructions

The combination of different data collection methods is applied for gathering better and more accurate in-depth data. In order to generate suitable questionnaires for each method, consulting guidelines and advice are necessary before distributing questions to the respondents.

5.2.1 Online survey

There are different methods for researchers to conduct the survey, such as face-to-face method, mail, telephone, or by computer to self-administered or administered

questionnaires with the assistants of computers, phones, or websites as touch-screen surveys. However, unlike qualitative research, which can be exploited in-depth details from open questions, surveys can lack probe answers and contain potential bias. In particular, when the surveys are delivered to the shared characteristic group of people, statistics and figures cannot represent as a whole. (James, Taylor & Williams, 52-54.)

Questionnaires can be sent to the respondents by e-mail or later evolution method as Web surveys (with the involvement of the Internet and the use of World Wide Web). Those data collection methods are defined as the computerized self-administered questionnaires (CSQA). (Couper & al., 149-153.) The revolution of information technology creates more chances for researchers to approach their potential target respondents with efficient cost, broader audiences as well as faster and more responses. Meanwhile, online surveys require fewer interactions between interviewers and respondents, which might affect the quality of data collection, particularly, which might lead to a lack of encouragement for completing questionnaires with accurate responses. Nevertheless, the degree of privacy might be compromised with the confidentiality of data collection. On the other hand, with the utility of technology, evaluation and measurement errors can be reduced. However, it might come to new issues as programming errors and computerized-related other problems. (Couper & al., 153-157.)

For this reason, the online survey, particularly, the web survey method, has been considered to conduct the data collection. (Couper & al., 158-159.)

Designed survey questions are planned to distribute to Vietnamese students who studied/ are studying in Finland (before and after 2017 with two types of tuitions and scholarships). It will also be expected to receive more than 100 anonymous responses from the Vietnamese students who are studying/ have studied in Finland. As mentioned above, the main questions that are used as the direction for designing the survey will include:
(1) What are the factors that motivate Vietnamese students to study in Finland?
(2) What is the level of Vietnamese students' satisfaction while studying in Finland? (to what extend)
(3) What are the intentions of the future career of Vietnamese students after experiencing higher education in Finland?
(4) What are the effective ways to attract more Vietnamese students?

The survey questions are designed relied on principles and guidelines from Couper & al. (2009, 242-252.) Firstly, survey items can be created in various formats. Researchers can focus more on three most common ones as (1) Open-ended questions with numerical

answers, (2) Closed questions with ordered response scale and (3) Close questions with categorical response scale. (Couper & al., 237.) Meanwhile, survey questions are also separated into three main types as (1) Non-sensitive questions about behaviours, (2) Sensitive questions about behaviour, and (3) Attitude questions. (Couper & al., 242-252.) While each type of questions may lead to different issues, concentrations when creating questionnaires are required for eliciting more accurate answers.

For the non-sensitive questions about behaviour, the wording of questions is taken into consideration as it requires specific and adequate details, explicit response options, and understandable language. Therefore, it can enhance the comprehensibility as well as reduce the errors of interpretation across audiences. In addition, by separating many subcategories and providing retrieval cues can assist researchers in recalling respondents' memories for accurate answers. (Couper & al., 243-246.) With sensitive questions about behaviour, open questions can be used to increase its effectiveness when collecting data. The level of sensitivity when conducting questions should also be emphasised. (Couper & al., 246-248.)

Another common type of question used for the survey is attitude questions. Guidelines have been acquired and focused on the wording of questions, questions orders, and the format of response scales. When conducting questions, firstly, the attitude objects should be demonstrated clearly and avoid double-barrelled questions or check-all-that-apply items. Closed questions are also recommended for this type of question. Moreover, verbally labelled scale points are suggested from five-to seven-point responses to avoid the loss of information or overload cognition when the scale is fewer or more. Ranking tasks are sometimes applied to compare objects. (Couper & al., 246-248.)

Considering the Web survey using, researchers also need to focus on guidelines for the self-administered questionnaires. Adjustments and navigations for visual elements, visual guides, and format forms are considered carefully to ensure the smooth flow when conducting questionnaires online. (Couper & al., 251-252.)

Google Form will be utilized as a way for authors to distribute the questionnaires online. A list of questions will be organized in logical orders with suitable navigations to ensure respondents will be directed to related questions for themselves. Processes for designing the surveys as well as checking for possible faults and technical mistakes will be carefully processed before distributing the survey. As mentioned above, the online survey will be shared in the "WTF – Welcome to Finland" group on Facebook, which is the group for the Vietnamese student community in Finland. Currently, the group has more than 22 000

members as students, alumni from different starting study times, and some parents and students who would like to study in Finland in the future. However, to support the topic of the thesis, the author will focus on Vietnamese student who did experience the Finnish education before and after 2017 (with changes in tuition fees requirements), either they are studying or have studied.

5.2.2 Semi-structured interview

Rubin and Rubin (2012, 5) claim that in-depth interviewing studies are commonly used in education, business, marketing field, etc. There are three kinds of interviewing methods: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews. Semi-structured and unstructured are typically "extended conversation between researcher and interviewee." However, a predetermined number of study questions are prepared in a semi-structured interview, and the follow-up questions are included. On the other hand, the questions in unstructured interviews are spontaneity and in response to the interviewees' answers, which follows a general topic (Rubin & Rubin 2012, 31). Compared to the unstructured and structured interview, the semi-structured method allows respondents to share the details that are considered vital to them freely. Meanwhile, researchers can control and guide the answers to the topic and issues that they deem significant (Brinkmann 2013, 21).

The interview is designed following the principles of Rubin and Rubin (2012). The questions are implemented in English; however, interviewees can choose to answer in Vietnamese or English. At the beginning of the interview construction, the authors identify the topics that cannot be fully elucidated by close-ended questions from the online survey. Those topics require a deep understanding, which will clarify "the hows of human action and experience" (Brinkmann 2013, 49). Main questions, follow-ups, and probes are defined subsequently based on the chosen issues. The construction of main questions comprises three basic approaches following authors' experience or knowledge, theoretical and context review and preliminary research (documentary analysis). The next step is to order the main question by classifying broader and narrower questions. It is suggested that broader questions should be asked first; thus, the detail can be studied logically, and the responses will not be restricted later. The process of creating and wording probes is executed afterward. Lastly, follow-up questions are established. After completing the questionnaire, four Vietnamese students are selected as interviewees: (1) graduated student who lives and works in Finland, (2) graduated student who came back and works in Vietnam, (3), graduated student who lives and works in other countries (rather than Finland or Vietnam) (4) ungraduated student finding a job in Finland. Subject number one

and two experienced Finnish higher education before the tuition fee policy is applied. Interviewees are found through the Facebook group "Welcome to Finland" of Vietnamese students. The interview can be conducted through Skype or Messenger and recorded by authors and then translated into English. (Rubin & Rubin 2012, 116 - 169.)

5.3   Data analysis

The data obtained from the qualitative interview is evaluated by using the thematic analysis method. Braun and Clarke (2006) describes thematic analysis as "a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data." There are six fundamental phases of the analysis process. Firstly, familiarise with the data by repeating reading the data actively to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of the content. In the case of verbal data, the interview is first recorded and then transformed into a transcript. Secondly, generating initial codes is to delineate and identify citations in the text (code), which have a consistent pattern or concept. Initial codes are considered the most basic raw data elements that are organised into meaningful groups. Thirdly, searching for themes is the process of specifying potential topics. The coded data from the second phase are sorted, and different codes can be combined to shape an overarching theme. The fourth phase is to review and filter the themes, and the thematic map is created afterward. The next phase begins when the map is completed. The authors will describe and further refine the themes. Lastly, the closing phase encompasses "the final analysis and write-up of the report." (Braun and Clarke 2006.)

According to Couper & al. (2009, 330-336), six different processing steps are processed after the web survey data collection. The data firstly will be gathered into electronic files with the edits for any faults of a data record. After that, answers from respondents will be turned into numeric data as the coding step. Any missing data or inconsistencies will also be adjusted to deal with harmful effects and omissions from differential selection probabilities, noncoverage, and nonresponse. The weighting of data records and imputation will be required to reduce bias from missing data and attribute to statistical estimation. Sampling variance estimation can be applied to measure variable error, reflect the stratification, clustering, and multi-sample selection.

Translating and summarizing non-numeric material from data collection to numeric data is an important and complex task for any researcher. Meanwhile, non-numeric data can include text materials and visual elements such as pictures, videos, sounds, and even physical samples that need to be described in some specific surveys. Couper & al. (2009, 332-333) recommended that researchers should build a "code structure" or "code list" that

can assist in classifying different types of materials for measuring as well as avoiding inconsistencies between data. All of the responses need to be handled for all cases, including "uninformative" data (for example, by accessing other related and previous questions as a cause). (Couper & al., 331-344.)

5.4   Validity and reliability

The definition and criteria of validity and reliability are aimed to assure the creditability of the research. According to Kananen (2013), validity is the consistency of the research results, while validity ensures researchers examine trustworthy things (Kananen 2013, 176). Several scholars added the delineations of validity and reliability. Bernard (2000) claims that it is "the accuracy and trustworthiness of instruments, data, and findings in research." (Bernard 2000 in Guest, MacQueen & Namey 2014). Meanwhile, the definition of reliability can be different between the qualitative method and quantitative method. For example, in quantitative research, the reliability is presented through the study's stability or replicability based upon the same context, instruments, and groups of respondents. On the other hand, the reliability in qualitative research "is regarded as a fit between what researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched." (Oluwatayo 2012, 391-395)

In a qualitative interview, the interviewees may feel more confident and open when they respond in Vietnamese. Thus, the interviewer will keep recordings of the interview and translate those that are answered in Vietnamese. All records are transformed into transcripts and forwarded to the interviewee. The contents of the transcripts need to be reassured that they match the interviewee's perspectives. Excellent quality of results should be objective, reliable, and valid in data information. In the case of online surveys, validity firstly requires the accuracy and transparency from the set of trials, which means each respondent should administrate only one trial. After that, validity can be measured by checking the correlation between responses with external data (for example, records, from individual reactions to statistics on the target population) and to other survey questions and theoretical expectations. Before checking the reliability, objectivity should be considered, which can ensure that the results were not affected by any other irrelevant, unrelated factors. Therefore, the reliability of the data can be checked by the repeatability of the results (the same questions with the same result each and every time). The consistency of answers across the survey is also needed to be focused on reducing the response bias. (Couper & al., 274-287.)

The questionnaire and interview questions were piloted with two to three students to examine the clarity of questions' meaning, format, and layout.

6 Results

The chapter analyses and summarises results and findings from the online survey and semi-structured interview. The questionnaire was distributed through the Facebook group of the Vietnamese student community in Finland. In total, there are 134 responses, and four interviews are implemented. Both of the results will be combined and arranged following the research questions: (1) What are the factors that motivate Vietnamese students to study in Finland? (2) What is the level of Vietnamese students' satisfaction while studying/studied in Finland? (3) What are the intentions of the future career of Vietnamese students after experiencing higher education in Finland? (4) What are the effective ways to attract more Vietnamese students? The open-ended answers from the online survey are attached in the appendix.

6.1 Research subjects

The target group is Vietnamese students who experienced Finnish higher education and life in Finland. The tuition fee policy was applied in Autumn 2017; thus, the results below will be compared between students who came to Finland before 2017 and from 2017 onwards. However, the limitation is that authors cannot identify the selections of students starting their studies in Spring 2017 and did not have to pay tuition fees. In the beginning, participants were asked to choose the higher education institutions and the year in which their studies start. Among 134 respondents (N), 24 students were studying at universities and 110 students at Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS). The number of students started their studies before 2017, and from 2017 onwards were 93 (n1) and 41 (n2), respectively. In particular, 41 percent of the UAS students and 60 percent of the University students had studied in Finland since 2017.
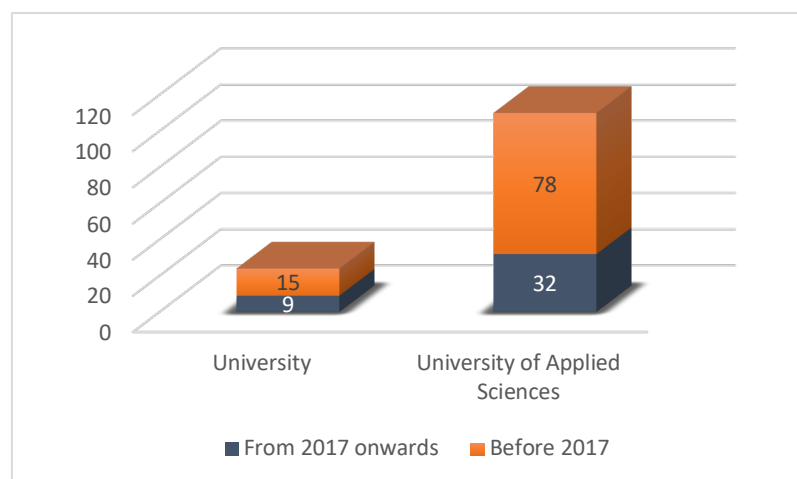
Figure 12. Respondents' higher education institutions. (N=134).

Four interview subjects are from different UAS, and their studies began before 2017. The first interviewee studied BBA degree and graduated from Karelia UAS (Joensuu) and currently works in Netherland. The second interviewee studied BA degree in Xamk UAS (Mikkeli) and came back to Vietnam after graduating. Interviewee number three, who studied IT degree in Metropolia UAS (Espoo), is now working in Finland. The last interviewee is currently studying in Saimaa UAS (Lappeenranta).

6.2 The motivations of Vietnamese students

In the first section, the motivations to study abroad of Vietnamese students were ascertained. The factors were ranked in order of importance from 1 to 5 (5 is the most important, 1 is the least important). Three factors had the highest average scores: obtaining international working, studying, and living experience (avg.= 4.6), enhancing career opportunities and better future salary (avg. = 4.3), and the chance of living independently (avg.= 4.3). The last two factors were improving language skills (avg. = 4.2), and courses and degree programmes overseas are better than local (avg. = 3.9). Other factors comprised the desire to obtain international networks, traveling around European countries, and a good place for health. The semi-structured interviews show the same motivations as listed above.
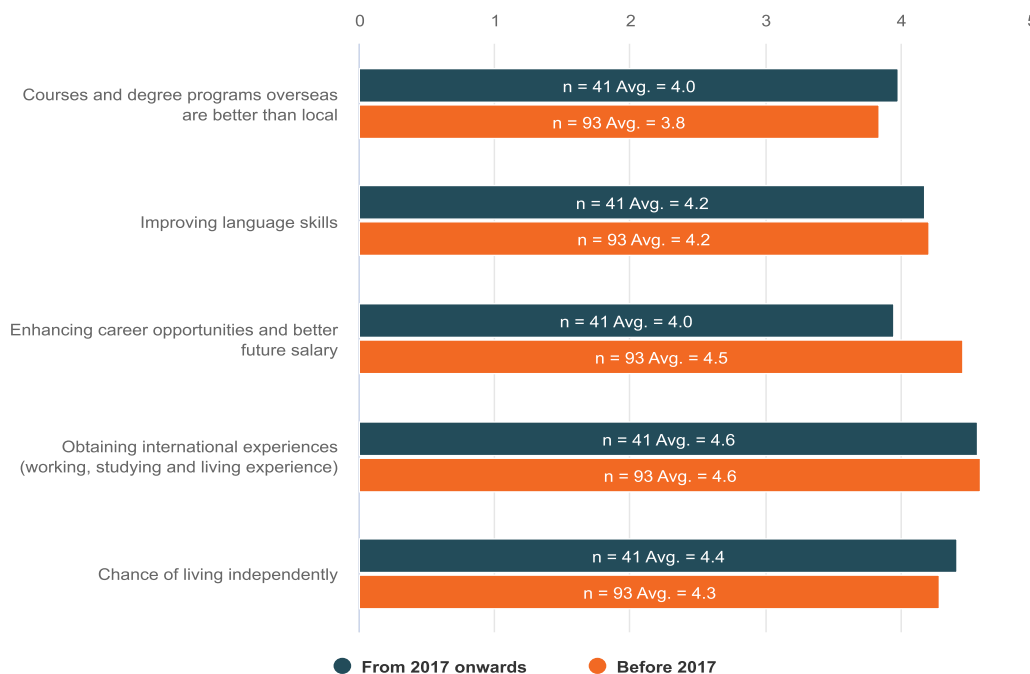
Figure 13. Differences of motivation factors between students who came to Finland before 2017 and from 2017 onwards. (n1=93; n2=41).

On the other hand, the levels of importance of factors were different between students who came to Finland before 2017 and from 2017 onwards. According to the bar chart above, the students from 2017 onwards rated the factor of improving language skills higher than enhancing career opportunities. Meanwhile, the choice of before-2017 students is the opposite.

Subsequently, the reasons influencing Vietnamese students to select Finland as an education destination were explored. The five-point Likert scale was applied, moving from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" with the "neutral" option. 81 students, which equal to 60.5 percent of the students strongly agreed and 32 percent agreed that cost (including tuition fee, living costs, and scholarship) affected their decision. The major of students agreed with the factor of education quality. 54.5 percent remained neutral attitude towards the factor of professional career opportunities. The medians of cost and educational quality factors were 5 and 4, respectively, while other factors scored the median of three. Moreover, other reasons given by interviewees were good students' supports and benefits; the program is less heavy than in Vietnam; preference of European countries' culture or lifestyle and trustworthy recommendation from friends. The bar chart below demonstrates the scale of influential factors:
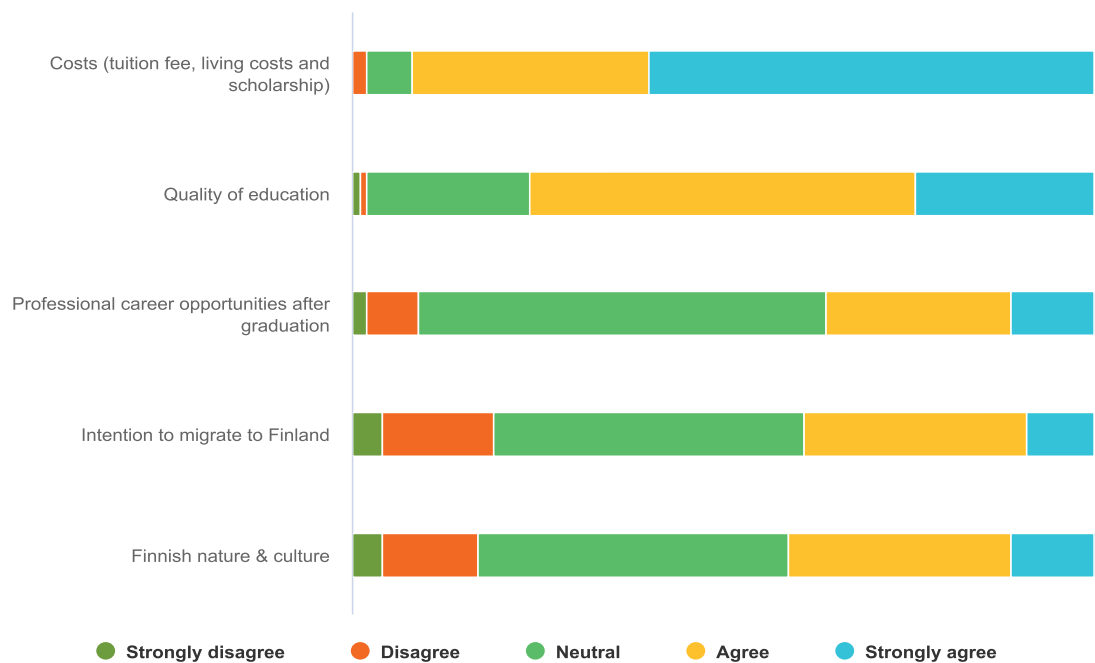
Figure 14. Influential factors in term of choosing Finland as a study destination. (N=134)

In this question, a significant difference was recognized between the selections of before-2017 students and from-2017-onwards students. The factor about the cost was strongly agreed by 71 percent of students who started their studies before 2017, while this number

from the other group was 32 percent. It may proceed from the tuition fee policy for non-EU students.

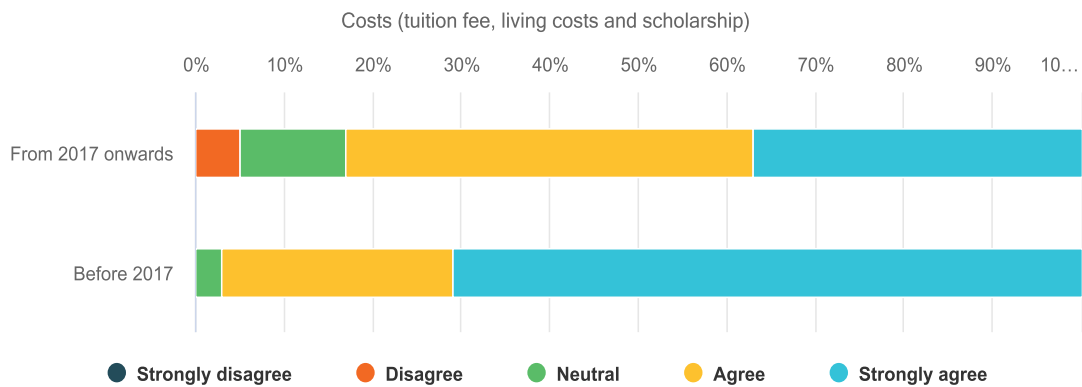Costs (tuition fee, living costs and scholarship)

Figure 15. The difference between the level of agreement about the cost factor. (n1=93; n2=41).

Moreover, there was a slight dissimilarity of the educational quality factor. The number of from-2017-onwards students agreeing was 12.6 percent higher than that of before-2017 students. Their neutral rate was 13.6 percent lower than students who were in Finland before 2017.

6.3 Level of satisfaction

The chapter aims to present the level of students' satisfaction with Finnish education and life in Finland as well as challenges and positive aspects.

6.3.1 Level of satisfaction with Finnish higher education

The second section of the survey measured Vietnamese students' satisfaction in terms of education and life in Finland. The five-point Likert scale was utilized, moving from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied" with the "neutral" option. Among five aspects, "University ser-vices and facilities" and "student supports" were prominently appreciated, which had the average scores higher than the average of the total (avg. = 3.7). In particular, facilities and services factor was evaluated "very satisfied" and "somewhat satisfied" by 44.8 percent and 39.6 percent of the students respectively. The third highest average score was the quality of degree program and curricula that most of the students (53.7 percent) were satisfied. Less than half of the total student was somewhat satisfied with the teaching method. Three factors had the highest rate of dissatisfaction: quality of degree programmes, teaching methods, and diploma recognition, with an average of

approximately 14.9 percent of each. The bar chart below displays the ranking of satisfaction in terms of Finnish higher education:
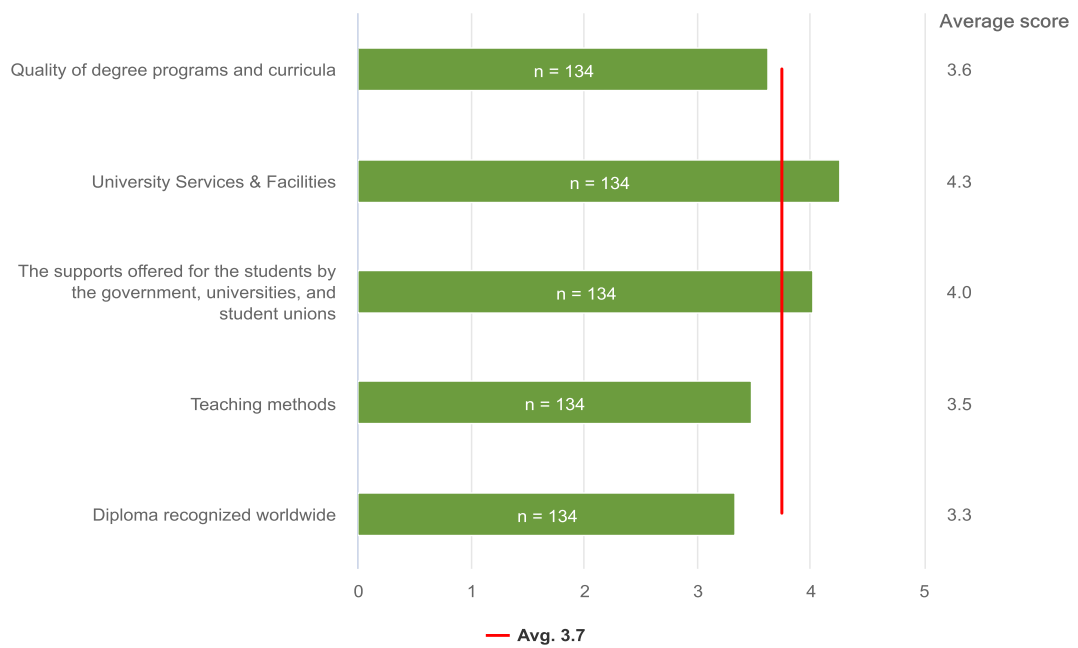

Figure 16. Ranking satisfaction in terms of Finnish higher education. (N=134).

Moreover, students were asked about aspects that they like about Finnish education. Teachers were most mentioned (4 out of 12 replies) with the words: friendly, helpful, and open. Two students enjoyed the opportunities of broadening networks through practical projects. In addition, others stated that higher education was flexible, innovative, sustainable, and universities encouraged entrepreneurship and multidisciplinary/ interdisciplinary education.

On the other hand, the results from the surveys provide an insightful point of view. The table below summarizes the comments of Vietnamese students after experiencing higher education in Finland.

Table 2. Comments of students on higher education in Finland.

	Comments of interviewees
Teaching method and quality	"relaxing"; "motivating self-taught"; "UAS system is underestimated in other countries"; "comprehensive, broad and practical but inadequate in-depth knowledge"; "pretty satisfied".
Differences from Vietnamese education	"not as competitive as in Vietnam"; "more practical"; "more freedom"; "the distance between teachers and students is smaller"; "heavy self-study"; "a lot of group works".
Teachers	"the qualification of teachers is not equivalent"; "responsive and helpful"; "some teachers lack pedagogical skills"; "friendly"; "A few teachers have ineffective teaching methods"; "straightforward communications".
Universities (facilities, services, etc.)	"supportive to International students"; "convenient"; "sufficient and modern"; "environment-friendly"; "willing to help", "host family program"

6.3.2   Level of satisfaction with life in Finland

Respondents were asked to evaluate aspects relating to life in Finland. The form of the question was the same as the previous one. Surroundings, services, and infrastructure, as well as the convenience of using English for daily communication needs, were factors that the respondents were most satisfied with. In contrast, social life in Finland was not that highly appraised. The figure below presents the ranking of satisfaction regarding life in Finland:
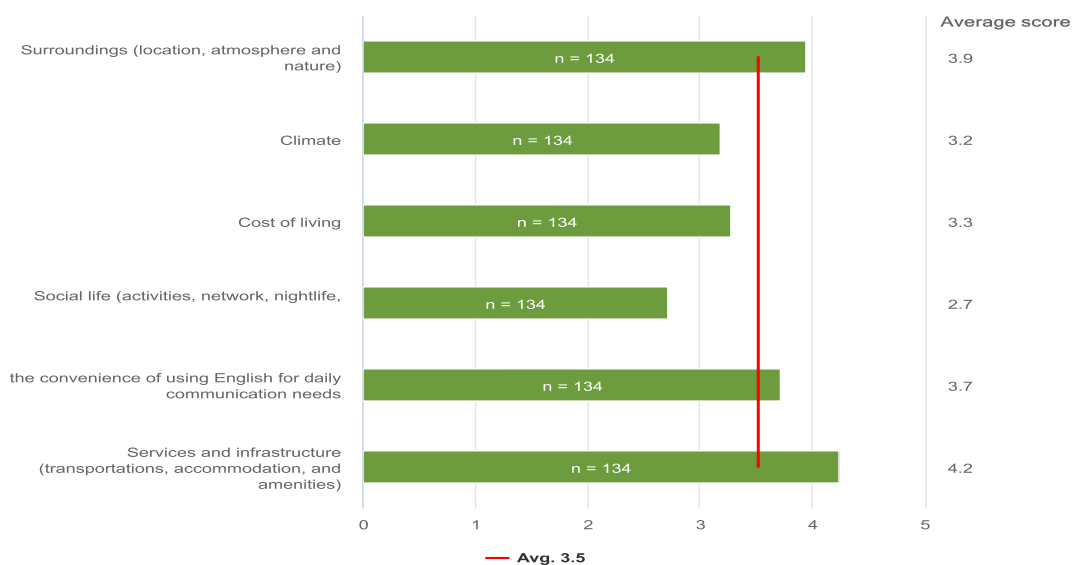

Figure 17. Ranking satisfactions in terms of life in Finland. (N=134).

In total, 82.1 percent of 134 students feel somewhat satisfied and very satisfied with Finnish services and infrastructure, including transportation, accommodation, and amenities, followed by nature, atmosphere, and location. On the contrary, social life and climate received somewhat dissatisfaction from approximately 30 percent and 20 percent of the respondents, respectively. There were no significant differences in the assessment of two groups of students for these questions. Thus, there was no comparison in this part.

6.3.3   What do Vietnamese students enjoy about Finland?

As an optional open-ended question, the authors gained adequate information for the data analysis. There were total 56 responses as short answers for the question "Despite challenges, what things do Vietnamese students enjoy about Finland?". In general, although there were several different answers based on different experiences, there were still many similar objects in terms of repeated words and ideas. Therefore, authors decided to group data into five main categories as about Finnish "people", "surroundings", "culture", "city, infrastructure and services", "education and personal developments", and also other reasons.
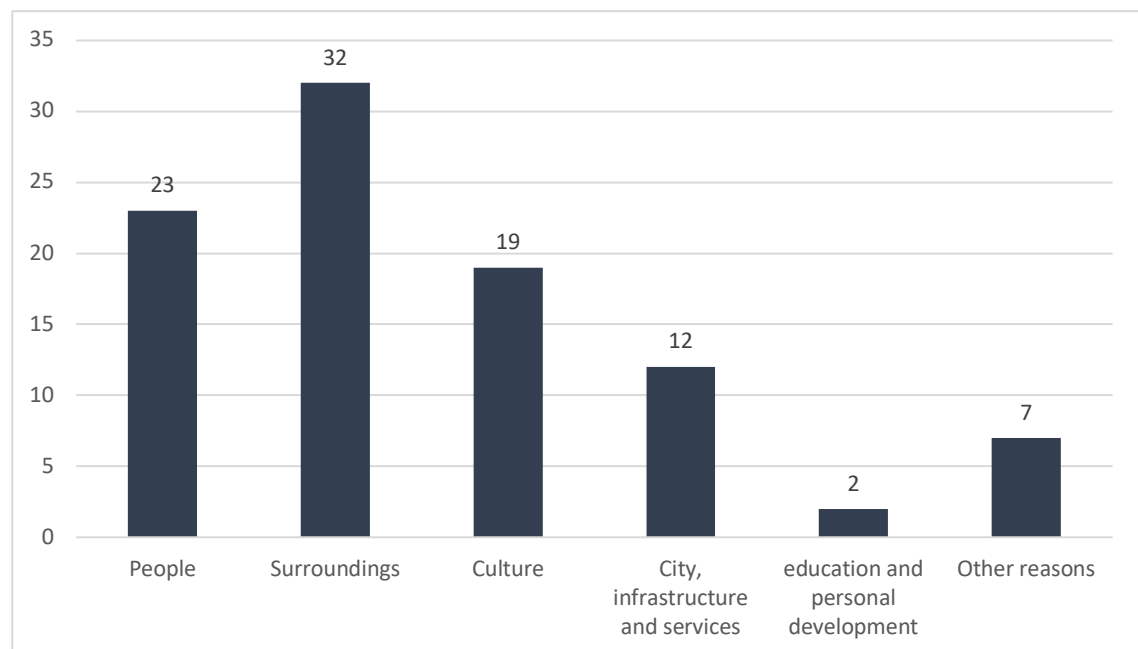
Figure 18. Main categories that depict answer for "What Vietnamese students enjoy about Finland?". (56 responses)

From gathered answers, Vietnamese students show the most interest in the Finnish surroundings (with 32 mentioned times). In particular, respondents made it clear that they enjoy a great and safe environment, beautiful nature, a peaceful atmosphere, and a

pleasant summer climate. For the next popular category, "people" elements are also mentioned several times with impressions about the Finnish people as they are "kind, helpful and friendly" as well as possess some other excellent characteristics. Meanwhile, the Finnish culture includes several responses that contain related-culture factors such as the Finnish lifestyle, traditional food, sauna culture, and great society with the slow-paced beat of life and politeness. Particularly, students enjoy the freedom, the work-life balance, and how people respect each other without judgments. City, infrastructure, and services, as well as education and personal developments, are mentioned in the form of amenities and the satisfaction with living standards, quality of life, healthcare, and technology, as well as good offered programmes, atmosphere, and facilities from institutions.

One of the interviewees also pointed out that she enjoyed the Finnish host family program from her institutions while it created a chance for her to learn more about the Finnish culture and make new friends. She also recommended that this kind of program could benefit new students for the first time in Finland; particularly, for the cultural exchange. Studying in Finland also created a chance to expand the social networks with international students from different countries. Besides, with the Finnish resident permit, it will also be more convenient for students to travel among European countries.

6.4   Challenges

Difficulties and challenges can affect the overall experience of international students while living and studying in another country. Raising awareness about this issue, the authors proposed a multiple-choice question to identify difficulties that Vietnamese students usually face up to during the time they have been studying in Finland. The question was built in the form of a multi-selection question that allows respondents to act for more than one choice. Beside available options, respondents were also allowed to add their possible answers (with the following open-ended but optional question) for more challenges that they might experience. In general, there were some extra difficulties from respondents' perspectives and four responses for no challenges (from students who have studied before 2017).

With 100 responses, accounting for 74.6% number of respondents, it can be seen that the difficulty in finding jobs (both full-time and part-time jobs) was the hardest challenge for Vietnamese students during the time living and studying in Finland. The number of responses also dominated for both groups before and after the year 2017. Next, language barrier and emotional issues were the next difficulties that students experienced with 84 and 70 responses in a total of 134 responses, accounting for 62,7% and 52,2% of the total

respondents, respectively. However, for the group of students who start their studies from the year 2017 onwards, financial management was their third biggest problem (25 responses, nearly 61% of students from this group), after the language barrier (26 responses). Meanwhile, the financial issues ranked the fifth for though who started their studies before 2017, after issues about emotions and left out feelings.

Table 3. Which challenges Vietnamese students have to face when studying in Finland.

	From 2017 onwards	Before 2017	Total
Language barrier	26	58	84
Stress, anxiety, depression and other emotional problems	17	53	70
Cultural shocks	7	26	33
Resident permit related issues	12	16	28
Living independently of your parents for the first time	3	9	12
Financial management	25	38	63
Differences in academic practices (learning and teaching methods)	8	14	22
Feeling lonely or left out	12	44	56
Difficulty in finding jobs (full-time and part-time jobs)	30	70	100
I do not face any challenges	0	4	4
Total	140	332	472

"Living independently with parents for the first time" seemed to be the least challenging for Vietnamese students while studying abroad in general (approximately 9% of total respondents). There was a switch in terms of challenges' orders of "cultural shocks", "resident permit related issues" between 2 groups of students. However, in general, they were still not noticeable challenges for respondents.

Added answers for Vietnamese students' challenges are also listed as the difficulties in making friends with Finnish students, harsh climate, and legal requirements (for example,

Finnish ID, bank ID, and Finnish services). Some of the students also have studied in small cities, where entertaining activities and job opportunities were not much for them. Besides, the extreme weather resulted in an interviewee's emotional issues, especially in the winter, when it is harsh, dark, and depressing for her. In addition, the Finnish people are also shy and not sociable, which makes students feel hard to make friends with. Therefore, it might cause the cultural shock at this point.
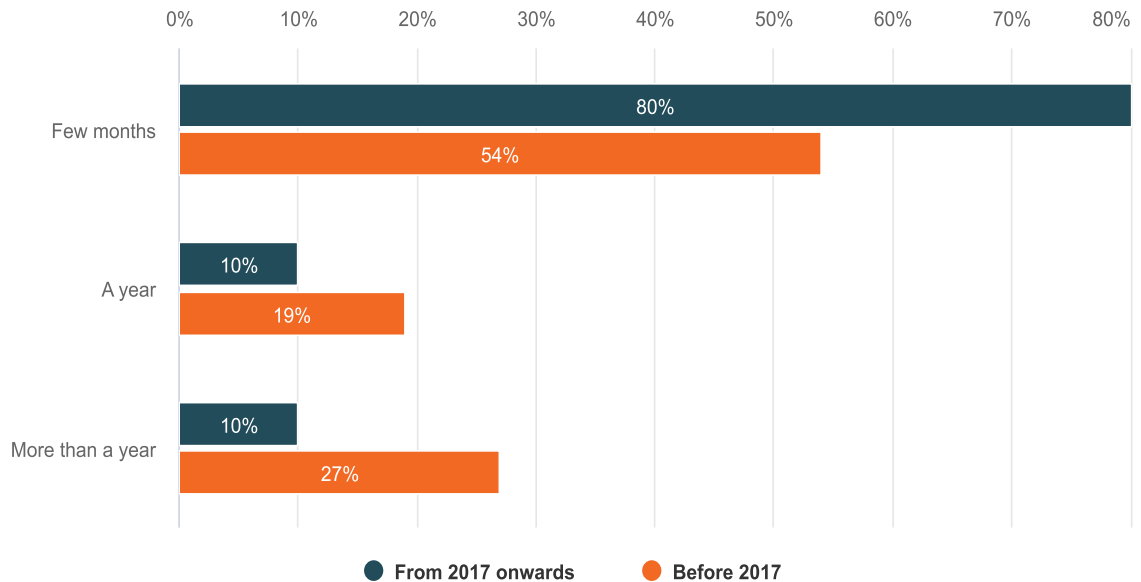

Figure 19. How long students take to adapt the life in Finland? (n1=93; n2=41.)

After identifying challenges Vietnamese students usually have to deal with, the question of how much time they need to spend to adapt to the Finnish society is delivered. As can be seen from the figure, the option "few months" has been selected the most for both groups of students (83 responses). From-2017-onwards students mostly spend "few months" to get themselves familiar with the Finnish life (around 80%, out of 41 responses from this group), and share the same percentage for options "a year" and "more than a year" (4 responses each option). However, the figure seems a bit different in the case of before-2017 students. 54% students from this group said that they spend "few months" to adapt, which mean nearly haft of them (46%, out of the total 93 responses from before-2017 students) spend more than a year to familiar with their life in Finland. Besides, there are also a high number of responses for "more than a year" from this group (25 responses), accounting for 27% of the total before-2017 students.

From semi-structured interviews, all four attendants said that they did not spend so much time adapting their new life in Finland, from a few weeks to less than haft year. Reasons were given as the Finnish life is "no hustle and bustle"; therefore, it is easier for them to

adapt. Besides, while sometimes, there is hard to make friends with Finnish people, being the group with other Vietnamese people in the class can help them overcome the loneliness and the long, harsh winter.

6.5 Future intentions

Firstly, the multiple-choice question is used to find out students' intentions for their current or future destinations after graduation. Therefore, authors can continue to raise the next questions to learn more about students' perceptions of the programme and diploma' value as well as difficulties when finding jobs after studying in Finland. In particular, most of the answers are chosen as Finland is the current/ planned destination after graduation (nearly 56%, 75 out of the total 134 responses), especially coming from students starting their study before 2017 (59 responses). The number of answers for "Vietnam and other countries" options accounting for 21%, and quite a balance between both groups of students. Meanwhile, many students still did not decide for their future working destination, especially the 2017-onwards-student group (16 responses, 39% of the total of 41 students).

Table 4. Future workplace destination (N = 134.)

	From 2017 onwards		Before 2017		
	n	**Percent**	n	**Percent**	**Total**
Finland	16	39.03%	59	63.44%	75
Vietnam	3	7.32%	11	11.83%	14
Other countries	6	14.63%	8	8.6%	14
I don't know yet	16	39.02%	15	16.13%	31
Total	41		93		134

From this stage, the next questions are delivered to specific chosen answers, whether students choose Finland or other countries for their future work. The form of "to what extends" questions and five-point Likert scales were utilized, moving from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" to gain students' opinions with given statements.
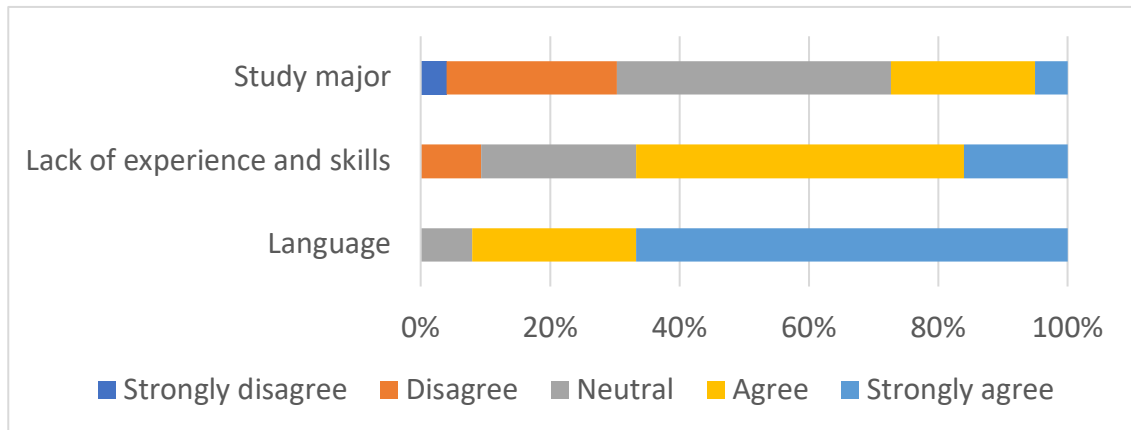
Figure 20. Reason for the difficulties in finding job in Finland. (n3= 75)

For those who concerned Finland as their current and future working destination, the question was created to assess reasons that lead to the difficulties and obstacles for Vietnamese students to get a job in Finland. Categories included the lack of experience and skills, language barrier, and also their study majors. In general, there were not many significant differences between responses from both two groups of students, which had quite the same average score for each aspect. Meanwhile, the language had the highest rate of "strongly agree" (66.67%, out of 75 students), and without any record for "disagree" and "strongly disagree" options (avg. = 4.59), which made it to become the primary reason among those aspects. Students also agreed that the lack of necessary experience and skills is also a factor that might restrict their chances in finding jobs (total 66,67% students went for "agree" and "strongly agree" options). In contrast, the study major seems fewer impacts than others (avg. = 3.35).

For those who consider Vietnam and other countries as their choice for workplace destinations after graduation, questions are aimed to let respondents evaluate the Finnish education in general as well as the Finnish diploma if they can assist students in enhancing the job opportunities. Sharing quite the same score with average of 3.6, most of the answers were gathered ranging from "neutral" to "strongly agree" for both two assessment questions. Therefore, it can be said that Finnish education and the Finnish diploma were appreciated as providing enough necessary skills and experiences as well as offering better job opportunities when students find a job in other countries.

Table 5. Q.1: To what extends, do you agree that Finnish diploma can help you have more job opportunities in Vietnam and other countries? / Q.2. To what extent, do you agree that Finnish education furnishes you enough skills and experience to find a good job in Vietnam or other countries?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Average	Median
Q.1	7.14%	0%	42.86%	28.57%	21.43%	3.57	3.5
Q.2	7.14%	0%	28.57%	50%	14.29%	3.64	4

To be more specific, interviewees agree that their study programmes furnished practical skills and knowledge for applying for the internships and work placement. However, all of them agreed that their programmes are quite broad and general, which covers many aspects of business, but not enough intensive and in-depth knowledge for a particular field. One of the interviewees also changed her major (from hospitality to the IT) by learning new skills to find a job easier in Finland. Therefore, self-study and real experiences through internships will give more advantages for future workplaces in their perspectives. Interviewees agreed that the "language barrier" was one of the noticeable challenges, especially when trying to find a job in Finland. Even though there are more and more jobs without Finnish language requirements, vacancies for those positions are still not sufficient for some specific major. One of the interviewees also expressed vague feelings about her future intention because of the difficulties in finding a suitable workplace in Finland, which might affect her decision to stay in Finland or try to find a job in another country.

6.6   The effective ways to attract more Vietnamese students

In the last section, students were asked how they knew about studying in Finland and what they used to do the research. Two multiple-choice questions were presented as well as the blank space for additional opinions. To start with, a significant number of 95 students (71%) found out about Finland through friends and family. Social media was the second most chosen approach (by 50 students), followed by study fairs, agency, print, and broadcast media, etc. Other ways were Google, YouTube, and forums. One student paid a visit to Finland before studying in here.

Table 6. How Vietnamese students know about Finland and Finnish education. (N=134)

	n	Percent
Friends and family	95	70.9%
Study fairs	23	17.16%
Social Media	50	37.31%
Print media (magazine, newspaper, poster, brochure, etc.)	11	8.21%
Broadcast media (TV, radio)	7	5.22%
Agency	17	12.69%
None of the above	3	2.24%

The differences emerged between the two groups of students. Social media was noteworthy, which selected by 49 percent of from-2017-onwards students. Moreover, friends and family continued to play the most crucial role in both groups. On the other hand, none of the students who came to Finland before 2017 chose the broadcast media, while it was voted by 17 percent of the other group. Print media was as well paid more attention from the latter students. The detail of how two groups of students know about Finland was compared in the figure below:
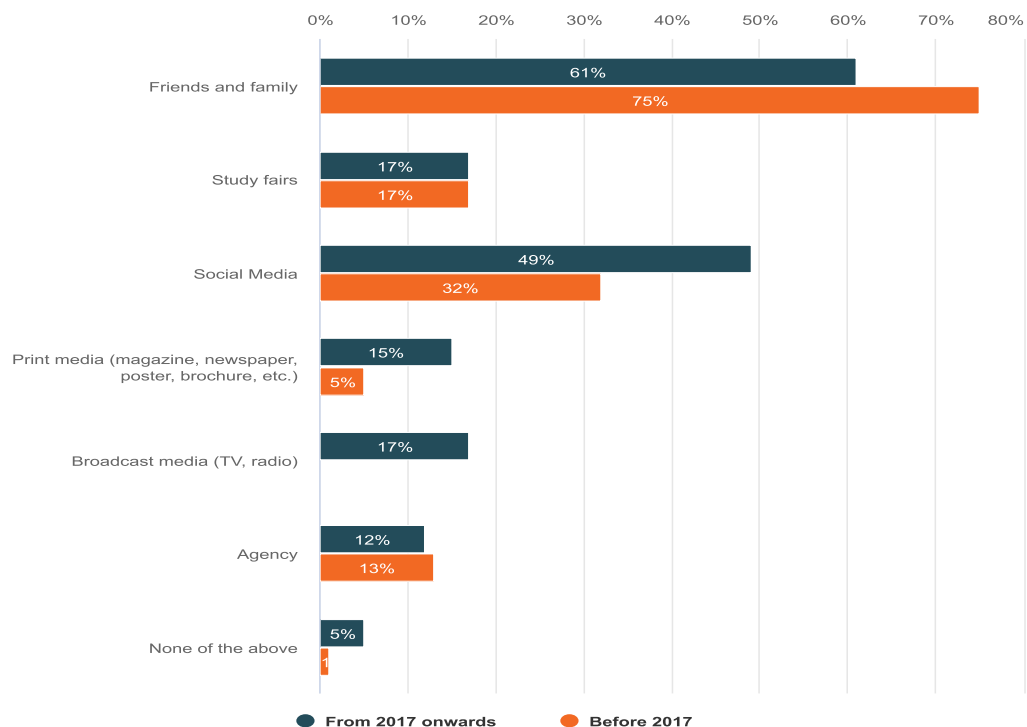
Figure 21. How two groups of students know about Finland in comparison. (n1=93; n2=41).

The next question aims to figure out which was the best way to research Finland from the students' perspective. Community groups were popular among Vietnamese students and

selected by the majority. University websites and government sites gained creditability of 80 and 75 students, respectively. In contrast, merely 14 percent sought information from agencies. There was one student mentioned about asking reviews from friends who studied abroad. The table below presents how Vietnamese students search for information about Finland and universities.

Table 7. Most effective sources to search information about Finland. (N=134).

	n	Percent
Community groups on social media	106	79.1%
Finnish governmental sites (StudyFinland, Edunation, etc.)	75	55.97%
University website	80	59.7%
Agency	19	14.18%
Reviews from alumni/ students	64	47.76%
None of the above	0	0%

The interviews revealed the students' process of selecting Finland as their educational destination. Four interviewees said that they know about Finland through friends and family: "senior students visited their high school and talked about studying in Finland"; "a friend of my sister"; "a friend of my mom"; "my mom watched the news about Finnish education on TV." Subsequently, students research more information through Google, Facebook groups, and forums. Interviewee number four collected the information about housing, university, and entrance exam through an agency called ASCI Group. A student considered studying abroad in Germany because her sister and relatives lived there. However, her final choice was Finland because the program studied in English and was free of tuition. Another student stated that her first option was Australia, but Finland had the advantage of affordable living costs, tuition fees, and excellent student benefits.

7   Discussion

The chapter presents the conclusion summarised based on the results from both online survey and interviews, as well as the suggestion for marketing approaches.

7.1.   Conclusion and recommendation

First of all, the survey provided ten motivations of Vietnamese to choose Finland as an education destination, which can be categorized into push and pull factors. Push factors to leave home country mainly focus on the desire to enhance personal skills, knowledge, and living experiences. On the other hand, there are disparities in living standards between Vietnam, a developing country, and developed Nordic countries. Thus, factors related to scholarship or living expenses are most considered by middle-class families. Before autumn 2017, Finland has an advantage in terms of costs aspect and be a convincing pull factor. Besides, the reputation of Finnish education quality has been widely recognized by the Vietnamese. Hence, students who came after 2017 still choose Finland despite the tuition fees. The motivations in this research, including those from interviews, are consistent with previous studies (Le & Tran 2018; Tran 2019; Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada 2012). However, the opportunity to live independently is a new factor emerging among studies on the Vietnamese motivation of studying abroad, which received approval from the majority.

Table 8. The push and pull factors in order of importance.

Push factors	Pull factors
(1) Obtaining international experiences (working, studying and living experience)	(1) Costs (tuition fee, living costs and scholarship)
(2) Chance of living independently	(2) Quality of education
(3) Enhancing career opportunities and better future salary	(3) Professional career opportunities after graduation
(4) Improving language skills	(4) Finnish nature & culture
(5) Courses and degree programmes overseas are better than local	(5) Intention to migrate to Finland

In terms of education, students are satisfied with study facilities, services, and support from both HEIs and government. Furthermore, students relatively enjoy practical teaching methods and teachers. Regarding life in Finland, Vietnamese students contented beautiful surroundings, modern and convenient city as well as the people. Furthermore, the international environment with diversity and equality in religions and nationalities creates

the Finnish society that leverages the freedom, high quality of life with no boundaries, and advanced wellbeing. There is also one remarkable opinion from interviews about the "host family program", which is usually offered by some institutions. This kind of program may create many benefits for students and even the host family when they can expand their connections and gain more knowledge with the cultural exchange. In addition, it might help students familiarize themselves with the Finnish culture, overcome the "cultural shock" and meet new local friends. However, social life, nightlife, and entertainment do not meet expectations according to an interviewee, which may result from cultural differences. The results are different from the Award report of StudyPortals (2014) about international student satisfaction in Finland. The surroundings factor is not as highly appreciated as others.

In contrast, Vietnamese students are fond of Finnish nature and people. Moreover, education and personal development factor are not mentioned much by Vietnamese students in comparison with International students. International students in general and Vietnamese students in particular enjoy the city, culture, and university services and infrastructure.

Difficulties that Vietnamese students have to face up to during the time staying and studying in Finland are also common challenges for any international student when studying abroad (Gebbrad 2013, 3; Wendroff 2013). Raking the seventh in terms of fluency in English skills, among non-English speaking countries (EF English Proficiency Index 2019), students did not meet any difficulties with their academic English for studying and daily communications. However, when it comes to the language for finding jobs, services, and legal papers, Finnish language skills are still needed. Therefore, it created challenges for students in both terms of language barriers and job opportunities. Moreover, even though Finnish's nature is peaceful with the stunning landscapes, the long dark winter cannot be denied as a factor that might create emotional issues for students, together with other elements. However, positively, Vietnamese students usually did not take too much time to adapt to their new journey in Finland. Meanwhile, the contribution of Vietnamese groups and supports from school and unions played a vital role in the students' adaptability. The table below summarizes what Vietnamese students satisfy or enjoy about studying in Finland as well as the top challenges.

Table 9. Summarize satisfaction and challenges.

What Vietnamese students satisfy/like about studying in Finland	Challenges
(1) Services and Infrastructure of the city (transportation, accommodation, etc.) (2) University Services and facilities (3) Students support (4) Quality of degree programmes and curricula (5) Surroundings (location, atmosphere, and especially, nature) (6) The people and culture	(1) Finding jobs (part-time and full-time) (2) Language barrier (3) Stress, anxiety, depression and other emotional problems (4) Financial Management (5) Feeling lonely or left out

The future intentions of students are investigated. Most of the Vietnamese students decided to stay in Finland after graduation, despite many obstacles and challenges. Through the interviews, authors also recognized that unknown future destinations might also come from the difficulties in finding jobs in Finland, which makes them hesitate whether they should stay more in Finland. Most Vietnamese students agreed that the Finnish language barrier is preventing them from job opportunities and suitable job positions after graduating. In particular, Finnish and Swedish language is still an advance and as a requirement in many workplaces.

Meanwhile, exceptions can be seen in the IT and design works fields where people are less required about language skills. Results pointed out that the Finnish diploma offered practical skills, and knowledge from Finnish institutions assisted students to enhance their job opportunities. However, experience for specific fields was considered by students as they need to be less general but in-depth and intensive.

Finally, the thesis studies how Vietnamese students know about Finland as well as what they used to research information. It is shown that "Words of mouth" dominates other approaches such as social media or traditional marketing (prints and broadcast media). Friends, family, and other connections have a strong influence on the decision of students as Vietnam is a collectivist society where the family is placed in the centre. Nevertheless, the frequency of Finland's reputation has increased for the last few years. In terms of researching information, internet sources such as social media groups, Forums, Google, the Finnish government, and universities' sites, etc. are utilized more than other options. In addition, since 2017, social media gained more popularity, which is coherent with other

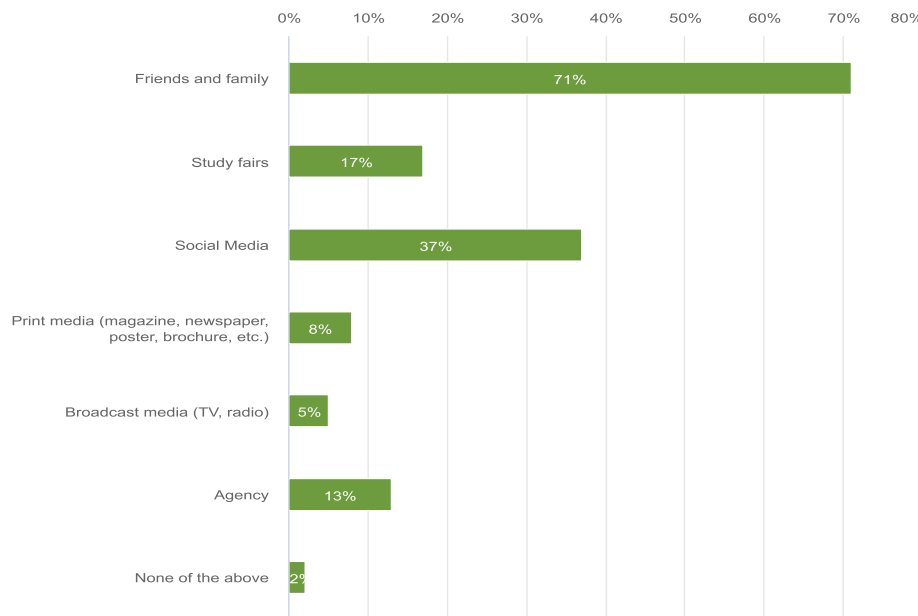studies on digital marketing of higher education (Clark, Fine, & Scheuer 2016; Brech et al. 2017)

Figure 22 How Vietnamese students know about studying in Finland

From gathered results, it can be seen that using agencies is not a good option when there are not so many Vietnamese students using this kind of service for going abroad to Finland. With support from Vietnamese groups, communities, and precursors, students can search for information, take advice, prepare documents, and apply for studying abroad by themselves. Besides, administration processes are not too complicated, and most of the information about Finnish education and requirements are clear enough thanks to the school websites, government portal, and current Vietnamese students in Finland or alumni. Therefore, the utility and effectiveness of Vietnamese agencies were not as expected. In addition, it should be clear that consulting agencies usually do not only focus on one specific country, institution, or study major but offering various types of studying abroad information and abundant options for students. Therefore, it will be hard to optimize the references and choices of students in different alternative countries. However, thanks to posts from agencies, the presence of Finnish education can be improved and increase awareness; notably, more and more people are using social media in their daily lives.

The use of student testimonials and their social networks can be an option for higher institutions when it could be cheaper and more effective. In particular, by encouraging current students to share their students' lives in Finland to social media through blog posts or videos, it can gain more real contacts from friends, relatives, and those interested in

learning more about Finnish education. Besides, it also can be seen as an ideal reference for future students for the first time come to Finland.

7.2. Reflection on learning

This following part aims to reflect the personal experience and lessons learned and critical remarks that emerge during the thesis writing process.

The topic of the thesis is not directly related to our degree programmes; however, it is close to practical life as we are considered research subjects as well. It is fascinating to study our home country's education market and the country that we have lived and experienced higher education. We learned about the differences between the two cultures and the motivations of students through the scientific point of view. Although we are parts of the research, the objectivity is ensured to deliver the genuine perspective of Vietnamese students' community. Academic articles, literature sources, and previous studies relating to the topic were logically reviewed and con-templated to deliver a reliable and in-depth understanding of higher education and students' behaviours.

The most challenging missions are to define the thesis problem to establish the framework and design the research instruments to obtain reliable and valid results. We overcame the challenge by consulting various sources that have a similar topic and acquiring the thesis advisor's instruction. The thesis gradually became our interest and opened an excellent opportunity to network with other Vietnamese students and the communication department of Haaga-Helia.

Moreover, it was a great opportunity that assisted us in improving our personal and professional competencies in many ways. This thesis research was the first project we collaborated on, but it ran more efficiently than we expected, even though each of us has different working styles and different characteristics. It was also a chance that we can learn from each other, exchange knowledge from different majors, and combine our skills to deliver the best consistency for the joint project. Besides, during the project, both of us have gained and developed several competencies, from communication in the team, management skills, critical thinking, group work skills to time, and risk management. For leadership competence, we decided to share the leadership; then, both had an equal chance to develop ourselves and make decisions while conducting the research. The project management skills, therefore, has been practiced in the best way for both of us. Moreover, we gained more knowledge about various topics, which definitely can assist us in our future career, such as market research or marketing in the educational field.

We are all satisfied with the thesis process and data that we gathered. We all hope that information we summarize can be an excellent material for future students as well as organizations when attracting more Vietnamese students and promoting Finnish education abroad. We tried to stay indifferent angles for broader perspectives when conducting the online survey as well as the interviews, to deliver both quantitative and qualitative results for the topic. During the time working on the thesis, many considerations have been delivered to gain the best results. There are also some minor things that we wish we could do differently. The design of the online survey could have been more convenient for the analyse process. For example, the assessment methods for motivations from push and pull factors questions should have had the same format; thus, we can compare and deliver better conclusions for which ones affected more on students' choices. The year students start their studies should have been able to categorize students who paid and do not have to pay tuition fees.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Different kinds of HEIs' programmes in Vietnam

Name	Description	Tuition fee	Certificate
Standard programme	Based completely on the Ministry of Education and Training's programme, taught completely in Vietnamese, has no foreign professors.	An avg. of EUR553 to EUR737 per year	Offered by the Vietnamese university and is not recognised internationally.
High quality programme	Based completely on the programme of the Ministry of Education and Training, taught partly in English, has foreign professors, applies modern teaching methods of global partner universities	An avg. of EUR1,250 per year.	Offered by the Vietnamese university and is not recognised internationally.
Advanced programme	Higher entrance scores than High Quality programme, teaching programme borrowed from reputable global universities, taught mostly in English, has foreign professors, modern facilities, and has the possibility to transfer abroad for one semester or one year	An avg. of EUR2,581 per year.	Offered by the Vietnamese university and is not recognised internationally
Transnational programme (2+2)	International programme regularly updated to world's trends, taught mostly in English, has foreign professors, modern facilities, comprises of 2 years in Vietnam and 2 years in foreign partner university	First 2 years: fees according to Vietnamese host university. Last 2 years: fees according to the foreign partner university.	Internationally recognised.

Appendix 2. Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland

University of Applied Sciences	University
Arcada University of Applied Sciences	Aalto University (governed by the Foundations Act)
Centria University of Applied Sciences	University of Helsinki
Diaconia University of Applied Sciences	University of Eastern Finland
Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences	University of Jyväskylä
HUMAK University of Applied Sciences	University of Lapland
HAMK University of Applied Sciences	Lappeeranta University of Technology
JAMK University of Applied Sciences	University of Oulu
South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences	Hanken School of Economics
Kajaani University of Applied Sciences	University of the Arts Helsinki
Karelia University of Applied Sciences	Tampere University (governed by the Foundations Act)
Lahti University of Applied Sciences	University of Turku
Lapland University of Applied Sciences	University of Vaasa
Laurea University of Applied Sciences	Abo Akademi University
Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences	
Novia University of Applied Sciences	
Oulu University of Applied Sciences	
Saimaa University of Applied Sciences	
Satakunta University of Applied Sciences	
Savonia University of Applied Sciences	
Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences	
Tampere University of Applied Sciences	
Turku University of Applied Sciences	
Vaasa University of Applied Sciences	

Appendix 3. Comparison between ISCED 2011 and ISCED 1997

ISCED 2011		ISCED 1997	
01	Early childhood educational development		–
02	Pre-primary education	0	Pre-primary education
1	Primary education	1	Primary education or first stage of basic education
2	Lower secondary education	2	Lower secondary education or second stage of basic education
3	Upper secondary education	3	Upper secondary education
4	Post-secondary non-tertiary education	4	Post-secondary non-tertiary education
5	Short-cycle tertiary education	5	First stage of tertiary education (not leading directly to an advanced research qualification.) (5A, 5B)
6	Bachelor's or equivalent level		
7	Master's or equivalent level		
8	Doctoral or equivalent level	6	Second stage of tertiary education (leading to an advanced research qualification)

Appendix 4. Survey questions

Finland as a higher education destination for Vietnamese students

Please select your higher education institutions

○ University

○ University of Applied Sciences

Which year did you start your studies in Finland?

[   ]

[Next]

Finland as a higher education destination for Vietnamese students

What are your motivations to STUDY OVERSEAS? Please rank the following factors in order of importance from 1 to 5 (5 is the most important, 1 is the least important)

	1	2	3	4	5
Courses and degree programs overseas are better than local	○	○	○	○	○
Improving language skills	○	○	○	○	○
Enhancing career opportunities and better future salary	○	○	○	○	○
Obtaining international experiences (working, studying and living experience)	○	○	○	○	○
Chance of living independently	○	○	○	○	○

Other factors, please specify

[   ]

Factors influencing your decision to select FINLAND AS A STUDY DESTINATION (to what extend)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Costs (tuition fee, living costs and scholarship) *	○	○	○	○	○
Quality of education *	○	○	○	○	○
Professional career opportunities after graduation *	○	○	○	○	○
Intention to migrate to Finland *	○	○	○	○	○
Finnish nature & culture *	○	○	○	○	○

Other factors, please specify.

[   ]

Previous   Next

Based on what you have experienced, please rate the following factors according to your satisfaction about Finnish education (to what extend)

	Very disatisfied	Somewhat Disatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
Quality of degree programs and curricula	○	○	○	○	○
University Services & Facilities	○	○	○	○	○
The supports offered for the students by the government, universities, and student unions	○	○	○	○	○
Teaching methods	○	○	○	○	○
Diploma recognized worldwide	○	○	○	○	○

State other aspects that you like about Finnish education (optional)

[   ]

Based on your experience of living in Finland, please rate the following factors according to the level of satisfaction

	Very disatisfied	Somewhat Disatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Very satisfied
Surroundings (location, atmosphere and nature)	○	○	○	○	○
Climate	○	○	○	○	○
Cost of living	○	○	○	○	○
Social life (activities, network, nightlife, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○
the convenience of using English for daily communication needs	○	○	○	○	○
Services and infrastructure (transportations, accommodation, and amenities)	○	○	○	○	○

Select challenges that you faced while studying and living in Finland

☐ Language barrier

☐ Stress, anxiety, depression and other emotional problems

☐ Cultural shocks

☐ Resident permit related issues

☐ Living independently of your parents for the first time

☐ Financial management

☐ Differences in academic practices (learning and teaching methods)

☐ Feeling lonely or left out

☐ Difficulty in finding jobs (full-time and part-time jobs)

☐ I do not face any challenges

State other challenges (optional)

[ ]

Despite the challenges, what things do you enjoy about Finland?

How long does it take to adapt to Finnish society?

- ○ Few months
- ○ A year
- ○ More than a year

Previous   Next

If respondents choose Finland, the question as below will appear.

What is your current/planned country to work and live after graduation?

- ◉ Finland
- ○ Vietnam
- ○ Other countries
- ○ I don't know yet

To what extends, do you agree with the following reasons that make it difficult to find job in Finland

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Language	○	○	○	○	○
Lack of experience and skills	○	○	○	○	○
Study major	○	○	○	○	○

The options Vietnam, Other countries and I don't know yet lead to the same questions.

What is your current/planned country to work and live after graduation?

- ○ Finland
- ● Vietnam
- ○ Other countries
- ○ I don't know yet

To what extends, do you agree that Finnish diploma can help you have more job opportunities in Vietnam and other countries?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
	○	○	○	○	○

To what extent, do you agree that Finnish education furnishes you enough skills and experience to find a good job in Vietnam or other countries?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
	○	○	○	○	○

How did you find out about Finland and and Finnish education?

- ☐ Friends and family
- ☐ Study fairs
- ☐ Social Media
- ☐ Print media (magazine, newspaper, poster, brochure, etc.)
- ☐ Broadcast media (TV, radio)
- ☐ Agency
- ☐ None of the above

If Other, please specify:

[ ]

What are the most effective sources to search information about Finland?

☐ Community groups on social media

☐ Finnish governmental sites (StudyFinland, Edunation, etc.)

☐ University website

☐ Agency

☐ Reviews from alumni/ students

☐ None of the above

If Other, please specify:

```

```

Previous   Submit

Appendix 5. Answer of survey's open-ended questions

What are your motivations to study oversea? Please rank the following factors in other of importance from 1 to 5 (5 is the most important, 1 is the least important) – Other factors, please specify

Responses
free education
Travelling around European countries
Chance to travel around European countries.
Place good for health.
chances for international networks

Factors influencing your decision to select Finland as a study destination (to what extend)

Responses
Finland is in EU commission. I have chance to move around and study exchange in other European countries with reasonable cost.
Weather of Finland
have been here before and I like the atmosphere here in finland
Fin belongs to Europe. So, we can get some convenience for travel, continuous learning in Europe.
free tuition and adaptable cost of living

Based on what you have experienced, please rate the following factors according to your satisfaction about Finnish education (to what extend) – State other aspects that you like about Finnish education (optional)

Responses
Teachers are friendly and helpful
Very kind and helpful teachers
Practical
Up-to-trend
Sustainability is a crucial part of Finnish education
The curriculum is iterative and evolving by years. The teachers intend to get feedback from students and develop bespoken program corresponding to emerging technologies/trends. Entrepreneurship is encouraged in universities and innovation or creating value is one of the core contents in all   majors. Finnish universities also encourage multidisciplinary/ interdisciplinary education which reflects the changing of the labour market.
Opportunities to gain more insights/broaden network through practical projects   Opportunities to participate in programmes from other european countries (not only through exchange study)
Flexibility in choosing courses, career paths, professional skill developemtn
Internationality
Connection between students and teachers
Teachers are nice and open. We can learn more things.

I also enjoy chances to open my networks an improve my skills at school through projects. Some school in Finland have the "host programmes" that enhance the chances for international students meet local people and know more about Finnish culture as well as receive assistants in daily life for the first time in Finland.

Select challenges that you faced while studying and living in Finland. State other challenges (optional)

Responses
I feel that making friends with Finnish students is hard, even harder to have a group of Finnish friends together.
Darkness and cold weather, lack of Asian grocery stores
Adapting to legal requirements for living: Registering address, must have a Finnish ID to use Bank ID,...
Climate
cannot find a job that fits your program after graduation.
I am still not there but I guess some challenges and choose
Many service, documents papers and website forms are in Finnish, then I have to translate them. Bank ID, mobile ID is required to log in some Finnish service, that annoy me sometimes.

Despite of challenges, what things do you enjoy about Finland?

Responses
Nature and lifestyle
Saunas and lakes, also the fact that people take cat for walks.
I enjoyed exploring things by myself and being exposed to an international environment
Nice and open-minded people, surrounded by nature, clean atmosphere
Quite friendly people and great environment.
Nature
Developed country with wonderful lifestyles
nature and food
The independent life and fresh air.
The people
The people are nice and straightforward, healthcare is really good

Nature, long-lasting friendship, summer in Finland!!, good traditional food like pulla or riisipiiraka
People, weather, safety
The nature and the ability of living independently
People, culture and quality of life
Good exchange programme Part-time job opportunities Northern lights & first snow Convenient travel within Europe
Finnish people
Finland's nature reserve is spectacular.
people, atmosphere and technology
High living standards
Quitenesss
All other
Kind people, beautiful nature
Finnish people
Nice and kind people. The Brightest summer ever.
weather, people, environment
People, culture, climate
Peace
People, summer, peaceful atmosphere
The quality of environment, living standards & safety.
Society is nice as a whole
I enjoy the liberal atmosphere in the campus. Student-focused education offers practical knowledge and opens chance to study whatever you have interest on. Unfortunately most of the program are ambiguous and vague. The content did not bring insightful knowledge at the end.
Friendly people who are willing to help people in need Nice weather in the summer Sauna Politeness
Weather and independence
The quality of environment and public services, calm people
Nature, local people

What I like here is that Finland is so peaceful, safe, less polution, and in Schengen area.
Quietness, slow-paced beat of life
Atmosphere
Finnish people are nice.
Peaceful country with great nature
People are freely to develop and respect each other.
There are spaces to grow and to adapt to Finnish environment, personally and professionally
Lifestyle and working style
The freedom
Freedom
environment and nature
I love the Scandanavian mindset of Lagom (not too much, not too little). I learn to balance between study, work, and self-care. I am happier compared to when I was in Vietnam.
Clear information and quite easy to find if i need something
Kind and honest people You feel like you can do anything you like without judgement from other people. Here they respect you for who you are.
I'm free to do whatever I like as long as it't legal. Finnish people are calm but really helpful.
Host family program
Very nice environment and living condition
Stay with my family together. My daughter can enjoy good education.
the peaceful surroundings
Finnish people are kind and helpful. The climate in summer is great There are more and more activities and new infrastructures in Finland