

EVERYDAY LIFE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN
SOUTHERN FINLAND

THESIS

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1. INTRODUCTION

Much of our daily lives are full of habits that we have formed during our lifetime. These habits and routines make the structure of our day and ensure security and stability in our lives. This adjustment period, coupled with difficulties that could be experienced when adapting to a new environment could be very challenging for new comers, especially if they are living in a foreign country for the first time. In this thesis I will focus on international students who have moved to Finland.

The aim of this thesis is to find out about the everyday life of international students in Southern Finland. This thesis is derived from a project that I conducted with my peers students as part of my studies, during the project management placement in February 29th-April 18th 2016. I settled on the topic everyday life of international students living in Southern Finland for this thesis.

The focus was on international students taking courses of Social Service and Nursing, after which we were intended in finding out how they experienced their everyday life in a new culture. The data was collected by interviewing 16 international students from various universities and universities of applied sciences. It was from this focus that I got the motivation to write this thesis on the same topic.

The following Students were involved in the Everyday Life of International Student Project:

Samuel Mburu, Lesly Rawstone, Mbale Derrick and Musambi Mark

2. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN FINLAND

In 2014 there were over 20,000 international degree students in Finnish Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences according to Statistics Finland.

Table 1 shows Number and percentage of International students

International degree students on different education levels in 2005 and 2014

(Source: Statistics Finland)

Table 1 Number and percentage of international students, new international students and degrees they have taken in 2014

	International students		New international students		Degrees taken by international students	
	Number	% of students on education level	Number	% of new students on education level	Number	% of degrees on education level
Bachelor's degree, UAS	9219	7,1	2522	7,2	1428	6,2
Bachelor's degree, University	720	0,8	142	0,9	118	0,9
Master's degree, UAS	454	4,9	167	4,8	89	4,2
Master's degree, University	6171	12,4	2100	39,2	1351	9,1
Specialisation in Medicine	217	5,0	45	23,0	22	3,8
Licentiate/Doctoral degree	3474	17,5	319	51,7	399	19,7
Total	20255	6,7	5295	8,8	3407	6,1

Table 1

Out of the 20,000 international students almost half of the students were studying in university of applied sciences.

Table 2 shows New International students on different education levels
(Source: statistics Finland)

New international students on different education levels in 2014 and 2005

	2014		2005	
	Number	%	Number	%
Bachelor's degree, UAS	2522	47,6	1388	56,7
Bachelor's degree, University	142	2,7	361	14,8
Master's degree, UAS	167	3,2	1	0,0
Master's degree, University	2100	39,7	499	20,4
Specialisation in Medicine	45	0,8	14	0,6
Licentiate/Doctoral degree	319	6,0	184	7,5
Total	5295	100,0	2447	100,0

Table 2

In 2014, from when we have the most recent data, there were about 20,000 foreign students studying for a higher education degree in Finland. About a quarter almost 5,300 of them were 1st year students; international students accounted for 9% of all 1st year students.

About 60% of international students study technology and transport, social sciences or business and administration. Almost a half of them are studying for a Bachelor degree in universities of applied sciences, about a third for a Master's degree and just under 20% for a post Master's degree in a traditional university. 76% of all international students and 79% of 1st year students come from outside of the EU/EEA.

The data provided by Statistics Finland looks at the status of foreign nationals in universities and universities of applied sciences in 2014 and 2015. The data has been collected by combining the university degree database of Statistics Finland with information from CIMO who organizes statistics on internationalization.

According to Study Finland, Finnish education system was ranked best in the world in 2012 (Pearson's Report, 2012).

The Finnish welfare society is built on education, culture, and knowledge. Education is the key reason in enhancing competitiveness. The aims of Finnish educational policy are quality, efficiency, equality, and internationalisation. It offers equal opportunities of education for all, irrespective of matters of residency, sex, economic situation or linguistic and cultural background

The studying style in Finland is regarded as relatively independent. It adapts innovative studying methods. For example, problem-based learning has been in use at the universities and universities of applied sciences for many years.

Teaching methods in Finland are far from authoritarian. Learning is based on discussion, working together, and pupils finding information themselves. (Study in Finland, 2016)

Internationalisation of higher education in Finland has many functions. One important function is to prepare students for international living and working environment. The world of work is growing more and more international and multicultural, it needs people that are able to find their way across national, cultural and ethnic boundaries.

Previous research about international students has raised a broad range of issues: what happens to them after graduation - how many stay in Finland to work and how many go elsewhere; whether their field of study, level of degree or nationality has an impact of their employability. We know the cost of education of international students, the economic impact on international higher education students; what statistics tell us about international student mobility in Finland; what motivates students to go abroad and what makes Finland especially attractive to European exchange student. (Facts Express, 2016)

The research conducted of international students in Finland to date has emphasized qualitative methods that showed positive outcomes. The research has focused mainly on education, language skills and employability of international students. While considerable research has been done on the issues of international students, there is relatively little focus on the everyday life of international students. And it is the aim at this research to shed light on this question.

3. EVERYDAY LIFE

As I am interested in everyday life of international students it is important to know what is meant by everyday life.

Bauman says that as we engage our environment and deploy the resources to which we have access in our actions, we move through time and space utilizing our bodies in various ways, experience time of happiness and sadness, stress and relaxation, engage in working activities and utilize various skills and finally rest and sleep. He notes that each of us exhibits, in daily routine of our lives, extraordinary abilities and different characteristics and that we are the product of the interaction between ourselves, others and environments we inhabit. (Bauman 2001, 147)

However, Suttons asks why should we concern ourselves with such seemingly trivial aspects of social behavior? Although social behavior is guided to some extent by forces such as roles, norms and shared expectation, individuals perceive reality differently according to their background. He then says our day to day routines, with their almost constant interactions with others give structure and form to what we do. Our lives are organized around repetition of similar patterns of behavior from day to day throughout the year. (Sutton 2009, 251)

Moreover, Chaney sheds more light to the aspects of everyday life by saying everyday life is frameworks of space and time that organize what is done when, with whom and where. The reality of habitual experience is provided in the routines or rhythms of occupation, relationships and residence. He assumes everyday life to be the forms of life we routinely consider unremarkable and thus take for granted. (Chaney 2002, 10)

“Every day is ordinary, in the modern era cultural change has made it uncertain and unreliable and harder to represent. It may seem silly to be puzzled by how to represent everyday life because it is so obvious. It seems that in order to know everyday life we have to be able to represent it; and our representation inclines us towards certain sorts of knowledge”. (Chaney 2002, 8)

Lefebvre mentioned that the familiar is not necessarily the known. He was convinced that sociological analysis could shed light on the nature of everyday and highlight the central role it plays in the social world. He noted that as mysterious as everyday life is it was at the same time substantial and fecund, and that it is crucial foundation upon which human activities of being, including abstract cognition and practical objectifications are necessarily premised (Gardiner 2002, 2)

Felski (2000, 17) offers three key concepts to that defines everyday life: time, space and modality. In other words; time as repetition - space as home - modality as habit

Time: Are the routines of everyday life because of connection to nature and emotions. Time shows repetition. Repetition is the cyclical structure of our daily routine. It is how humans organize the world, make sense of their environments. Acts of repetition are what help us define ourselves. Every day cannot be the same.

Home: Is a privileged symbol in different spaces. The most related one with routines. It is the start and the end point of daily life. It is where protection, familiarity, and warmth are found. Freedom and essence of life are seen to be outside, in the streets, and longing for home is seen as un-modern. Home is subject to different emotions, fights, and decisions. It is also shaped by conflicts and power struggles, just like any other space. Home is the investment of meaning in space.

Habit: Are automatic behaviors, routine, and the natural attitude in order to survive and get things done in our places. It connects us to our environment. Habit

is very closely linked to repetition and home, by the concept of familiarity that ties them together with everyday life. Habit is the epitome of everydayness. It is repetitive, automatic, distracted and involuntary. For these reasons, habit is seen to be a half-sleep mode of life, which should be overcome. It is said that habit is insidious and should be countered by critical vigilance.

It is true that habits are conducted automatically, but consider the opposite: daily routines wouldn't be possible if we did every act consciously. Without repeating habits, there wouldn't be impulse and innovation. There would be chaos and stress without the familiarity of habits. In contrast, a life consisting fully of habits is unthinkable. Everyday life consists of both habits and conscious acts of innovation. Therefore, the habit does not prevent transcendence. Habit is not an unchanging, static concept. It does not have to fit molds, it can be unpredictable, and it can always change.

Felski offers the concept of the invention of everyday life with the points she has raised about the complexity of the quotidian. It is mundane and repetitive, but also a field of production.

Everyday life should not be linked to a gender or certain classes because neither can be excluded from it. Everyday life should not be demonized or romanticized. It should not be painted as a glorious and powerful mode of life, nor as a form of alienation or dehumanization. Everyday life is a way of experiencing the world.

Actually, it is more than our everyday life, the life that we spend unconsciously. In order to understand it, different perspectives should be adopted. It can be seen as an ordinary concept; but, it is the measure of all things no clear boundaries, difficult to identify, habitual, ordinary versus organizing the world according to certain assumptions and criteria. Everybody has got his or her own daily life. Billions of everyday life exist, attached with negative, non-intellectuality, gray, inauthentic, degradation. Some groups are associated with it; Women or working class. Every life has its own peak moments and episodes.

In the book *History of Everyday Life in Scotland* Foyster and Whatley say that the true state of every nation is the state of common life. That, life consists not of a series of illustrious actions, or elegant enjoyments but the greater part of our time passes in compliance with necessities, in the performance of daily duties, in the removal of small inconveniences and in the procurement of petty pleasures (Foyster and Whatley 2010, 20)

“In 1775 Samuel Johnson noted that changes to everyday life were often gradual, hard to discern and not unusually regional and even local in their impact. His belief that it was the ‘necessities’, ‘daily duties’ and ‘petty pleasures’, that

provided the greatest insights into the life of a nation. His findings was that population growth, urbanization, changes to the rural economy and political and religious upheaval all had an impact on the daily patterns, rhythms and rituals of everyday life for ordinary Scots.” (Foyster and Whatley 2010, 23)

The four books in the History of Everyday Life in Scotland, 1800 to 1900 series, examine the ordinary, routine, daily behavior, experiences and beliefs of Scottish people from medieval times until the present day. Their focus is on the ‘common people’, that is, most of the population, the ordinary folk below the ranks of the aristocracy, substantial landowners, opulent merchants, major industrialists, bankers, and financiers, even if it is true that people from relatively humble beginnings have managed periodically to haul themselves into the ranks of the nation’s social elite. The events and activities that determined how individuals spent their time are explored, including the experiences of work and leisure, and ranging in duration from those that affected the passage of a single day, through those that impinged on peoples’ lives according to the calendar or the seasons and weather, to those that were commonly experienced over the course of the lifecycle. Scottish people made sense of their everyday lives, it is argued, through ritual and belief, by their interactions with others and by self- reflection

4. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The broad goal of this thesis is to make the everyday life visible because it’s the place where power relations are practiced.

In February 29th-April 18th 2016 during the project management placement period I the other students conducted interviews that were participant led. I was looking for the common thread and interesting topic that has never been focused on or commonality from the interviews.

The definition of daily life for this project concerned the minutiae of daily lives, everyday occurrences, everyday objectives, routines and how students think, act and feel. We asked the students to describe these things and we asked them to clarify questions if the answers given were not specific enough. The process was an organic one, which means student led.

The mission was to collect information about this subject in a series of the interview using participatory research methods. The participatory research method is whereby the community members come together and use the knowledge that they have to solve a problem or provide information for research like in our case. (Bowden, 2)

The topic of daily life is becoming a popular one in social services and humanities but there is little known about it from the perspective of an international student in Finland and my task was to find out this information and decode its meaning and commonalities. "A need is recognized when there is evidence that there is a problem that should be addressed" (Martin 2002, 28)

I hoped to find out information about certain topics such as acculturation, networks, families friendships, study models, work life, cultural differences, digital lives, thoughts, repetition, routine, and feelings, in terms of the minutiae of their daily lives. However, I had a clear mission statement not to ask specific pre-ordained questions or lead the conversation in any way apart from asking clarifying questions to the subjects of the study. It is hoped that by this student-led, organic process I would find out critical information that I would not have thought of asking had this been undertaken in a typical question and answer session.

Therefore our research question was outlined as follows:

What are minutiae of daily lives, in terms of space, habits and time of International students living in Southern Finland?

5. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

In March 2016, my peer students I narrowed the focus of the subjects for the interviews to be the current international social services and nursing students. However, it was that if the criterion was not met then other international students from other fields will be included. The goal was to collect and transcribe narratives from 20 students; finally, my colleagues and I managed to get 16 participants.

Each interview lasted about an hour and some longer. The interviewees were chosen in a random sample without regard to gender or nationality. The interviews were conducted in places where the interviewees were comfortable; we visited some interviewees in their homes some we met in public places such as libraries and coffee shops.

The aim of the interviews was to allow students to organically form their own narratives, and express what they felt were their most important habits and routines over 24hour period. In this thesis, I will analyze the interview data of the daily experiences of these students, and create a snapshot of their routines, thoughts, and feelings as they experience student life in a foreign country.

To fulfill the goals I used a number of tools to aid information gatherings such as photography, audio and clock. The subjects of the study had to take pictures during the course of their day, in the form of a photo diary, for a period of a week. The photographs were used solely for the project but in this thesis I use only interviews.

I then used these pictures to prompt the students as a basis for their narratives. I also used the clock and their narrative was described by them on a timescale during the day. The clock helped in following client's activities throughout the day: from the time they wake up, breakfast, what they wear, how they feel, and letting them tell more about their average day as the clock ticks. The narratives were recorded and transcribed so the information gathered is as accurate as possible. I then need to analyze the data so that commonalities, as well as surprising information, could be used to produce an article about their daily lives of international students. I also had a consent form to be filled by interviewees before the interviews.

ETHICS

According Hay to ethics are principles for guiding moral behavior for distinguishing between what's the right thing to do in a situation or the wrong thing during a situation. He says the decisions that researchers make are in evitable individual and are very much influenced by the context in which the person is working and by society's moral views about rightness and wrongness. (Hay 2006, 15)

In this thesis the data was collected from participants who only volunteered to participate. They were given fully informed consent. Confidentiality is highly maintained in that the use of names can't link information to the participants and I would not do anything that would embarrass participants such as share information which is linked to their identity. The names I have used in the transcribed interviews are not the real names of the participants. I avoided causing psychological, emotional, physical or social harm to participants during the interview and even throughout this thesis.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

As a group, we had aimed at 20 interviews but we managed to get 16 participants and ended up with 13 transcribed interviews and 3 audio recordings which could not be transcribed because it carried information which was not relevant to the topic. My thesis is based on transcribed interviews and in this case it's under qualitative research

“Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials the case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand.” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, 2)

Research is an organized systematic disciplined approach to answering questions about our observations and experiences in the world. It is a structured approach to gathering and interpreting information that allows us to understand or explain the experience.

Qualitative research focuses on generating meaning and understanding through with description, it can be a particularly useful approach to studying educational problems that require developing and understanding of complex social environments and the meaning the people within those environments bring to their experience.

In its very earliest stages qualitative research aims to explore. The goal is to identify patterns, themes and initial models that provide an initial understanding of this phenomenon. The description is the heart of qualitative research; the essential characteristics of the description are that it conveys information to detail and specificity necessary to accurately convey the experience. Ultimately qualitative research strives to produce meaningful interpretations of events and phenomenon. With interpretation the goal is to make sense of what goes on, to reach out for understanding or explanation, through exploration, description, and interpretation. Qualitative research will arrive at a complete understanding of a phenomenon in a particular setting or context.

Qualitative data are typically obtained from sources such as interviews, focus groups, observations and existing documents. One study may include data from

one, several or all of these sources. For example, in research about the everyday life of international students in Finland we observed students as they work on their daily chores including, students' reactions to the activities such as body language and facial expressions. (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994,)

Just as quantitative analysis must be presented in tables and figures, qualitative data can be presented in narrative form, table or visual diagrams.

The qualitative analysis supports visualization data analysis. In this thesis, I am going to use visualization data analysis in order to expose the unknown.

Visualization helps explore and get a sense of the larger trend happening and diving in deeper. Sometimes visualization helps discover the new perspective, gain new insight and find something new and interesting to explore in the data. It is also an easy way to share results with colleagues and communicate findings of the research with broader audiences in an acceptable way.

To make visualization of the transcribed interviews possible I did my analysis using Nvivo software.

NVivo is software that supports qualitative and mixed methods research. It is designed by QSR International to help you organize, analyze and find insights in unstructured or qualitative data like interviews, open-ended survey responses, articles, social media and web content. (QSR International Pty Ltd)

Nvivo software supports transparency, organizes a large amount of data, has a constant comparative method and is reliable and follows ethics of research. It has been used predominantly by academic, government, health and commercial researchers across a diverse range of fields.

In this thesis I am using 13 transcribed interviews and this is a large amount of data large enough to use Nvivo software. I prepared and organized data, this included transcribing interviews, ensuring all documents to be included in the analysis were present and available. Second I reduced the data by identifying themes, coding data elements and creating categories.

Using Nvivo software where all my transcriptions are uploaded, I ran first a frequency query. Frequency query shows the most said words from the transcriptions and therefore frequently mentioned topics. I searched for 100 common words just to start with. This was to find out more about the most prevalent words being said by international students throughout the interview in order to get a sense of what's happening in the big picture. The result coming out from running a word frequency is called a Word cloud. Word clouds are the words being used and are closely correlated with the topic being covered. These words are called codes.

A Code is a word or short phrase that represents the essence or key attribute of narrative/verbal information. They are used to categorize the data. Coding is the process of organizing data into chunks that are alike. They help in reducing, condensation and summarizing the data into smaller themes and conceptual categories. They also help to identify and categorize meanings in the data. It is usually done systematically and consistently

7. FINDINGS

When I take all the transcribed interviews and want to see what the things are and themes international students talk about most, I run word frequency test using Nvivo software. A word frequency is the appearance of a word in transcription multiple times, for example I can search for 100 common words used by the interviewees throughout the transcribed interview which then as a result gives me a word cloud. A word cloud is appearance of words in source of contextual data and enhances the value of simple visualization of the data. The larger the word in the word cloud the more it has been spoken by the interviewees and forms part of the themes and from there I dive in deeper.

Below a word cloud as a result of running frequency query

Diagram 1



The larger the word is the most frequent its being talked about by international students as illustrated in diagram 1 and diagram 2 as shown above.

If we look at diagrams 1 and 2 with Felski's definition of everyday life in our minds we can see words like time, home, work, school, job, summer, winter and friends are commonly spoken by the international students and co-relate with the themes of everyday life. We can see that everyday life is not only home it happens also elsewhere.

To dive in more deeply to this concept after running a word frequency query, I ran a text search for example for the word everyday life. A text search is the search for specific theme related to the main topic from the transcribed interviews. A word tree is a preselected word and how it is connected to other words in text-based data through a visual branching structure. This

creates a word tree and then it shows what everyone has to say about everyday life as shown in the picture below

Diagram 3

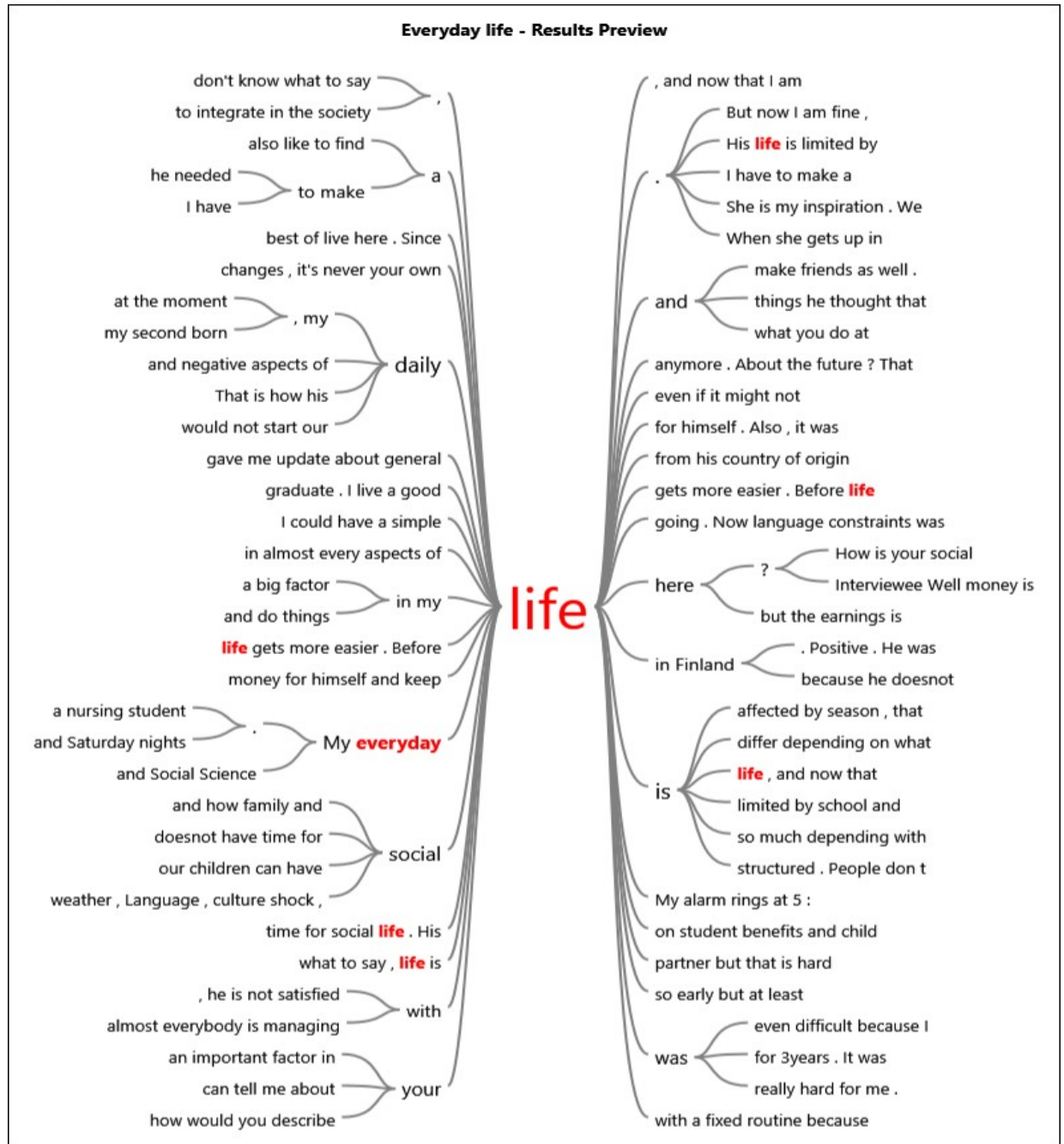


Diagram 3 shows the word life and how it is connected to other words in the transcribed interviews while at the same time it shows words that precede it.

If I narrow down to the text that contains the word daily life, we can clearly see exactly what the interviewee is talking about in this particular subject. See the word trees below in diagram 4 and 5.

Diagram 4

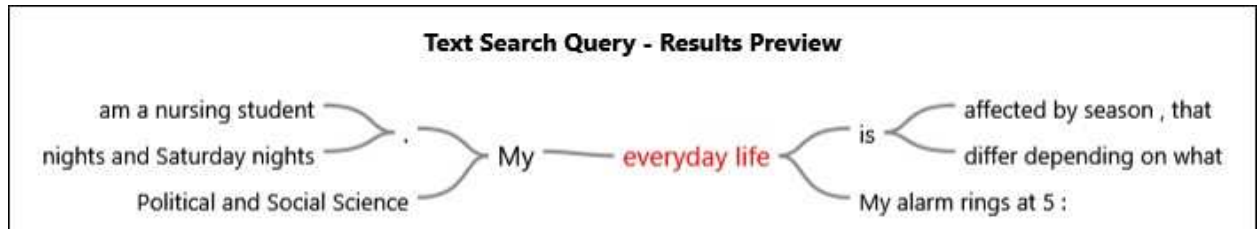


Diagram 5



When I highlight the words like life, everyday life or daily life from the word trees above, they shows me the context itself, the quote from interviewees

“My everyday life is affected by season that is winter and summer. During winter I am not very active because I feel very tired unlike spring and summer when I feel energetic and strong. May be because of weather and darkness” (Henry)

Henry says that changes in seasons and weather affect his everyday life because he sometimes doesn't feel active or he is tired due to weather.

“My everyday life is differ depending on what kind of the day I have. I never have same daily routine due to my lifestyle and my situation. Therefore my typical day start with me waking up at 5 o'clock in the morning.” (Lucie)

Lucie on the other hand says even though in atypical day she wakes up at 5 o'clock, her everyday life differs depending on her situation in a particular day, and that every day is not the same to her.

"My daily life was even difficult because I was also having a night job for early newspaper delivery. I used to get so tired, I think for not sleeping during the night time."(Richard)

Richard says that he gets tired for not sleeping at night because of the nature of work he does and this makes his everyday life difficult.

Exploring our coding a little more in order to know what sources is coded to a specific node then we use a chart. To see who is talking more about family, friends, entertainment or good about living in Finland and social relationships

Felski offers three key concepts to that defines everyday life: time, space and modality and from the interviews finding we are able to see what the international students were talking about in respect to these concepts.

In other words; time as repetition - space as home - modality as habit

7.1 TIME

DAILY RHYTHM

Mornings seem to be an especially challenging time for our group of interviewees as they struggle to adjust to the unique conditions of imposed through the seasons in Finland that can disrupt sleep patterns due to excessive or insufficient hours of daylight. According to scientific research, these disturbances to circadian rhythms caused by external cues such sunlight and temperature can be physiologically harmful. Southern Finland has approximately six hours of daylight in midwinter and this coupled with extreme winter temperatures were cited as being one of the greatest challenges during the wintertime. This is in direct contrast to the summer months where there are around nineteen hours of daylight during midsummer. The majority of the students interviewed felt that their sleep was periodically disturbed both in winter and summer. Some those interviewed reported that they had less than five hours sleep each night during some parts of the year. Those interviewed were typically early risers due to a variety of reasons including the demands of family, part-time work and the time taken to reach their school by public transport.

“Sometimes I can even set five alarms to go off during thirty minutes because it is so hard for me to get up” (Henry)

Henry confirms that he has a difficulty of getting up, he has to set alarm several times before he wakes up.

7.2 SPACE

HOME AND FAMILY

Over a quarter of those interviewed for the study has family members living with them in Finland. The demands of parenting and the activities involved in family life constituted a large part of their free-time outside of their studies. The students who had small children praised the standard of the Finnish day-care system and schools which they felt gave them the opportunity to pursue their own educational goals. The issue of gender equality also arose as some of the students come from countries where gender roles are very clearly defined in reference to household duties and childcare. These students reported that it took them some time to adjust to the equal role both parents are required to take in housework and child care in Finland. Some of the interviewees mentioned the role of extended family and domestic servants in their country and felt that they would have preferred their small children to be looked after by family members rather than a day-care system, however good.

Most working students felt home and family were the most important aspect of their lives followed by work and then school whilst the entertainment was last in their priority list. The fact that school was not considered to be the main priority was quite surprising but most students reported that they had few problems managing their school work in conjunction with a working although it did mean that they had very long days. In turn, this may have some influence on their emphasis on family as clearly family times were restricted to some students as they were so busy. On average work was the biggest priority for men and

women without families. Many of those interviewed had a lot of financial pressures that accompanied studying in Finland and part of those interviewed also help to support family members in their country of origin. Many of the respondents also stated the high cost of living here and the fact that the job market for students was poorer than in other European countries canceling the effects of the benefits of free education in Finland.

“When I take the boys from the day-care, I cook for the family and do normal household activities. I am typically working as a house boy in our family.” (Richard)

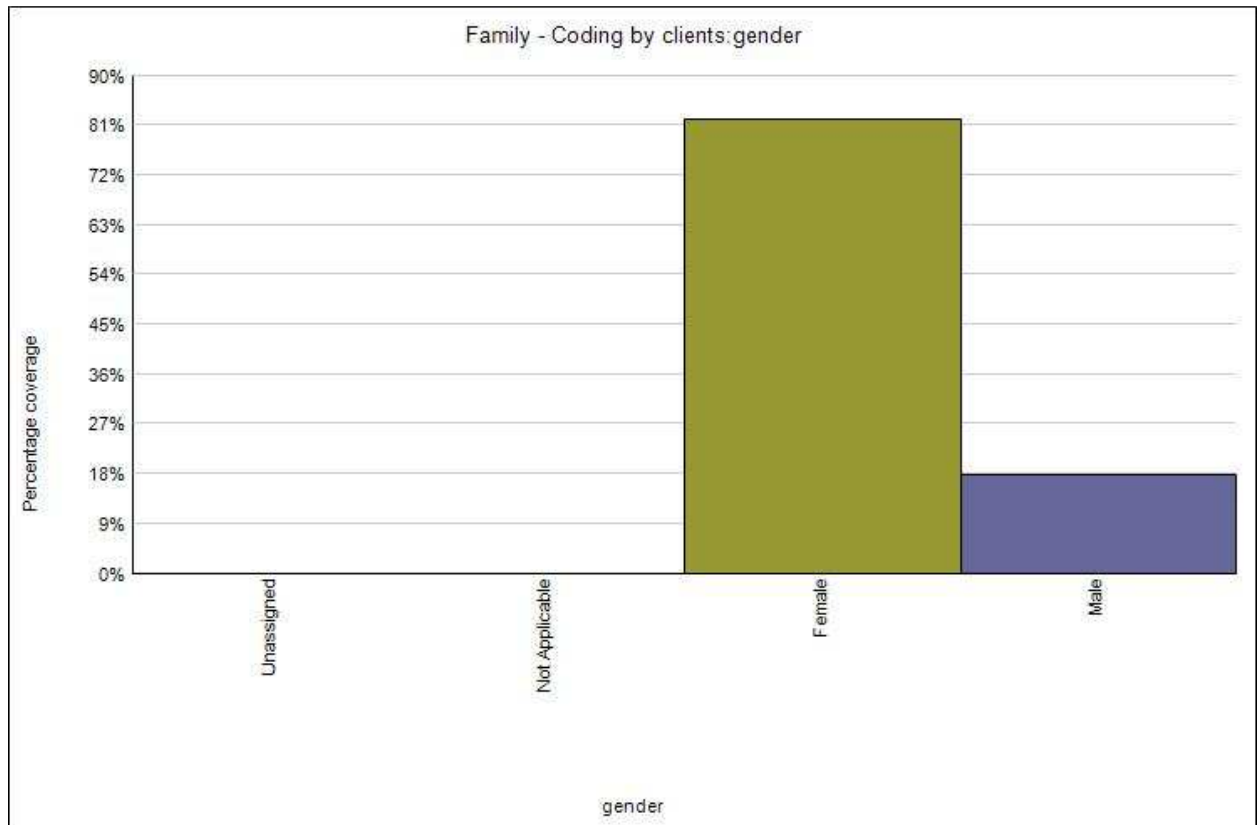
Richard considers himself as a houseboy because he does all the house hold activities

“I then go home and make their snack and then the evening meal. We try to have meat or fish dishes every day. I do a lot of cleaning as I want a beautiful home for my family. I try to vacuum the whole house every day and I wash the floors three times a week Monday, Wednesday and Friday. I like to have friends coming over at the weekend and it is easier if I have kept the house neat all week. I also want the children to have clean clothes every day so I always have washing and ironing to do” (Dary)

Dary sees home as a place where she is comfortable to meet with friends, she make it neat and prepares food from the home and keeping her family together at home.

To see what codes are more talked about by attribute of gender, let’s say we want to know which group is talking more about family. Using Nvivo software I run the code family with attribute of gender and the result is as seen below.

Diagram 9

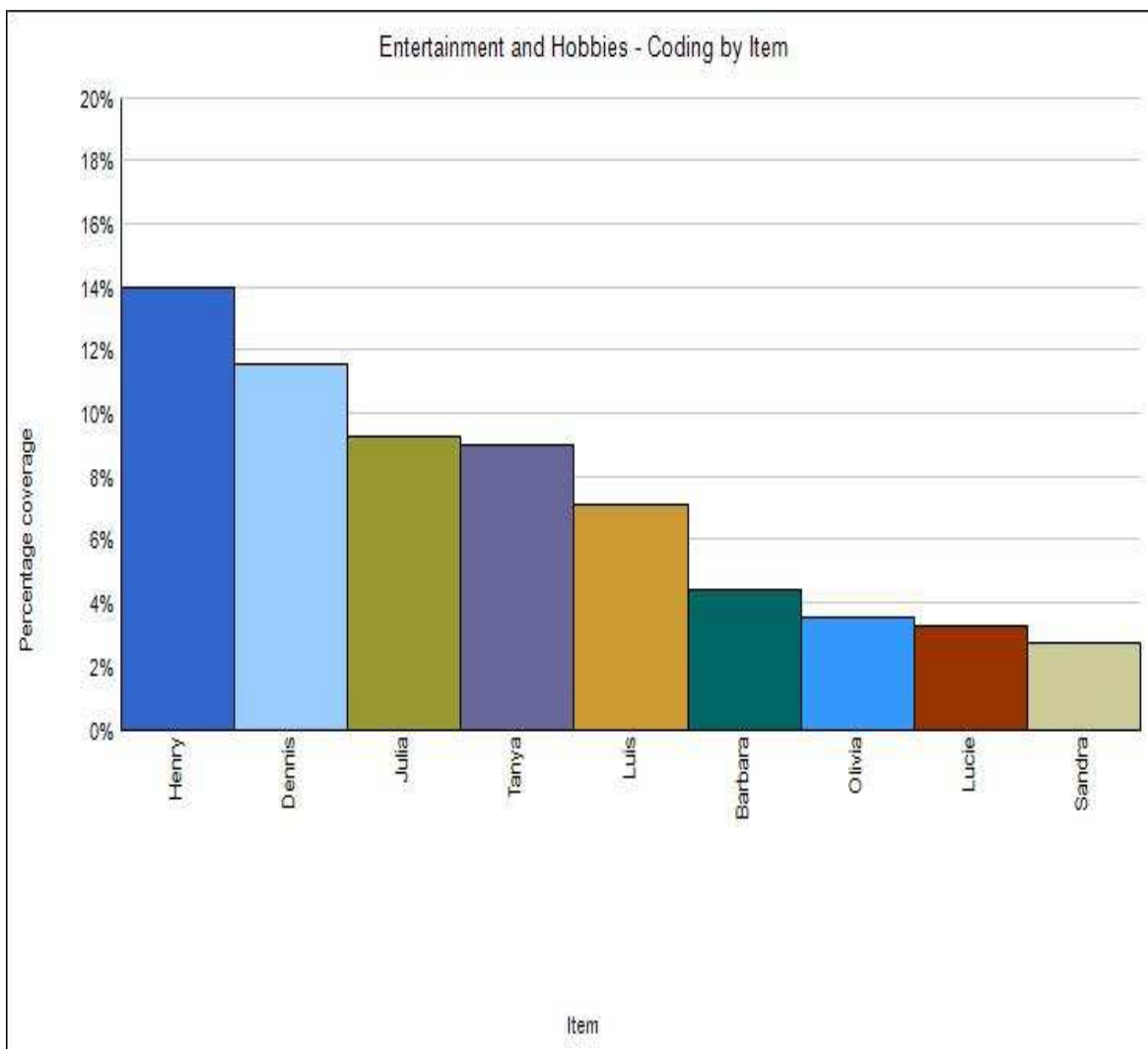


Looking at the graph in diagram 9, it telling that there is a particular sex in this case female that is talking more about family compared to the males, this is a quick way to communicate that information.

ENTERTAINMENT

Comparing entertainment preferences, it was discovered that parties, community gathering, and nightlife were clearly important for both men and women. Though it varied according to gender, age, and level of education as illustrated in diagram 10.

Diagram 10



“At weekends we party a lot if we are not working. We go to cheap and trendy, student bars in kallio that have free gigs. we also have parties in our apartment sometimes but we got a complaint about noise once so we have not had one in a while”(Julia)

Julia says they do parties at home the problem of doing that is that she gets complains from the neighbors, so she and friends visit cheap trendy students bars for entertainment.

7.3 MODALITY

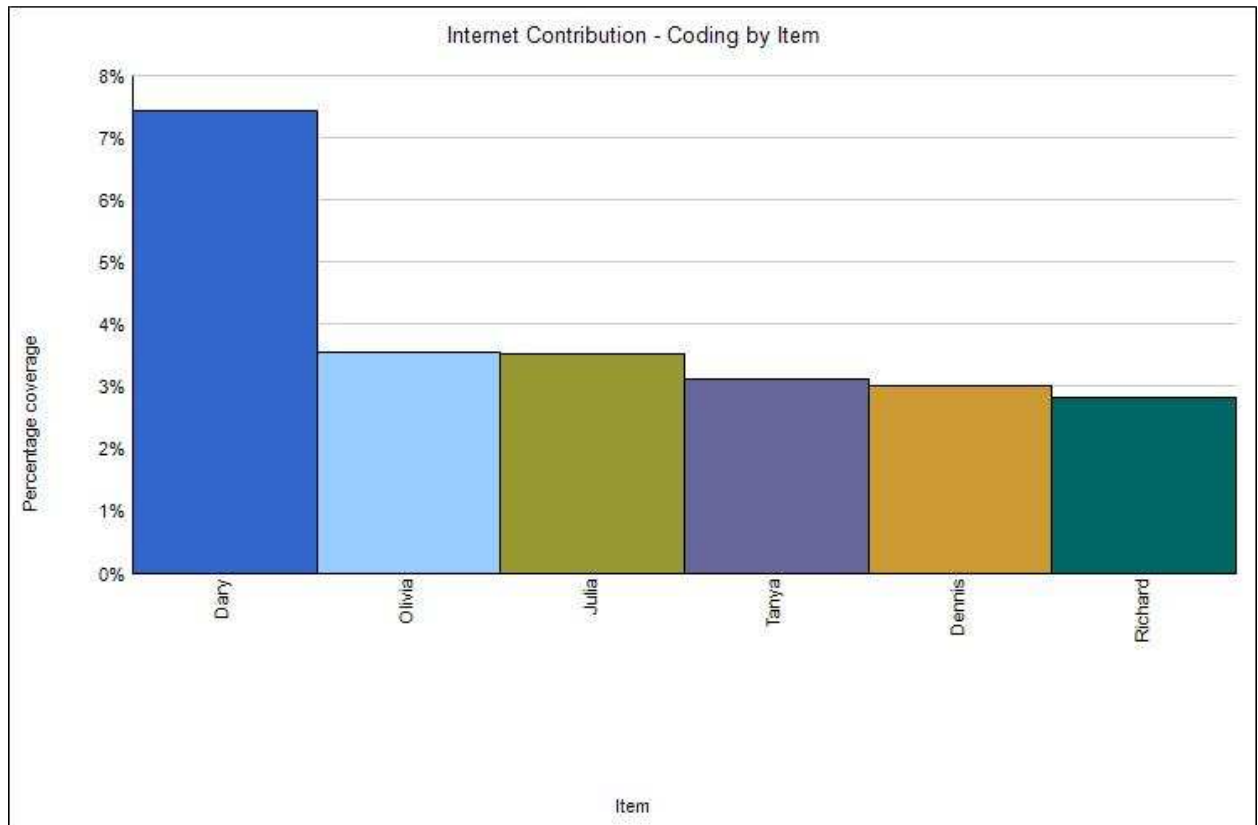
SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND TECHNOLOGY

The use of social media platforms and Skype were a very important part of the daily lives of the international students in the study. Internet facilities such as Facebook, WhatsApp, skype and other social media have provided good communication channels to the friends and families living in Finland and abroad. It has also promoted integration into Finnish society and local communities. The Internet has also provided for international students a place for the discussion of culture, entertainment, education, life in general and art.

The majority had daily contact with their friends and families abroad. However, some of the interviewees did mention that they felt that they had become more silent and introverted since they moved to Finland and this had been noted by friends and family. Some also felt that their own native language was suffering as they were not familiar with new words and expressions that had become part of daily usage during the time they had been away.

Diagram 6 shows graph of how much the 6 among the 13 interviewees talked about internet contribution in their lives here in Finland according to the transcripts.

Diagram 6



“I skype my family and I am so pleased with this technology as my children get to see my family back home and show them drawing they have done or cakes they have made. Both my family and my husband’s family have been very loving and supporting of our marriage.”(Lucie)

Lucie confirms that technology has been very important in her life because it has connected her family and has brought her relationship with the husband so close.

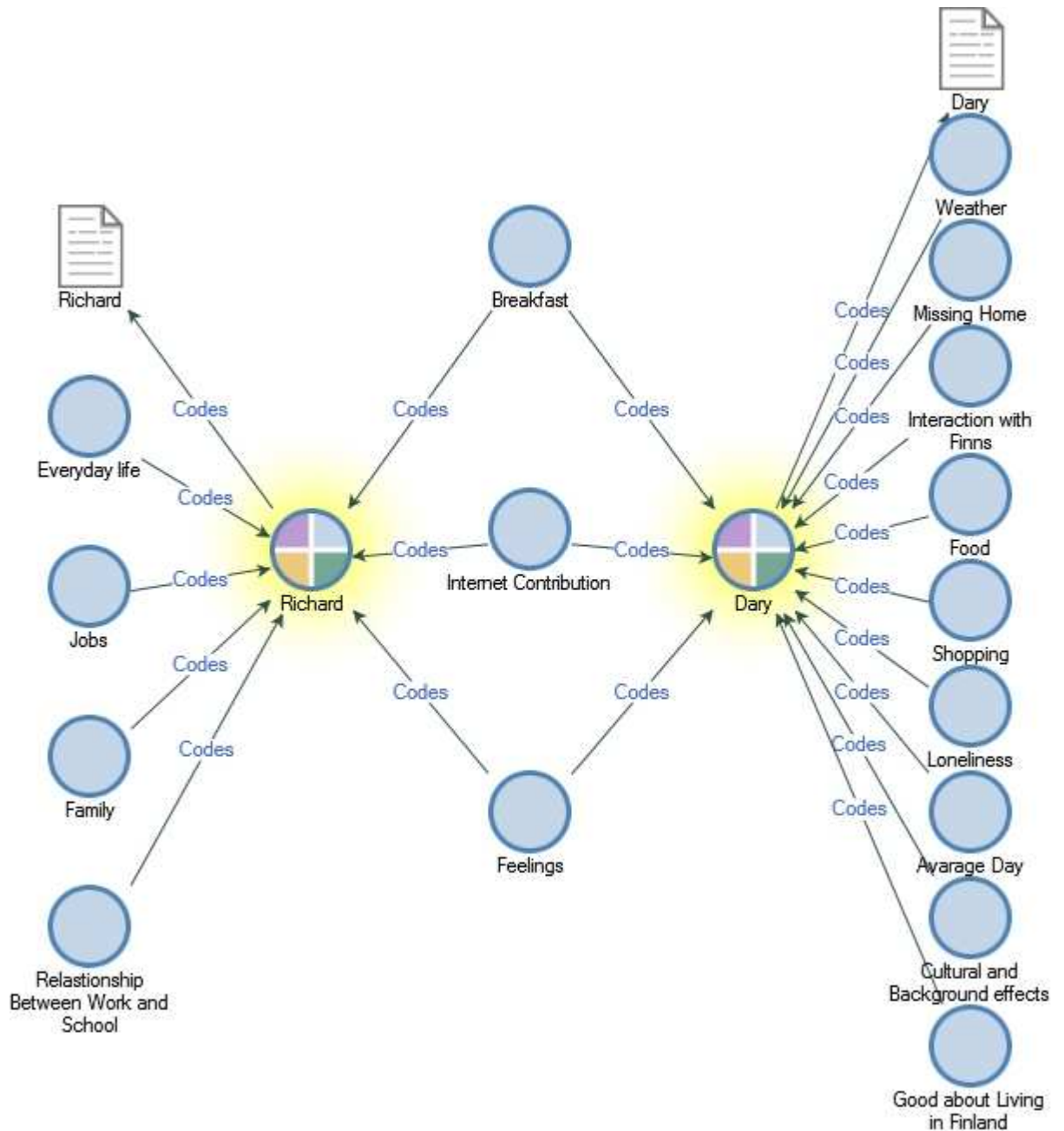
“I get a bit lonely sometimes. But I Skype and telegram my family in Iran about four times a week and we speak for about thirty to forty minutes each time. This makes me feel better and this is one thing that makes me happy.”(Dary)

Dary praises technology by saying how happy it makes her by sometimes taking away her loneliness when she talks with her distant family.

Diagram 7 below shows a comparison between 2 interviewees Richard and Dary and what they talked about, the commonalities and different other themes they talked about and still shows that internet contribution, breakfast, family and expressions of feelings was talked about by both of them. While Dary focused on more other topics such as weather, food, loneliness, and cultural back ground

effects. Richard on his part focused also on jobs and relationship between school and work which was different from what Dary was talking about.

Diagram 7



FRIENDS

The problems associated with making new friends from within the local populations are common for international students. According to the findings from our study, those that were, working, involved in church activities and team sports found it easier to make friends with Finns. The majority of those interviewed felt that language was also a barrier to forming friendships and that they found it hard to strike up meaningful conversations with Finns outside of the school environment. Some of those interviewed had forged friendships from contact with Finns at their part/time workplace but they reported that the majority of their close friends in Finland were other international students. One of the students in

the study had been living here for quite some time but reported that he felt very lonely in the evenings and weekends and had no close friends. He was not able to explain the reasons for this as he had not experienced such difficulties in his country of origin.

“I don’t really know many Finns. I know some from school but most of my friends are from my own country or region. We always sit together at lunch and Finns are welcome but well, we just seem to sit in our own groups.”(Luis)

Luis says even though they are in an international school they just find themselves sited in groups of their own kind however, the others are welcomed if they want to join.

“My husband is Finnish so that makes it a lot easier for me to make Finnish friends through him and his family. My mother-in-law is very nice and comes to visit the children a lot. I don’t want her to babysit them as they are already at playschool all day so I am the only one looking after them at weekends” (Lucie)

Lucie says because of his husband and his family she has been able to connect with many Finnish friends.

FOOD

Some of the students in the study had experienced initial problems adjusting to a different diet and food culture when they first arrived in Finland. There was, however, universal praise for the lunch provided at school in terms of the portion size, diversity of the menu and pricing. The majority of the students interviewed reported that they ate the school lunch on a near daily basis and those that did not make food and took it to school with them. One of the main differences noted was that though the meal’s main ingredients were often familiar, the usage of spices and flavouring was vastly different from that of their home countries. Some of the students used some Finnish recipes at home but the majority cooked dishes from their country of origin which required some special ingredients and spices that had to be sourced from ethnic shops.

According to, Kalekin-Fishman and Kelvin indeed, food and the senses then become potent sorcerers that help transport us across thousands of miles and all the years we have lived, back to our ‘homes’ to times and feelings of familiarity

and comfort, where we are able to relive more and more of our ‘madeleine’ moments. It is therefore indeed profitable to draw out how food and the senses might not only play into memories, which are often more embodied than verbal or textual but also how these are connected with the reproduction and negotiation of multiple identities for social actors in such transnational spaces.’ (Kalekin-Fishman and Kelvin 2010, 16)

“The secret to Finnish food is that if you don't have any allergy or something to do with religion, just eat everything and ask later ... what was that I just ate.”
(Julie)

Julie has a positive attitude towards food in that she just eats everything and will ask late of what she ate.

“It saves money to eat at school and my child eats lunch at day care during the week. Food is a big part of my budget and as I said I like to eat and use fresh ingredients. The food at school can be quiet bad but they always have salad and bread so it is good value for money.”(Nick)

Nick says that Food is a big part of his budget and that saves money by eating at school because its cheap there.

GOOD ABOUT LIVING IN FINLAND

Libraries, club rooms, and cinema services had been used actively but other culture. Services were less used. The role of schools and daycares was noted by students with families and schools and playschools were widely praised allowing those with children to pursue their studies. Some respondents initially felt unsure about leaving their children in daycare as in their culture care was assigned to family members or trusted friends. Despite these reservations, the students were very satisfied with the care provided. Some of the respondents had suffered racism but this was not an overwhelming theme of their narratives.

The graph below shows the number of interviewees who talked about the good of living in Finland.

Diagram 8

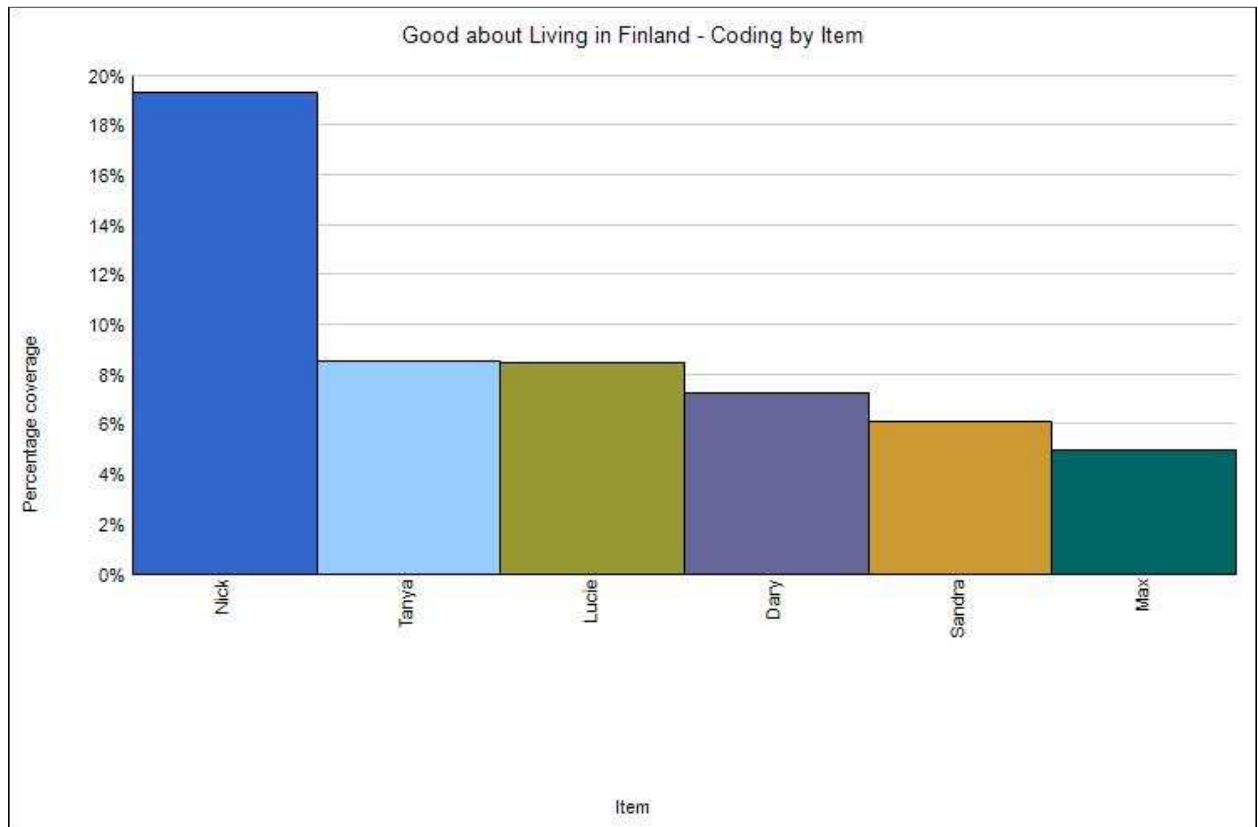


Diagram 8 illustrates how much 6 of the 13 interviewees thought that living in were good and how good it was. The graph in diagram 8 shows the percentage of the words that talked about good of living in Finland from all the transcribed interviews

“Studying in Finland has been a very good experience for me, but like many foreigners, what worry me are the chances of getting a job when I graduate. I live a good life here but my earnings are not meeting my expectations; I mean am earning enough but spending it all on the expensive Finnish system. I don't get to save anything. I am worried about the future.” (Lucie)

Lucie worries about the future because of her uncertainty to get work after graduation and due to expensive life in Finland. However there some things she enjoys about living in Finland.

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the overall satisfaction level of the students in the study, concerning their daily lives in Finland, was very high. Students without families had a range of recreational hobbies and some of those interviewed had found part-time work in non-skilled professions. The standard of student housing and the content of their study programmes were also highly praised. One of the primary concerns for all those interviewed was the high cost of living in Finland and many were worried about their abilities to finance themselves during their studies. Many of those interviewed expressed reservations about their opportunities to find work in their field after graduation and were fearful that they might be forced to leave a country they had grown to love.

Doing this research on the Everyday life of International students turned out to be something special, an idea opened itself, our teacher had this in her heart to find out more about international students outside and that's why this project was conducted. I came closer and saw the future of international students growing to a future they've been dreaming of .Every day we saw these in the faces of 16 international students who shared their special moments with us. What's special to all is being able to stand behind them as future social workers, using these findings social workers are able to do good guiding and counseling and are able to recommend clients to different places of services through networking. With assets all over Finland, the municipalities and social offices are able to help and make the special moments of international students come true.

9. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As an international student I already know part of how life is in this state, but during our interviews, I learnt from the interviewees that the most important thing in life is doing the absolute best in the present moment; this is one of the greatest principles. To be at you best spiritually, academically, physically and socially. A client said that with him it's all about relationships and that if you don't set the right goal, that goal can end up being destructive.

During the interaction with interviewees, I increased self-confidence after I had learnt to decide exactly what I want. Though we had no specific questions written for our clients I was able to direct the interview to achieve the results we were looking for.

I learnt how to be a good interviewer and now I know about interview ethics and several methods to ease interviews and gain more information.

APPENDIX

Consent letter

Name: _____

Date: _____

This form is to be completed by any individuals being asked to participate in the project THE EVERYDAY LIFE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS LIVING IN FINLAND by students of Diaconia University of Applied Science.

I give my consent to:

- Interview of Everyday life project (interview)
- Audio (voice recording which will not be used in presentation)
- Still images (photographs)

I accept that the subsequent use may be in a number of media, including but not limited to print, digital and electronic use by Musambi Mark herein referred to as the producers and/or by agents authorized by the producers.

The producers and/or agents authorized by the producers will make the image(s) available to the general public via the internet, in storage devices like DVD and printed at public places.

I hereby grant the producers permission to use for educational and/or advocacy purposes via web-based and other digital/print mediums.

By signing this form I confirm that this consent form has been explained to me in terms which I understand

Signature(s) of person(s)
Giving consent

Signature of official

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