



**Discrimination against foreigners working in the restaurant field:
Focus on the capital area of Finland**

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Abstract

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Introduction: This thesis studies discrimination occurring against foreigners who work in the restaurant field in Helsinki, Espoo, or Vantaa. The main objective is to find out about the experiences of workplace discrimination in the capital area of Finland. Discrimination is a phenomenon that has been recently occurred more frequently in the media in recent years.

Theory: The main focus is on legal discrimination defined by the law of Finland; the Non-Discrimination Act law, labor law, and the collective agreement. Discrimination is an issue that many face regularly, especially the minorities of a country. There are also many negative effects of discrimination that affect those who face it, both mental and physical health are shown to be poorer in people who are discriminated against. Some even cope with it in negative ways with excess drinking or smoking. One of the biggest problems is that many are afraid to speak out about their experiences, which makes it harder to raise awareness on this topic to help combat it.

Materials and methods: This is a qualitative research study. The study was conducted by doing semi-structured interviews amongst 6 different people who have worked or are still working in the restaurant field. The participants had to have moved to Finland after the age of 18, not have had previous knowledge of Finnish, and had at least 6 months of work experience in the restaurant field. The participants were reached out through a Facebook group called "Foreigners living in Finland".

Results: During the interviews were asked about the participants' background, work experience, if they have experienced discrimination to what they think could be potential solutions to workplace discrimination. The interviews revealed that discrimination has not been a major issue in the restaurant field in the capital area of Finland but proved that many have seen others discriminated against. Only two had faced discrimination, but one cannot be sure what for. Many solutions to stopping discrimination were offered, such as an integration system during recruiting and making it easier for everyone to reach out for help in case they are discriminated against.

Conclusion: Although the majority of the participants had not faced discrimination, other issues arose during the interviews, such as workers being taken advantage of for not knowing their rights. Protecting the worker and human rights is important and there is room for bettering the Finnish work system in making sure people are not being discriminated against as everyone deserves to be treated equally and fairly.

Keywords

Discrimination, foreigner, restaurant field, worker rights

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1 Introduction

This thesis is studying about discrimination against foreigners living in the capital area of Finland, who have either applied or are working in the restaurant field. With the capital, the area is meant in this context Helsinki, Espoo, and Vantaa. Although Finland has laws against discrimination, there have still been reported incidents of discrimination in recent years. Moreover, even though these laws exist, it is still difficult to be able to prove such incidents to have truly been cases of discrimination as most are hidden.

Finland and other countries in the world have done several research papers on discrimination, from gender to ethnicity to age. (Jasinskaja-Lahti, et al., 2012) A law against discrimination exists in all of the European Union (Council Directive, 2000) but it does not mean discrimination has vanished completely. (Mannila, 2021) Although several reports have been published, they often take years to gather, so when the results are public, the information can be years old and can be considered outdated as new information might have surfaced by the time of publishing. Although not all research papers or case studies are from the last few years, they prove that a trend is forming. The fact that discrimination is still happening indicates that more should be done to prevent it.

There are many similar papers and case studies made on discrimination (Mannila, 2021; Ahmad, 2020; Jasinskaja-Lahti, et al., 2012), but not specifically on foreigners living in Helsinki, Vantaa, or Espoo that are also working in the restaurant field. Even when trying to find information about foreigners in the working field in Finland, there is very little information to be found. Moreover, on the website of statistics Finland, much of the data collected is not recent, some are four or five years old, and any statistics concerning foreigners are limited. (Statistics Finland, 2014) Moreover, there is little to no data on the background of the participants' answers, such as the percentage of each nationality. The results can be misleading as the number of participants is not transparent.

In this thesis, the term "foreigner" is used a lot. The term refers to people who were born abroad or have non-Finn parents. They have often immigrated to Finland after the age of 18 and have no prior Finnish or Swedish language knowledge. Additionally, the word "restaurant field" is mentioned and means in this context any work in the restaurant, such as waiter, dishwasher, bartender, and host. The word "F&B" or food and beverage field is not used as this thesis does not include nightclubs, venues, or bars. The choice to narrow the field of interest relies on the author's personal work experience knowledge and additionally to narrow down the focus group for the qualitative study.

On the website of Statistics Finland, (2014) discrimination against a person's race or nationality is described as uncommon, yet the report is not transparent on how many in total were interviewed or answered a questionnaire, nor the number of people from each age, gender, or nationality group are specified. On the contrary, in a survey conducted in 2018 (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights), Finland was found to be the most racist country in the EU. Between the two surveys were four years, so the results are naturally different. Moreover, the number of foreigners in Finland becomes greater every year. (Statistics Finland, 2020)

The reason why discrimination is bad is not only because it's illegal but also harmful to people's mental and physical health. Finland's population is aging and in decline, as not enough children are born (Statistics Finland, 2021), so one of the solutions is to have people from abroad come work in Finland. (Sisäministeriö, 2022; Lassila & Valkonen, 2021) Having a multicultural work environment with people from different nationalities and mindsets have been proven to be beneficial for most companies. (Honka & Saarto, 2020)

The author of this thesis is a native Finn that also looks like a typical Finn with blonde hair and blue eyes. In short, although the author did not have a lot of work experience before moving to Switzerland in 2016, she never experienced, at least to her knowledge, discrimination in Finland. Even in Switzerland, from the outside, many locals would mistake her for another local until she would open her mouth. On the contrary, in the workplace, she was belittled when demanding her rights to respect the working hours, free days, and fair payment. Discrimination seemed to be happening even in the recruitment phase as after hundreds of applications were sent, there would only be a negative answer or none at all.

Switzerland is a very conservative country. In one canton, women were granted the right to vote only in the 1990s. (Switzerland Is Yours, 2013) Although Switzerland's population consists of approximately 25 percent of foreigners (Federal Statistical Office, 2021), there still occurs racism and discrimination. Moreover, the discrimination is against both the foreigners and the native Swiss in different-speaking cantons. (Swiss Info, 2021)

As Switzerland is situated in the middle of the EU, next to Germany, France, Italy, and Austria, many neighboring countries choose to move to Switzerland often for work or family reasons. (Université de Neuchâtel, 2021) Those with a foreign passport often are offered a lower salary than the native Swiss. (Bundesamt für Statistik, 2020) As every canton can choose its laws, a minimum payment does not necessarily exist, which means that some workers might be paid thousands of Swiss francs less than others for the same work. (Janicke, 2022)

After two and a half years, the author returned to Finland for studies and briefly after started to work. But as she was very content with her work experience, many of her school colleagues who are foreigners complained about the unfair advantage in recruitment and struggled to find a job. Additionally, some of the author's work colleagues mentioned similarly that they are not treated fairly in the workplace or are often not given the chance to work if their Finnish is not fluent even though they might only work as a food runner or help set up tables. In a position like that, it's hardly unlikely to need to know perfect Finnish.

With all the experiences in Switzerland, the author could be more understanding of the discriminatory situation happening both in Finland and other countries. Although the author's experience was nothing that some face daily or more severely, she did no longer think that Finland or Switzerland were countries where discrimination did not exist. It is easy to think it does not as long as a person is not experiencing it her/himself. It might be therefore harder to sympathize with the victim, hence many think it is non-existent as Finland has human rights laws and Non-Discrimination Act law. (Finlex, 2014) Sadly, it is still a relevant issue that needs to be tackled. This is ultimately why the author decided on this topic to shine a light on the issues. Because hiding discrimination or racism is not going to make it go away.

Each year more and more people immigrate to Finland (Statistics Finland, 2021), and most of them want to settle in the bigger cities in southern Finland, Helsinki is the most popular. (Statistics Finland, 2020) It is more likely to be able to find work in English in the capital area as it is the most international, and as the international airport is close, most tourists need customer service in English. The population of Finland is also rapidly aging as not enough children are born, hence why it is important to have a workforce from abroad to combat the shortage of workers in Finland. (Statistics Finland, 2021)

Not much or close to no research have yet been made specifically on discrimination against foreigners living in Finland, specifically in the capital area, nor on the discrimination occurring in the restaurant field. There is a research gap, which is necessary to fill. The Uusimaa area is the one with most foreigners living there and although many foreigners can work in most restaurants in the area in English, it does not mean that discrimination has completely disappeared. Moreover, many discriminatory incidents are not always reported (Zheng, 2020), so the numbers are not entirely accurate.

Many international students have come to Finland either on exchange or to study full-time. It is free to study in Finland if one is a European citizen, making it an appealing choice to study in. Yet, many students struggle to find a job, which is one of the first discriminatory practices focused on in this thesis; recruitment discrimination, and another one is workplace discrimination. As international people find little to no work, they often return to their home countries. (Yle, 2019) Finland offers free education that is paid for by the workers who pay taxes but then if the students are not able to work, they cannot pay any taxes back to the government.

This is a research-based thesis. The goal is to do qualitative interviews of 7 to 10 people, interviewing foreigners living in the capital area of Finland who have worked or are currently working in the restaurant field. The main research question is to find out whether discrimination occurs in the restaurant field. The sub-objectives are to find out what type of discrimination they have experienced and what are ways to combat discrimination in their opinion. All of the interviews will be anonymous, revealing only the nationality and gender of the participants. It is done anonymously to ensure the participants' rights as well as make sure they can be as honest in their answers as possible. The interviews will consist of approximately 10 questions, lasting around 30 minutes, and will be semi-structured in case more questions or new issues can be discussed further. This thesis uses the Harvard referencing method.

2 Discrimination

Discrimination means that someone is treated inferiorly to others because of their personal traits. Discrimination is often prohibited in the law in most countries. According to the Equality law, no one should be discriminated against for their ethnicity, gender, nationality, language, religion, opinion, belief, political action, union action, family relationship, health, invalidity, sexual orientation, or any other personal trait. There can be both direct and indirect discrimination. (Yhdenvertaisuus valtuutettu, 2022)

Examples of discrimination of the above-mentioned definition are gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or race. Discrimination is prohibited by law (equality.fi, 2015), yet it still occurs. (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2018) Discrimination is often caused by prejudice and bias, additionally, some discriminatory acts are hidden discrimination that even the person discriminating against another, he or she might not know what they are doing is wrong. Not all discrimination is lawful discrimination. (Citizens Advice, 2022)

Direct discrimination happens when someone is discriminated against because of who they are, whom someone thinks they are, and/or someone they are with. It is only unlawful discrimination if someone is treated differently or worse because of protected characteristics. Direct discrimination is acceptable in cases of age when older people and people belonging to the risk group are offered a vaccine before the rest of the population. (Citizens Advice, 2022) Bad customer service does not equal discrimination, especially if it happens similarly to everyone. (Yhdenvertaisuus valtuutettu, 2022)

As discrimination is illegal, more often there is hidden discrimination. The complete definition of hidden discrimination is behavior that may not be intentionally discriminatory but may be perceived as offensive. It can be subtle. (IGI Global, 2022) In short, hidden discrimination, although illegal, is harder to prove. According to Lily Zheng (2020) many who have experienced discrimination that less than fifty percent of discriminatory victims have filed formal reports. The reason often is that the worker does not feel safe in their workplace or fear it will affect their work negatively. This then shows that discrimination happens more than what is officially reported. But as these are not reported, it can be hard to know the real numbers, which results in only speculation and the number of cases can be potentially many more, or not.

No one is born a racist or a person who discriminates against others for who they are, it is always learned from parents, environment, and people surrounding them. People from previous generations have often more conservative beliefs because of their upbringing. In most cases, discrimination is solely caused by fear and misunderstanding. (American

Psychology Association, 2019) Some people are used to their own culture and the way their nation behaves in academic and business life, so when they meet others of different cultures, it can be hard to understand why they do things differently.

Some learn about different cultures only briefly, for example from a young age, children are taught to “eat your food because there are African children who are starving” to make children finish their meals and be content they have food on their table. Certain “harmless” sentences are engraved in peoples’ heads until later, especially if they have not met anyone from Africa personally. These people might still believe every African is starving and poor, although Africa is a huge continent with 54 countries.

An article written in 2013 by Palomaa says that the Finnish study books still heavily portrayed the stereotypes of different nations and cultures, which explains why some Finns might believe them to this day. The article explains how Russia is still portrayed as being a threat and scary and how the schoolbooks describe other nationalities or countries through the typical stereotypes. In the article, a teacher in Nokia elementary school adds that it is then ultimately the teacher’s job to further educate the pupils to give them a broader perspective. (Palomaa, 2013)

The people who face the most discrimination are the minority groups of a country. (Oudhof, 2007) As an example, in Finland the majority of the people are light-skinned with light hair, and the minority are those that have darker skin tone and have darker hair color. Some of the minorities in Finland are Roma people, Sámi people, and immigrants. People can also be discriminated against for multiple reasons, if they, for example, are both gay and an immigrant (Yhdenvertaisuus.fi, 2022).

2.1 Stereotypes

The definition of stereotype: a simplified and standardized conception or image invested with special meaning and held in common by members of a group. (Dictionary.com, 2022) An example of a stereotype is to say, “every Finn is quiet” or “every Spaniard is loud”. Not all stereotypes are negative, but some can have very negative connotations to them that can start to affect their ability to find a job or make friends.

The media does not help as many criminal cases have been made by a person with a foreign background (Conzo, et al., 2021), which is often highlighted. Foreigners are often portrayed in a negative light by the media, which plays a big role in shaping the views of the public on foreigners. (Diepenbrock, 2016) Moreover, the media can portray anyone positively or negatively, which can add to the prejudice against foreigners.

Negative stereotypes, such as “all foreigners are violent” or “all Muslim women are suppressed” are more examples of how little most people know about the person individually and how they are put all in the same box without any question. Refugees who are forced to leave their home countries must have a hard time on its own when entering a completely foreign country with a different language and culture, additionally, they often face the most discrimination and racism. (Nichols, et al., 2021)

There are many immigrants in Finland, some have come with a refugee status while others have simply moved for work or family. A refugee is a person who has been admitted to a shelter in a country. (Sisäministeriö, 2022) On the other hand, a person who has emigrated to a country, an immigrant, is someone who has moved from another country. (THL, 2021) There is a term specifically for those immigrants who move for work: expatriates. Expatriates or, in short, ex-pats are individuals who are living and/or working in a country other than their own. (Kagan, 2021) Refugees might find it harder to find a job because of the lack of language skills and local work knowledge. (Abo-Sasha, et al., 2012)

Akhlaq Ahmad made a research study where he tested the theory of whether the name mattered in the job application (2020). He sent five thousand applications of five different nationalities, Finnish, English, Russian, Somali, and Iraqi origin, with the same language skills and skill proficiency, yet the applicant with the Finnish name was considerably asked more times for a job interview. A similar case study was done in 2012 between a Finn and a Russian. It was proven that the Russian had to send twice as many applications as the Finn to be asked for a job interview. (Jasinskaja-Lahti, et al.)

It does not mean automatically that if a person is not considered for a job, discrimination has something to do with it. But several case studies prove otherwise, which is why anonymous recruiting has been introduced in certain fields. (Yle, 2018) In anonymous recruiting the person’s skills are only shown, not their name or picture. Many qualified and skilled workers might not even be considered due to their nationality or name. Moreover, if a person has acquired work experience or studied abroad, it is often not considered the same in Finland (Yle, 2021), which can result in an experienced worker not being given the chance to show their skills or struggling to fully find work in their field.

2.2 Bias and prejudice

Bias is a term that refers to an opinion that has been made before getting to know a person or a thing. It is mostly the cause of ignorance because one does not know the

topic or person, so one has to guess, generalize, or prematurely judge it. Biases are often targeted toward human groups such as ethnicities, nationalities, or minority groups. Biases can prevent getting to know one another or respecting someone. In worst cases, biases can lead to discrimination and racism. (Mannerheimin lastensuojeluliitto, 2022)

Stereotypes are often the reason why people have biases towards others, positive or negative ones. Many might not even acknowledge having a bias towards someone or something, which can be the reason why some people think they are not being biased or discriminatory. (Steinhauser, 2020) This is why anonymous recruiting is one way to resolve this issue. In this recruiting method, the people with the most skills will be chosen, rather than pushed to the side because they by chance have a foreign name.

When one has a positive stereotype, it can be advantageous for them in making friends or finding a job. On the contrary, negative stereotypes can be majorly harmful to individuals. These types of biases and prejudices cause many to be overlooked for a job opportunity or any chance at all. In reality, a person has encountered a negative experience with one individual, but because that person happened to be from a certain nationality, religion, or color of skin, many will identify every other individual similarly. (Steinhauser, 2020)

People who are prematurely judged will often not be given a chance to prove the stereotypes wrong. They will also experience discrimination based on no actual or factual merit. In Finland, it can be hard to find a job if one does not know the correct people, therefore being considered for a job as a foreigner already puts one at a disadvantage over Finns. No outsider can know why one is turned down for a job, so these are merely speculations. Even if it cannot be proven, many cases have shown foreigners to be at a disadvantage when applying for a job. (Jasinskaja-Lahti, et al., 2012; Ahmad, 2020)

Currently, in most job applications, one must put their name, age, address, nationality, and picture. All of which can subject a person to a disadvantage and can be discriminated against. Many job applications ask for a video CV or additionally the applicant to respond in video form to certain questions. Even in this case the applicant's accent can easily be a reason to disqualify them over their skills. As a way to stop peoples' biases and prejudices blinding their judgment in choosing good candidates, anonymous recruiting has been slowly introduced as an alternative method.

In anonymous recruiting, the applicant's name, gender, age, nationality as well as pictures are not placed on the application, only his/her skills. It is a step for the better although it is still not perfect. Most of the time, the applicant still needs to go through a job interview where prejudices can still happen and result in discrimination. Moreover, some job

applications require fluent Finnish skills even if it might not be necessary for the job. (Nichols, et al., 2021)

2.3 Negative effects of discrimination

It was said that by mid-2019 279 million people would be living outside of their home country. (Caqueo-Urizar, et al., 2020) As more people live in countries they are not originally from, for example, refugees or other migrants, many will need to adapt to a completely different culture as well as language. Most people move to another country in hopes of better living conditions or options either school or work-wise. Nonetheless, they might still experience the negative sides, such as discrimination, labor exploitation, which then negatively affect their well-being. (Caqueo-Urizar, et al., 2020) It also depends on the age when people move to a new country, as younger people are often easier to adapt to cultural changes or new languages than older people. (Guzmán, et al., 2001)

Besides being an immigrant in a country, many were born or lived their whole lives there. Even though the people might look different on the outside than the majority of Finns, with different skin colors or eye shapes, they are still Finns. Many Asians or Africans face stereotypes. (Hassan, 2018; Hong, 2020; Palomaa, 2013) There are sayings such as “all Asians are Chinese” even though Asia is a continent and has 47 countries besides China. At the beginning of 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, it was scary for many. As it was known to have first been discovered in Wuhan, China, many people around the world started to blame all Asians for it. (NPR, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2020) Xenophobia started to play a big role in the lives of many and affected them negatively. Xenophobia is the fear or hatred of strangers or foreigners (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

As many categorized all Asians as the same, most Chinese-looking people became the blame for the pandemic, although they potentially had never even visited China. In the United States of America, the hatred became soon violent as some Asian spa parlors were burned and some Asians were violently attacked and even burned alive. (Cabral, 2021) After the beginning of the pandemic, more than 9 000 Anti-Asian cases had been reported. (NPR, 2021) What has made the matters worse is that in several countries the leaders have either directly or indirectly encouraged hate crimes toward Asians. (Human Rights Watch, 2020)

Media is one of the many places that people find information, but as social media became more popular it made it even harder for some to know what information shared is factual. Although it is said that media affects now fewer people’s opinions than in the past, one cannot say it does not influence at all. The media has been asked to not report things that

have no relevance to the story, such as that the person is a foreigner, yet it still happens often today. This is a harmful way to influence people's thoughts on certain human groups. It causes negative stereotypes and people's biases towards certain people. This in result can be so harmful to the point of even causing some individuals to be outcasted from society: not hired, bullied, or discriminated against. (Haavisto, et al., 2010)

Although the Finnish population has become more open and welcoming towards immigrants, there are still many who are opposed to foreigners coming to Finland. A study made in 2007 (Jaakkola, 2009) studied the way Finns viewed foreigners. It proved that in the bigger southern cities of Finland, Helsinki, Tampere, and Turku, the overall consensus was that they were more accepting of foreigners coming to work in Finland than in other cities. The results of the study showed how people living in rural places were less open to foreign companies opening as they were worried about their own income.

There has been made significant improvement in the attitudes towards foreigners but there are still biases and prejudices against them. Akhlaq Ahmad wrote about how many foreigners face unemployment and its reasons. One of the issues is the fact that Finland does not consider degrees or work experience gained abroad equal to those achieved in Finland. This has resulted in many not being able to work in the field of their degree or expertise. Another issue is that there is very little trust towards immigrants, which will then result in not even having the chance to be hired. (Ahmad, 2010)

Ahmad also made a study where he answered to 400 job applications as himself. He is originally from Pakistan and was a little over 30 years old at the time of the study. He applied by calling and writing. He only received six job applications out of the 400 he sent out, so in total only 1,5%. He received a negative answer to 63 applications with reasons, and the biggest reason from almost half of the applications (48%) was "the job offer is still available but technically has already gone". 19% was for the lack of Finnish language although the applicant spoke Finnish in the interview with the recruiters and some even said that his Finnish was not good enough and had to be perfect as an excuse to tell he is unqualified for the job although he had work experience and was able to communicate and understand everything during the interviews. (Ahmad, 2010)

Workplace discrimination has been studied and has shown that people who have experienced discrimination have overall less motivation and their work performance suffers, which then negatively affects the business. The people who face discrimination have been shown to not only have effects on their mental but also physical health, as well as higher levels of physical distress. There have even been linked negative coping

mechanisms by people who have been racially discriminated against or workplace bullying with smoking or heavy alcohol use. (Etheridge, 2015)

A wealth of psychological research shows that discrimination can worsen stress. Discrimination-related stress has been linked to mental health issues, even affecting children. (American Psychology Association, 2015) American Psychology Association, or in short APA, made a study where they asked how many Americans experience workplace discrimination. This study showed that 69% reported having experienced discrimination, and 61 percent said to have experienced it day-to-day, such as having been treated unfairly. Discrimination has also been linked to higher stress levels and health issues. (American Psychology Association, 2015)

As many people might experience discrimination, which affects their overall health and well-being negatively, there are also ways to deal with the issue at hand. In Finland, it is a crime to discriminate against anyone and there are also ways for people to seek help. For example, in the case of workplace discrimination, it is advised to report it to one's employer. It is suggested that these conversations are also marked in writing so it can be easier for another, possibly a legal person, to know in detail what was discussed. Another person besides the employer to talk to is the workplace representative. If the situation cannot be resolved with either one, it is best to call the Nationwide Telephone Service of OSH authorities where a person can report the incident anonymously. It is suggested that a person does the reporting sooner than later as the cases have expiration dates and might not be able to report any longer. (Työsuojeluhallinto, 2022)

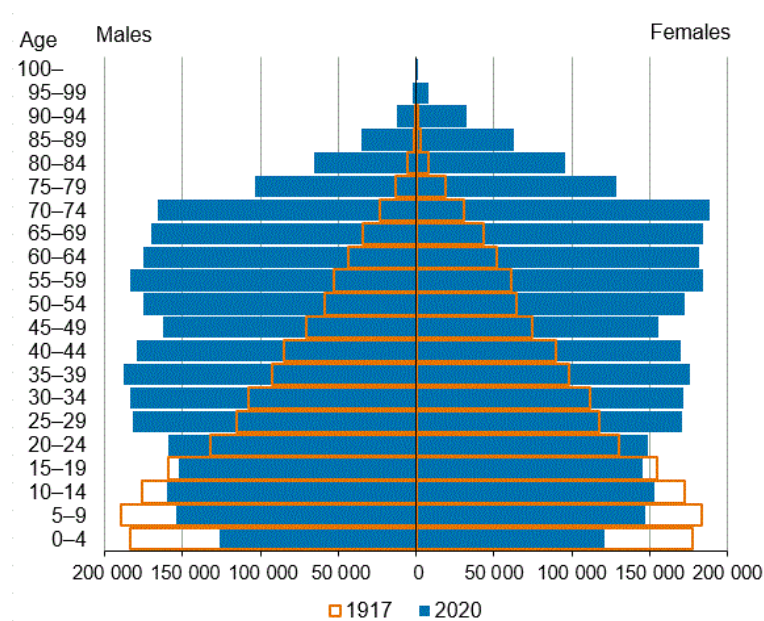
3 Population and work structure

Multiculturalism has many definitions but simply said the term means that there is a co-existence of diverse cultures, such as religious, racial, or cultural groups. In short, it means that people of different cultures can co-exist, work or study and there is no discriminatory behavior towards minorities as they would be accepted. (Editeur, 2015)

Finland's population is rapidly declining as there are fewer people born, and although there are more immigrants moving to Finland yearly, there are also many who emigrate from Finland to other countries. Many companies also do diversity management as they have noticed it has been beneficial for them. Workers are needed but discrimination makes it not so inviting for work. If one wants foreign workers, the attitudes towards them need to change.

3.1 Demographics of Finland

Finland's population is small compared to the total area of Finland. There lives only approximately 5,5 million people in Finland. Compared to the year 2000, Finland's population is decreasing and there are almost equal or more people over the age of 50 than people aged between 25 to 50. (Statistics Finland, 2021) Although Finland gains yearly more immigrants, simultaneously there is a fraction of people who emigrate away from Finland. (Statistics Finland, 2020)



Picture 1: Population structure of Finland (Statistics Finland, 2021)

In the population structure of Finland (picture 1) one can see the difference between the structure over 100 years ago. In 1917, there were more children and workers than older

people (people aged over 60). On the contrary, in 2020 the population structure has changed and is becoming wider at the top than the bottom. It shows how fewer children are born overall compared to 1917, and although workers (aged 25-64) and pensioners (aged 65-74) are fairly equal, the situation can easily change in just a couple of years that there will be more pensioners than workers.

There are advantages to having fewer children born as more people will most likely be working as women will not be on maternity leave. It is helpful for the economy for many years but there are consequences in having fewer people born as the population is then in decline and the population slowly just keeps on aging and it is harmful to the economy. The way to combat this is to have a faster solution than more children born, and it is to have a labor force from abroad come to Finland. (Lassila & Valkonen, 2021)

The problem with having more pensioners than workers is that there will not only be a labor shortage but the number of people paying taxes. In Finland, the healthcare, school, and schoolbooks (in high school one has to pay for them, but before they are provided by the school) and school lunch is mainly free or the cost is very minimal. If there are not enough people paying taxes, these services can no longer be provided in the same way. There have already been made many cutbacks in some schools or health care centers in smaller towns where they had to be shut down and combined with one of the nearest bigger town or city. (Hiilloskorpi & Niemonen, 2020) This results in people having to do a long commute, which can be problematic, especially for poorer people. In cases of emergencies, it can result in more severe injuries or even death when having to wait for a long time for an ambulance or having to drive or commute to the nearest hospital.

As Finland has a labor shortage, there has already been talking about finding workers from abroad. As many fields need expert knowledge, there are not enough people in Finland who can fill those positions. Moreover, there are many that are considered by many as "lower-end" jobs such as construction work or cleaners that many are not willing to do and therefore have a labor shortage. (Sisäministeriö, 2022) On the negative side it might cause people to take advantage of these foreign workers and use them for cheap labor. That's why it is important to have a proper integration system for all the workers.

3.2 Benefits of having diversity in the workplace

It is beneficial to have innovative and creative people in the workplace. Most people from different cultures think differently and have different opinions, which can then result in varied perspectives. For a company to stand out from its competitors, it needs to be innovative and do things differently than others. This goal can be reached by having

cultural diversity but also an open-minded staff as well the recruiters. (Honka & Saarto, 2020)

Especially now that the Finnish population is slowly aging and in decline, the solution for it is to find workers from different countries. (Sisäministeriö, 2022) Most of the foreigners will have different cultures, mindsets, and ways they work. But the way a company can expand and come up with innovative ideas and differ from its competitors is to do things differently, offer different and better services. If companies encourage and listen to their workers, the work environment will then be then better, which in result will create higher motivation and productivity from the employees. Having greater productivity will then result in higher profits for the company. (Findix, 2019)

When employees feel appreciated and there is a positive work environment, the workers are most likely going to stay at the company. (Findix, 2019) This can save the company lot of money as they will not need to train many new workers, instead, they will have workers who can work independently and well, which will increase productivity and therefore also the profits as they have experience in their work. This does not mean that only those with multicultural work environments have employees who are appreciated but it's something that helps change the direction of the company positively.

Many people talk about their work in their free time with their close ones. If the workplace is a good one, the employees might recommend the workplace to their friends or family, but if it's a bad one, the reputation can soon spread. Having a good company reputation can then result in a better recruitment process and therefore having well-qualified candidates for hire. (Findix, 2019; Honka & Saarto, 2020) All in all, having an open-minded company that wants to better by starting from its workforce can result in many positive outcomes in the long run.

4 Legal framework

Everyone must have felt at least once in their life that they were treated unfairly. Although many feel that they are being discriminated against or treated unfairly, it does not always necessarily mean they truly are discriminated against, at least in Finnish law. It is important to note in this thesis the difference between legal discrimination and non-legal. In this thesis, the focus is on legal discrimination.

In Finland, the Equality Law was conducted in 1987. The latest and updated Non-Discrimination Act Law (NDA) was published on the 30th of December in 2014 and made public at the beginning of 2015. (Opetushallitus, 2022) According to the unofficial English translation of the NDA (Ministry of Justice, 2014), it says as follows:

“(1) No one may be discriminated against on the basis of age, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, political activity, trade union activity, family relationships, state of health, disability, sexual orientation, or other personal characteristics. Discrimination is prohibited, regardless of whether it is based on a fact or assumption concerning the person him/herself or another.

(2) In addition to direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, denial of reasonable accommodation as well as an instruction or order to discriminate constitute discrimination as referred to in this Act.”

This law would not be necessary unless people would not have experienced discrimination. Even though this law was conducted many years ago, in 2014, cases of discrimination have surfaced in the media in recent years. (Yle, 2021; Yle, 2019; Yle, 2021; Yle, 2021; Yle, 2021; Yle, 2021) It is more concerning that although the law exists, its “rules” are vague, which can easily result in a “he-said-she-said” situations. Meaning that if someone were to discriminate against another person, but only the parties involved were present (the discriminator and the victim), it could easily not be valid in court as no proof could be provided if the discriminator were to deny his/her actions.

Additionally, treating someone differently does not immediately mean someone is being discriminated against. For example, even the Non-Discrimination Act Law says that if there is a good reason for treating someone differently even if it cannot be proven, it is allowed. (Ministry of Justice, 2014) This is understandably written in a way that in case someone wants to pursue legal action against someone based on discrimination, each case will be analyzed thoroughly, instead of dismissing it because it was not exactly how the law says. It does still mean that people who are discriminated against can easily have their cases dismissed or not want to pursue their complaints because they are afraid or do not want to deal with, possibly, years of a legal battle.

It is important to note that treating someone differently is human and empathetic in some cases, and it would be impossible to treat everyone a hundred percent equally. There is a reason why elderly people are given the privilege to have a seat on public transport over younger people. Although it is common sense to most, some still find it to be unfair and discriminatory towards them, which then is not legally binding as the NDA does not consider it to be legally discriminatory. (Ministry of Justice, 2014)

4.1 Foreigners moving to Finland after the age of 18

As the Finnish language is mainly spoken in Finland, people moving to the country do not often have prior knowledge of the language. The Finnish language is part of the Uralic languages, the closest language being Estonian and a distant relative being Hungarian. The grammar of the language is considered one of the hardest in the world with 15 different declinations. (Yle, 2013) Moreover, a majority of Finns speak or understand English at a basic level and many learning the language tend to not feel the need to use Finnish in their day-to-day lives. (Irina, 2015)

Foreigners moving to Finland are often offered the chance to learn the language. Foreign people married to a Finn as well as refugees are some among others who are given the chance to attend an integration Finnish course by the TE Office, which is the office people seek help from when they are jobless. To receive the course for free, one has to inform both the TE Office and Kela about being jobless, then Kela will offer to pay on behalf of the participant. (TE-Palvelut, 2022) It is offered to make it easier for them to adjust to Finnish society and find a job. In the Finnish courses, one is taught written Finnish, or Swedish, which is different from the spoken Finnish language. (Yle, 2019; Yle, 2015) It is an essential part of language learning to know the grammar, yet many people struggle to keep up with it as what they learn in class does not help them necessarily to understand the language outside of it.

These courses are there to help people to find work in a different country by learning the language. The people are encouraged to find an internship to then make it easier for them to find a job after the course finishes. As the internship is most often unpaid, people are more willing to hire someone even though their language skills are not up to the standard because they won't lose anything. It is hoped that after this internship they would be hired, but it is not always the case. Some are also only offered an internship for cheap labor. (Yle, 2019)

4.2 Collective agreement

There exists for almost every job a collective agreement in Finland. In this collective agreement is displayed the minimum wage, maximum hours, breaks, holidays, free days, and many more. (PAM, 2020) There are many people in these language courses as well as outside of them that do not know the existence of the collective agreement. The collective agreement exists to protect workers and their rights (PAM, 2020), but without a work contract, verbal or written, it is not valid.

As people in these Finnish language courses are aiming to go for different careers, it would be impossible for the teacher to go through all the collective agreements with the students. The collective agreement is written in Finnish, Swedish, and English. As people with very little knowledge of any of the previous languages will find it hard to read and understand. This can lead to them not knowing their rights and can be easily taken advantage of. It does not mean that only foreigners get taken advantage of, but often in cases, they do. (Yle, 2021)

Although in most big companies there is a workplace representative, it is not required by the employer to have one. A workplace representative works as a negotiator between the employees and employer. He/she helps in all work-related issues confidentially. His/her job is to make sure that the collective agreement is followed at the workplace as well as the worker law. (Teollisuusliitto, 2022) This workplace representative (luottamusmies) is either selected by the union (PAM) or the workers can choose their own if one is not already chosen.

It is not legal to exploit workers or purposefully take advantage of them when the employer knows that the worker is not fully aware of his/her rights. There are often not any legal repercussions to the employer for their wrongdoings. Only if someone notices that they have been mistreated and complained about it, the employer is asked to stop what they are doing in the workplace representative. If the employer stops it, or even if they don't, they will be asked another time. Again, without any consequences. The employer will not get into trouble, nor does she/he have to compensate anything to the workers (depending on the severity). In short, an employee can easily be taken advantage of as long they do not get caught.

These types of exploitations such as paying too little pay or not giving paid vacation to the employee can happen too often when a person is not aware of their rights. Even if people know they are being underpaid, they sometimes might just accept it as it is the only job they were offered or they need a job to pay their bills. Especially for a foreign person, it

can be worse to potentially risk losing their job over demanding their rights, as they then might lose their residence permit or not be able to receive help to pay their bills. In a positive case, a Russian woman was denied pay the last month when she decided to resign and was paid under the minimum wage. After she complained, she received on top of her last pay, compensation, and the pay she was denied all along. (PAM, 2021)

Although exploitation is not very common in Finland, it often happens most to foreigners. Some employers are looking for ways to cut their costs. (Yle, 2019) There are even cases when people bring their relatives or friends into the country and force them to work for free for them to pay off their "debt". This has happened mostly in some foreign restaurants. These people do not have any work contracts and are paid under the table to avoid taxes. In the worst cases, they are enslaved to work ridiculous amounts of hours without any rights. (European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, 2014) The work is in many cases also physical without any safety measures taken into consideration.

Those working without contracts are in the black market. They are paid less than the minimum wage. If something were to happen at the workplace, the company they worked for is not responsible for paying for the medical bills or medical leave. It is possible that the worker could have a serious injury that he would have to not work for many months, and they would not get any compensation from the company either.

5 Materials and methods

This is a research-based thesis using qualitative methodology. The main objective of this thesis is to find out whether discrimination occurs in the restaurant field against foreigners. The sub-objective is to find out what type of discrimination and how to combat discrimination. The research will be conducted by interviewing different foreigners who live in the capital area of Finland. The aim is to get seven to ten volunteers to participate in the interviews, as for the timeline for this thesis it is not possible to have enough time to interview more people. Doing semi-structured interviews of 20 to 40 minutes will hopefully be enough detailed to answer the main research question. The participants will be contacted through Facebook groups called “Foreigners in Finland”, “Foreigners in Helsinki” and “International Friends in Helsinki”.

As the author will post on the walls of the Facebook groups (appendix 1), she will give a week (7 days) to allow people to volunteer to take part in the interviews. The reason why she only gives seven days is that social media, such as Facebook is used by thousands daily, and on its own, the Facebook group “Foreigners in Finland” has over 46 thousand people. Those who are part of the group and regularly log in to Facebook will probably see it, but after a couple of days of posting (3–4 days) other people might also post something new and the text the author posted will no longer be at the top for most people to see. Moreover, the author will also make sure those who volunteer to meet the requirements, such as have moved to Finland after the age of 18, are fully foreigners (not half Finnish), and have worked in the restaurant field in the capital area (Helsinki, Vantaa, or Espoo) for at least six months.

The interviews are semi-structured and anonymous. They are semi-structured to allow room for more questions and clarifications from both parties, the interviewer, and the interviewees. The author chose the qualitative instead of the quantitative method because the results can be more holistic in the qualitative methodology. Although the questions asked in the interviews will be the same, the answers will be broader than in quantitative ones that often only allow focus on numbers. (Streefkerk, 2019)

In this thesis, only employees are interviewed instead of employers. The reason is that the author wants to give a voice to the possible victims. Instead of asking employers if they think discrimination happens, the question would be first-hand from the workers who are more prone to having experienced either recruitment or workplace discrimination. The age limit is from 20 to 40 years old. The reason is to have younger people, but also not too young to have had the chance to have gained enough work experience and might be able to adapt to a new country easier. The minimum requirement for the participants is that

they have at least six months of work experience. Both full-time and part-time are accepted. During that time some might have already experienced discrimination, either from coworkers or employer(s).

The participants should be people who have moved to Finland after the age of 18 and also did not know Finnish before moving. The reason is to show a side of the people who often might find it more difficult to settle down in a foreign country without knowing the local language. These people might learn Finnish very well after moving but as languages are best learned at a young age, and Finnish is not related to other languages than Estonian, many might struggle with learning it. (Smith, 2018) Even if they do learn it, they will most likely have an accent that the native speakers will hear. Having an accent might be a reason some are prejudiced against some who have one. (Koh, 2017; Shah, 2019)

The interviewer will inform the participants that the interview is done anonymously, which will hopefully impact the trustworthiness of the process. As the participants' names will be not out in public, they will be more likely honest in their answers. Moreover, the interviewer will ask to record these interviews so she can later go over all the answers better. If the interviewee will not allow the interviewer to record it, she will have to write answers mid-interview, which might jeopardize the interviewers' concentration and can result in the data collection later.

Due to the pandemic, the interviews will all be done through video or sound. It would be ideal for all to be through video so that the interview could feel closer to being done face to face, and perhaps easier to ask further questions. On the contrary, being on camera, the interviewee might feel more insecure and not be as open with his/her answers. Only the sound will be recorded with those who allow it to be recorded to make the interviewees feel the most comfortable. All of the interviews will then be transcribed into text for the analyzing phase. It is less time-consuming to read multiple texts and find similarities than to listen to interviews back-to-back.

Although the interviews are semi-structured, the author has written questions (appendix 2) to follow throughout the interview. The questions are about the background of the participant, such as where they are from and their work experience, what their overall work experience in the Helsinki area has been like, if they have experienced discrimination and what could be a solution to discrimination in their opinion. Some questions might not be even asked if the participant already mentions it themselves or if they happen to not have experienced discrimination.

All the interviews will be digitally voice recorded to make it easier for the author to go through all of the interviews later. The interviews will then be transcribed into text to make the analysis process easier and faster. By having the interviews in text, it will be easier to identify similarities between each of the interviews. The author will read through the interviews dozens of times to understand them better. After the author feels she has some idea of the similarities, she will put them into a tool called Quirkos. One can add Word documents to the application, which is useful in having all the data in one place. To analyze the data, the author will use the coding method. Coding is a process of identifying a passage in a text or other data items such as a picture, searching and identifying concepts and relations between them. (Cessda Training, 2022) By using the coding method, it will be easier to gather the overall consensus of the results.

In Quirkos, one can add bubbles. The bubbles can then be named and colored differently. As the text is in the tool, it is also possible to highlight important words or sentences that can then be dragged onto the named bubbles, or even add new ones. After having found dozens of bubbles, one can drag similar bubbles together to then find a few main themes. It is helpful as the texts one adds can be named differently, so one can see at the end when going through the theme bubbles, which of the participants had said what. Moreover, the bubbles with the most highlighted text inside will appear larger. It makes it easier then to identify potential themes. After the coding process, the author will name them (theming phase) and put them in a mind map with general consensus going through them.

The picture below (picture 2) shows all the data collected from the interviews. The ones with similar topics have been dragged together to form a main theme from all the different codes. The picture has dozens of different codes, and the smallest bubbles have less data than the bigger ones. The bigger bubbles help to identify the main themes as they are more likely phrases or words repeated throughout the interviews amongst the participants. There are not necessarily from each participant data in each of the bubbles, but the size signifies that it has enough data to draw some type of conclusion.

6 Results

In total six participants of five different nationalities took part in the interviews. The participants were from Brazil, the Philippines, two from Poland, Ghana (born in Italy), and Egypt. Three (3) of the participants were male and three (3) females, aged from 25 to 40 years old. Five (5) of the interviews were done through Zoom and one through Teams. The interviews lasted between 20 to 50 minutes, an average of 35 minutes, and were conducted on five consecutive days in the last week of February 2022. All of the participants had their videos on during the interview and allowed the interviewer to record the audio so she could gather the data later. All of the participants volunteered themselves to take part in the interview through one Facebook group called “Foreigners in Helsinki”. Three (3) out of the six (6) participants still work in the restaurant field.

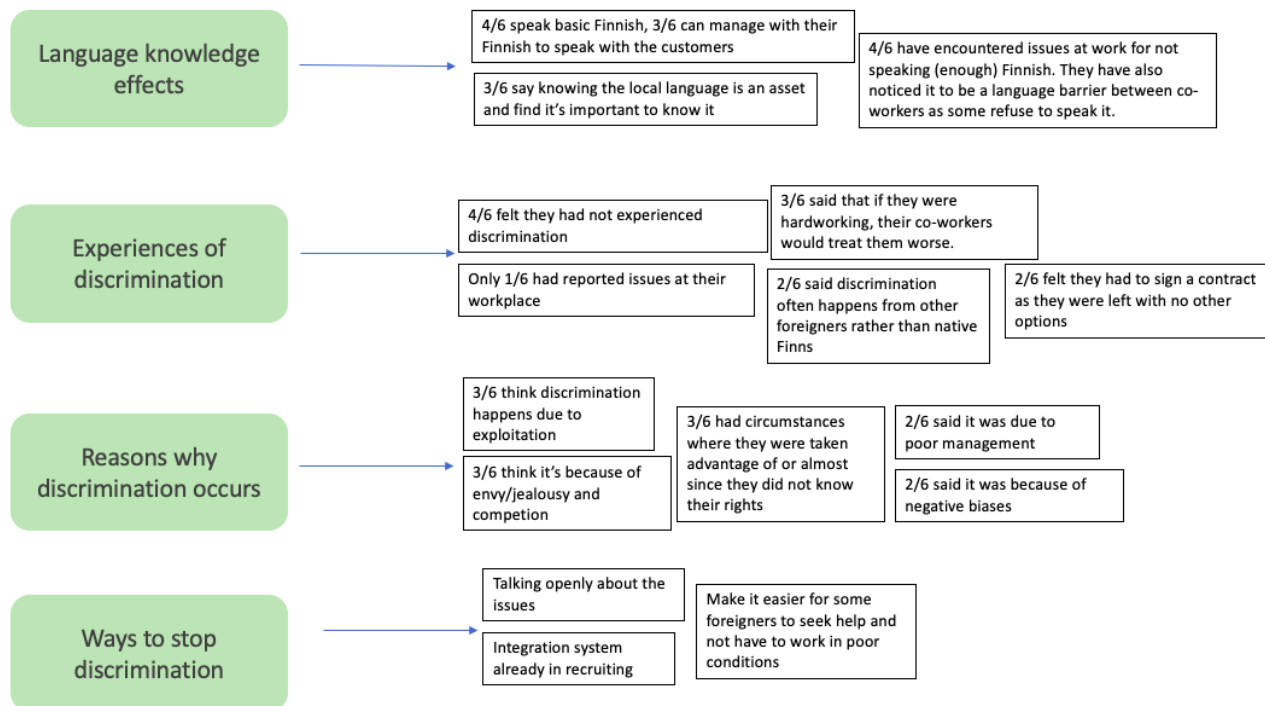


Figure 1: The four main themes and the subjects found during the interviews.

The figure above (figure 1) shows the four main themes, language knowledge effects, experiences of discrimination, reasons why discrimination occurs, and ways to stop discrimination, found when analyzing the interviews. The author used the tool called Quirkos and was able to put together dozens of codes to then find out the main themes. The texts next to the themes are the main discussions during the interviews. The numbers show how many of the six participants had a certain trait or opinion.

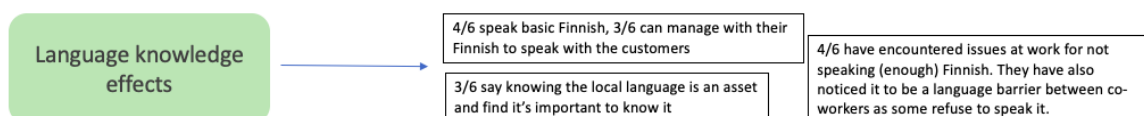


Figure 2: From figure 1 one of the main themes: the language knowledge effects and its subjects.

During the interviews, language knowledge was discussed (figure 2). One of the questions during the interviews (appendix 2) was to know how well the participants' Finnish language level was. The reason why this question was asked was to know better about the participants and also to see if knowing Finnish could have been a factor in discrimination or it could have helped them integrate and find work in Finland.

The majority of the participants had poor to basic Finnish level and even mentioned having had issues at their workplace due to it. Two (2) out of the six (6) participants had a good to intermediate level of Finnish whereas five (5) out of six (6) had still some basic knowledge to have been dealing with customers in Finnish if it was necessary. Two (2) out of six (6) said not knowing Finnish is not a problem in Helsinki but the rest said they had encountered some issues either finding work or had communication issues at the workplace due to the lack of language. Some co-workers even refused to speak English with them even though they could speak it.

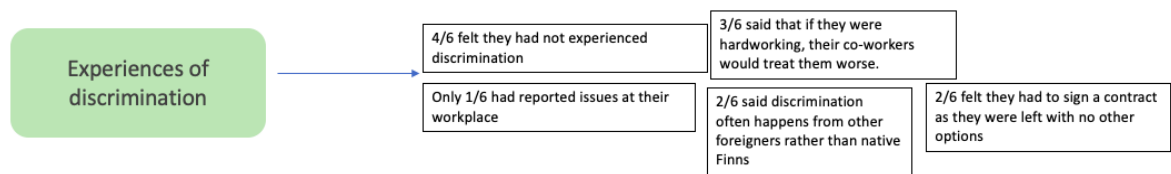


Figure 3: From figure 1, one of the main themes: experiences of discrimination and its subjects.

Figure 3 has the main answers summed up during the interviews about the participants' experiences of discrimination. During the interviews, the participants were asked if they had experienced discrimination while working in restaurants in the capital area. This was the main research question and an important one to know if discrimination exists in the restaurant field.

A majority of the participants (4 out of 6) felt that they had not personally experienced discrimination, but after further discussion and what the participants shared, it seemed they had experienced some form of exploitation. Only 2 out of the 6 participants felt they had experienced discrimination but neither of them chose to ever file a formal report. They felt that as they were already alienated and the "outsider" at their workplace that it would only reflect negatively on them. 2 out of 6 had felt pressured to sign a contract for work in fear of not finding a better offer, or a job at all even though they knew that the job contract was not according to the law. Although the majority of the people interviewed, were not discriminated against personally, they had seen others having been discriminated against. 2 out of 6 even said that discrimination often happens from other foreigners to other foreigners, instead of from the native Finns. It is believed to be occurring due to

competition and jealousy. 3 out of 6 felt that if they worked hard it resulted in their colleagues treating them worse.

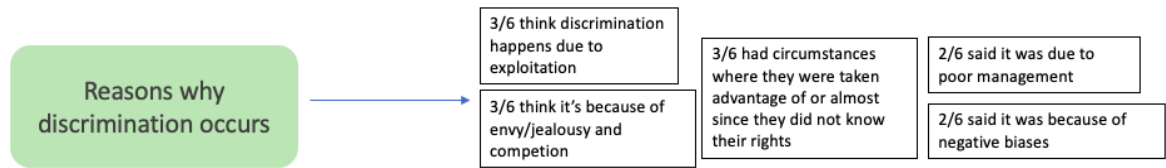


Figure 4: From figure 1 one of the main themes: reasons why discrimination occurs and its subjects.

One of the sub-objectives of this thesis was to know why discrimination occurs, hence why it is one of the main themes that was found during the interviews (figure 4). For this question, the author only asked for an opinion of the participants on reasons why discrimination occurs. The reason why only an opinion was asked is that only the person who is discriminating against another person can truly know the reason, and there is also no right or correct answer, or even only one answer for this particular question.

The reason for discrimination is not entirely known, which is why during the interview the participants were asked to share their opinion on the topic only. 3 out of 6 believed discrimination occurs because the other colleagues are envious of them. They think that their co-workers don't want them to learn because they are afraid, they will become better than them. Another reason is by many do not know their legal worker rights. 3 out of 6 said that many people, not only foreigners, are taken advantage of in their workplace by either paying too little or offering poor working conditions. Some take advantage of them because they (managers) know some foreigners are left with less choice in the job market due to language skills or fear of losing their residence permit. Discrimination is also believed to still be occurring because of negative biases towards certain people as well as poor management.

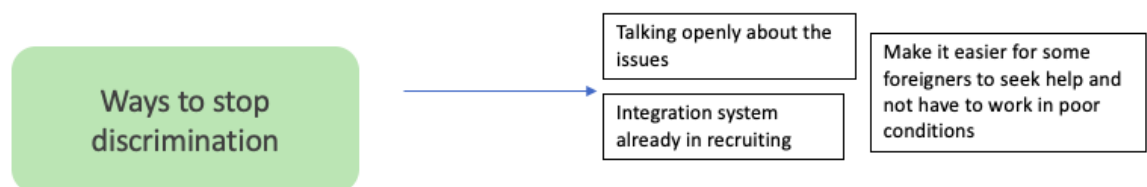


Figure 5: From figure 1 one of the main themes: ways to stop discrimination and its subjects.

As in figure 4, in figure 5 there is not only one answer to stopping discrimination. By asking the participants about ways that they think could be a solution to stopping discrimination, there were varied answers. Since there is no right or wrong answer to this question, the author put together all the answers and found three possible solutions that could be implemented in real life. These answers are only opinions and none of the

participants have made a concrete plan on how to execute them nor did the interviewer ask the participants how they could work as it was not necessary for this study's results.

In the interviews, the participants were asked to give some ideas on how to stop discrimination. Some of the ideas were such as having those who have experienced discrimination talk about it more openly. Many are afraid to talk about it as they fear it will harm them, but it is believed that if the issue of discrimination was more widely known, people would realize it truly is a problem and wants to do something about it to stop it. Another suggestion was to introduce an integration system in the recruiting phase. There should be already during the recruiting process a step to make sure that the work environment is open and does not tolerate any type of discrimination. One suggestion was to make help easier available for each individual. As some struggle with poor working conditions but are afraid to quit their job because they might then lose their residence permit or then not be able to pay their monthly bills. Help should be made more accessible to those in need so people would not have to suffer and be able to give the necessary help for the time they are looking for another job.

7 Discussion

The main objective of this study was to find out whether discrimination occurs in the restaurant field against foreigners. The sub-objectives were to find out what type of discrimination and how to stop discrimination. The main results showed that workplace discrimination in the restaurant field is not a huge issue in this limited study. The majority of the participants did not experience discrimination as the majority did not feel they had experienced discrimination. But even though the majority of the participants said to have not been personally discriminated against, most of the participants said that they had seen or heard others been discriminated against at their workplace. The reason for discrimination was not as simple to answer, as many only had speculations. But the majority of the answers concluded the reasoning to be jealousy (from other coworkers) and misunderstanding. On the other hand, finding answers for stopping discrimination were opinions. The results were not concise but included an integration system already in recruitment, talking more openly about discrimination and making it easier for foreigners to seek help in case they experience workplace discrimination.

Although some mentioned that they had been taken advantage of because they did not know their rights as workers, it cannot be correlated directly to being discriminated against because they are foreigners. For example, a Polish woman felt she had not experienced any type of discrimination but mentioned that in one working place she was pressured to do overwork without pay. She said she was asked to start work 15 minutes earlier, but it was not considered paid work. This is according to TES illegal as every worker is supposed to be paid for the work they do. (Työsuojeluhallinto, 2022) Similarly, a Brazilian man said to not have experienced discrimination but had been taken advantage of at his first workplace when he did not know about his rights. He was given a trainee salary at his work although he had a degree and experience. He did file a report to PAM and the issue was quickly resolved.

At least half of the participants felt that it was important to know the Finnish language and that it could help them find a job easier. One of the participants had also had work experience in Tampere and felt that Helsinki is an easier place to find a job without the Finnish language as it is more international. It was also mentioned that a participant was not offered the manager job because their Finnish language skills were not strong enough to deal with all the papers although she had the experience and skills. The person also felt that they could never be able to be promoted because of their lack of Finnish. On the contrary, it was also said that not knowing Finnish is not an issue and that there are plenty of jobs in Helsinki to work solely in English, but even they agreed that knowing the local language is an asset.

Even though the interviews did not prove that discrimination is an imminent problem in the restaurant field, some other issues were raised during the interviews that were surprising. Half of the participants mentioned that discrimination often occurs from other foreigners rather than locals, although usually, it is minorities being discriminated against by the majority of the population. (Yhdenvertaisuus.fi, 2022) Another issue mentioned was how not only foreigners but also locals can easily be taken advantage of if they do not know their rights as a worker, although there exists legislation (collective agreement (PAM, 2020)) available in three languages, Finnish, Swedish, and English. Many just do not necessarily know its existence. Further research should be made on both issues from the current times. Moreover, this particular hypothesis should be further studied on a larger scale from the whole of Finland and using other forms of ways to contact the participants than only Facebook.

7.1 Reliability, validity, and ethics

For a thesis to be valid, it first needs to be reliable. It is a way to assess the quality of the measurement procedure of the data collected. (Laerd Dissertation, 2022) Both reliability and validity are ways to evaluate the quality of the research. A reliable study does not always mean it is a valid study, but a valid study often is also reliable. In a reliable study, the point is to see how consistently a method is measured. In a valid study, the point is to see how accurately a method is measured. (Middleton, 2022) In the case of ethics in a thesis, one's goal should be to do good and not intend on doing any harm. There are five principles of ethics, which include minimizing the risk of harm, obtaining informed consent, protecting anonymity and confidentiality, avoiding deceptive practices, and providing the right to withdraw. (Lard Dissertation, 2022)

As the interviews were all done anonymously, and the interviewer did her best to make all the participants feel comfortable during the process. She also empathized with the participants and tried to be understanding when anyone shared something, either something that related to the interview or not. But as the topic is somewhat controversial some of the participants might have already had an initial bias on whether they had or not had experienced discrimination. Moreover, the majority of the participants said to have worked in an international work environment, which explains the results of the majority of them not having experienced discrimination.

There is always room for improvements and the author noticed during the interviews that it would have been best to have made the questions more precise, specifically about the restaurant field. It would have been better to make sure those questions truly could

answer the main research questions. Moreover, the author should have prepared different questions for those who said they had not experienced discrimination, but it was not something the author expected. Many of the participants had more work experience in other fields and sometimes they would share their experiences of the other jobs, so during the analysis process, it was hard to identify if some shared experiences were still about the restaurant field. This could have impacted the validity of the results. These questions could have not been changed anymore after the interviews began as it then would have changed the results and therefore the reliability and validity of the whole thesis.

Before, during, and after the interviews the author conducted, she carefully tried to make sure no real identifying information has been revealed from the participants or their working places. It was very important for the author to make sure the ethicality was kept throughout the thesis and kept it completely anonymous as well as asked permission to record the interviews. As the text the author posted was on public Facebook groups or at least all of the members of the group could see it, including the comments under it, she has also opted to delete the post. Some of the participants did write that they would want to take part in the interviews, so if someone were to search the post, they could see the identities of some of the participants.

7.2 Improvements to the thesis

There is always room for improvement and making this whole process better with a different approach, and possibly even with a mindset. As this was the first time for the author to conduct a study, even though it proved to be quite difficult on a smaller scale and certain things made differently could have resulted in “better” results. Meaning that learning how to find hundreds of different information, plan how to execute interviews, and then analyze the data with only researching online is not so easy as in theory it can work well but in reality, the author should have practiced and been more prepared for the interviews. Moreover, there are dozens of different ways to analyze qualitative data, so it is possible another method than coding might have suited this type of analysis better.

The study has its limitations as it was only conducted on six people ages 20 to 40. There are thousands of people in Helsinki alone working in the restaurant field so one cannot say this study’s result is how the general population of foreigners who work in Helsinki in the restaurant field feel. The results can easily change by changing the age, years of people living in Finland, and language skills. Not everyone owns Facebook or might have checked its new posts during that week. There might have also been more people willing to partake in the interviews if the scope would have been bigger. If it had not only been about workers in Helsinki but the whole of Finland or people with less work experience. As

in the book by Jaakkola (2009) the views on foreigners were studied from the Finnish point of view proved that smaller cities were less open to foreigners coming to work in Finland. The results could have been completely different if there would have been smaller cities involved.

Additionally, what could have improved the reliability of the thesis is to go through the interview questions more thoroughly to make sure they truly can answer the main research question. It could have been useful to ask questions such as “has the language skills affected you finding a job” or “has the amount of experience you gained affected in finding a job”. Moreover, the participants were only from one Facebook group, and as social media is something people are on almost constantly, it also matters a lot when the post is posted on the Facebook group. Many Facebook groups have hundreds to thousands of people and soon your post might be lost amid dozens of others. It is also possible that the participants felt pressured to either say they face discrimination or not as they were aware of the topic beforehand.

7.3 Future studies

Many possible discrimination cases should be further studied to find out more about them, such as the current case on Russian hate. The Ukraine-Russia war began at the end of February 2022 that shocked the whole world. In only 2 weeks, dozens of Russians or Russian-speaking people have faced online or real-life discrimination in Finland. Even Facebook and Instagram said that they would allow hate speech against Russians when speaking of the war. On those social media platforms, it is acceptable to wish upon death and violence toward Russians. (Lehtonen, 2022) Some Russian speakers are now afraid to speak in Russian in a public place for fear of it affecting them negatively. There has not yet been able to make a proper report or statistics on the increase in hate and discrimination Russian or Russian speakers have faced as the war has only been going on for a little over 2 weeks at the time. (Karjalainen, 2022)

Of all the immigrants in Finland, the biggest number is from the old Soviet Union, which is today called Russia. (Statistics Finland, 2022) Besides those who speak Russian as their mother tongue, many use it on the regular. Over 80 000 people speak Russian in Finland. Even among Ukrainians over a third of the population speaks Russian. (Karjalainen, 2022) As many are lashing out at the Russian speakers because of the war, not everyone is from Russia. Although some have stopped speaking Russian in public and instead use Finnish for fear of being faced with discrimination, some still choose to speak it as it would be impossible for thousands of people to stop speaking. (Kokkonen, 2022)

As Finland used to be part of Russia over a hundred years ago, many still today have had negative biases toward Russians. The hatred got better after the 90s but now as the war started, it got activated again. (Haverinen & Kivimäki, 2022) There is even a very ugly slur in Finnish to describe Russians and many are justifying their hateful actions towards Russians as they did during the beginning of the global pandemic against Asians. (Korvela, 2017) Negative stereotypes have affected many all over the world, and in the case of the war, innocent people are being discriminated against although they have nothing to do with it.

Many wars are happening in the world, hence why there are many refugees. As the Ukraine war started, many European countries were welcoming their fellow Europeans to their countries and many even offered them housing and transport for free. This has been criticized as people from other countries such as Somalia have needed to go through a long and difficult process to be considered a refugee. After five years he was only accepted. In the article by Yle the Somali mentioned that he cannot return to his country as some of his friends did and now, they have passed away. (Jämsén, 2022)

During one of the interviews, the customers' discrimination topic arose. The question asking if the participants had faced discrimination was specified in coworkers or employers. One of the participants did say to have experienced discrimination from the customers during their time of work in the restaurant. It is an important topic and should be further researched as restaurants rely on their customers and their opinions. At the beginning of the pandemic when many Asians faced discrimination many people wrecked some Asian stores in the USA (NPR, 2021) and the discrimination must have happened also in the restaurants from the customers. Even the unemployment of Asian Americans lasted longer than others after the start of the pandemic. (NPR, 2020; Ramirez, 2021)

As Russians and Russian speakers are criticized largely in the media, social media, and in real life and they have encountered discrimination, it is potential this war might affect their possibility to find a job. It is an important issue that should be studied in the future to find out the effects of the recruitment on Russians and Russian speakers, as it is possible the ones working in customer service might also be facing discrimination from the customers.

7.4 Conclusion

This study was made with a small study group of 6 random foreign volunteers who either have or still are working in the restaurant field. The participants were picked out from a Facebook group and the interviewer did not know if she was going to have any volunteers

when she first wrote to the Facebook group at the end of February. It also needs to be taken into consideration that it was the author's first-time interviewing anyone so some errors are to be expected, for example, some of the interview questions could have been more precise to have clearer answers. Because some of the participants discussed their experiences in other fields besides the restaurant so, in the end, it was not entirely clear if all the experiences were in the restaurant field or the others when analyzing the recordings of the interviews later.

During the interviews, it was helpful to have the tool to record the interviews to make it easier later for the data collection, but as the interviews were all done through Zoom or Teams, some technical difficulties occurred that sometimes the volume did not pick up. As the interviewer did not do any notes during or right after the interviews, she noticed some points discussed could have used further clarification with questions. But as the transcribing and going through the data was done much later, it was too late to have answers to those questions. In the future, it would be better to do notes during the interviews besides recording the interview, so part of the data analysis could have been done with fresher eyes.

The author learned a lot more about discrimination during this process. It is surprising to hear how many still face or struggle with the consequences of discrimination on the regular. Although there are a lot of ways to improve on and do better in the future, the study is reliable, but it is possible that the validity of the study might have been influenced by the way the questions were formulated. But the author did not change the answers or try to influence the participants to change their answers to have a different result. That being said, the results could have been more defined if the questions would also be more precise.

All in all, the study proved in the end that some form of discrimination occurs in the restaurant field, and it also revealed some other issues such as people being taken advantage of due to not knowing their rights or being forced to sign a work contract as other work is not available even if the work offers lower pay or poorer work conditions than they are willing to accept. The majority of the participants felt that most people discriminate due to jealousy and misunderstanding, often due to language or culture. When asked how to combat discrimination, the results varied, but a few of them included that people who experience discrimination to be more vocal about it, to introduce an integration system already in the recruitment phase before starting a job (to ensure discrimination to not happen) and make help more easily available for those who experience discrimination.

7.5 Process of the thesis and self-assessment

The author started her thesis process in the spring of 2021 and as it was her first time writing such a big assignment and due to COVID all of the school was remote, she struggled with motivation. Not only was school closed but so were libraries and many other places. This meant that everything had to happen in the same place: sleeping, cooking, eating, attending school, studying, and doing group and individual projects. It is hard to find motivation at the same place when one is supposed to be able to find peace and relax. This then resulted in the author postponing the original graduation which was thought to be in December 2021.

After many months the author thought she would find motivation, but it never came. But then she started the thesis all over the end of January 2022. The start was extremely difficult and writing a thesis requires a lot of patience and time devoted to it. Especially with such an important topic as this, the author wanted to do it justice. Although the original deadline got postponed by many months, after restarting the process the author has kept with the deadlines given to her and can finish it before the final deadline that is set at the end of May. She has not only learned to better her academic writing and find reliable sources but also learned a lot about discrimination. The author has also taken the constructive criticism given to her by her supervisor and tried to better her writing.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Text posted on the Facebook groups

Hello. My name is Lotte Kivelä. I am studying restaurant management at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. I am in my final year. I am writing my bachelor's thesis about Discrimination against foreigners living in Helsinki working in the restaurant field. I am asking if anyone would be willing to be interested in being interviewed, it would be a great help in my research. The interviews would last approximately 20-30 minutes (give or take, depending on how much you would like to share). I will be asking around 10 questions. The goal is to find out about the experiences of workplace discrimination based on ethnicity, skin color, and/or nationality. The questions consist of your background, work experience, experience with discrimination, and thoughts on a potential solution for it.

I am looking for people who are currently working or have worked in the restaurant field in Helsinki, around the ages of 20-40 years of age. I am looking for people who have worked for at least 6 months in Helsinki in the restaurant field, no matter if you have worked full- or part-time. You should be a foreigner who has moved to Finland after the age of 18 and had no prior knowledge of the Finnish language before moving.

I would interview you remotely due to COVID, it can be either video or audio-only interview, whichever you are most comfortable with. None of your personal details will be in the final thesis (except your gender, nationality, and age (it can also be a rough estimate if you are not comfortable sharing your actual age)), all will be done anonymously. Additionally, it would be great if I could record (audio only) our interview to reflect on it later when doing the data collection. If you are not comfortable with it, it will not be recorded.

Appendix 2. The questions asked during the interviews

1. Where are you originally from?
2. How long have you lived in Finland?
3. How is your Finnish?
4. How long have you been working in the restaurant field?
5. What position(s) have you worked in the restaurant field (e.g., part-time waiter, kitchen, etc.)
6. Have you found it difficult to find a job in Finland?
7. What has your work experience been like in Helsinki?
8. Have you ever experienced discrimination in your work field – from employers or co-workers?
9. If yes, could you describe it?
10. Did you report it to anyone? (e.g., supervisor, manager, co-worker)
11. If yes, did it get resolved? / If not, why not?
12. Why do you think it happened?
13. Why do you think work discrimination happens still?
14. What could be a solution to stopping discrimination (in recruitment/workplace)?
15. What is your opinion on anonymous recruiting?