



# Influencing Factors for Hiring International Students

A Case Study of MSMEs in the Tampere Region

Ahmad Abou Merhi

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## **ABSTRACT**

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu  
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Ahmad Abou Merhi:  
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Finland's population is expected to age rapidly in the coming decades compared to the European Union, the OECD, and other Nordic countries resulting in potential labour shortages and financial pressure on several levels. These repercussions are seen as a threat to Finland's welfare system and long-term economic growth. Therefore, the country needs international talents to mitigate these challenges. Finland already has a talent pool with 3000 to 4000 international students who graduate each year, however these students still find it very difficult to find an internship during their studies or work after graduation. Hence, the thesis aimed to identify and explore the key factors that influence the hiring decisions for international students with the potential of improving their employability. This study focused on MSMEs in the Tampere region commissioned by the Talent Boost Program.

The theoretical framework included an overview of the Tampere region and highlighted the importance of diversity in the workplace. Most of the research on the employability of international students so far has not paid much attention to the theory of planned behaviour. Therefore, attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control were among the other factors considered by the research to grasp a better understanding of what could influence employers' hiring decisions. This research is a single exploratory case study in which the data were obtained from both secondary and primary sources. Secondary data were acquired from academic journal articles, official government publications, and other reliable sources. While the primary data were obtained by adopting exploratory sequential mixed methods design, where qualitative and quantitative data were collected by conducting an interview and one questionnaire.

The thesis identified and explored the main factors influencing hiring decisions for international students in the Tampere region and confirmed that the career outcomes of international students are influenced not only by their qualifications but also by employers' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control along with other key factors associated with recruitment channels, language proficiency, and company resources. Thus, improving the employability of international students requires a long-term action plan that needs cross-level cooperation between all stakeholders in the Tampere region.

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Key words: ageing population, labour shortage, talent, diversity, international students, attitude, diverse workforce, talent boost program, tandem

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**ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS**

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
EU	European Union
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
FCC	Finnish Chambers of Commerce
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
PPL	People
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
MSMEs	Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
K	Thousands
M	Millions

## 1 BACKGROUND

### 1.1 Introduction

For five consecutive years, Finland has been ranked as the world's happiest country according to the World Happiness Report after overtaking countries like Denmark, Iceland, and Switzerland to emerge triumphant once again (YLE, 2022). But the northern European country that is known for its high-quality education, work life balance, low crime rate, beautiful nature and landscape, and various other characteristics, faces two major problems that can be seen as a threat to its welfare system and long-term economic growth (Satu Salonen, 2021).

The first problem lies in its demographic change as Finland's population is expected to age rapidly in the forthcoming decades compared to the OECD, the European Union, and other Nordic countries (de la Maisonneuve, Andréi, Garcíaí & Koen, 2014, 6). Accompanied by a sharp decrease in the total fertility rate of 1.40, well below the 1.60 average of the European Union in 2016, significantly lower than the current average of 1.65 of the Nordic countries and close to the all-time lowest rate of 1.38 recorded in the Nordic countries (Denmark) in 1983 (Hellstrand, Nisén, & Myrskylä, 2020, 315). With increasing life expectancy and insufficient fertility rate, Finland is one of the fastest ageing societies in Europe as 22% of its population consists of elderly people according to statistics Finland (Statistics, 2022; see also Finnish institute for health and welfare, 2021).

Consequently, this leads to the second problem which concerns the shortage of labour. De la Maisonneuve et al. (2014, 14) state that population ageing will put pressure on the labour market. The overall rate of labour force participation in the labour market will decrease as a result of the increasing percentage share of older workers in the labour force, who usually have a rather low participation rate. In addition, the labour force participation rate of people aged 15 and over was around 62% in the 1990s, however this percentage is expected to decline to 54% by the end of 2060. Thus, this problem has already been a concern in Finland for two decades and is projected to persist during the next 50 years unless reform measures are adopted to increase the overall labour force participation rate.

Accordingly, the ageing of the population will reduce the supply of labour, resulting in a potential labour shortage.

A survey conducted by the Finnish Chambers of Commerce network revealed that three out of four FCC member companies are facing a shortage or even an acute shortage of skilled labour. Many companies struggle to find suitable candidates to fill the vacancies due to the applicants' lack of appropriate qualifications or relevant work experience. However, a similar survey conducted in 2020 showed that only about half of the companies were facing a shortage of skilled labour which means a significant increase of 25% in just one year. For instance, the tech industry in Finland will need 13,300 skilled specialists per year or about 130,000 over the next decade. The social and healthcare sectors are expected to need 30,000 more nurses by the end of 2030 as well. Despite the skilled labour shortage, Finnish Finance Minister Annika Saarikko called for attracting blue-collar workers because many sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, healthcare, and social services need foreign workers to fill the niche. Furthermore, 70% (910 companies) of the surveyed companies have reported that the current situation has hampered their business growth. Thereby, Johanna Sipola, Executive Director of the Finnish Chamber of Commerce, notes that the Finnish government should set a numerical target as an objective for employment and education-based immigration of 30,000 immigrants to study or work in 2022 to alleviate the shortage of labour in the country. (Helsinki Times, 2021; YLE, 2021a; YLE, 2021b; YLE, 2021c.)

On top of the negative impact of population ageing on the Finnish labour market, several studies have pointed out the adverse effect on the public purse as well. Thus, these repercussions will exert financial pressure on Finland in the future due to the expected increase in healthcare and pensions expenditures, which are almost totally publicly financed. In addition, the OECD projects that the gross- and net general government debt will rise to 180% and 45% of GDP respectively by 2060 due to the ageing-related costs and will continue to rise thereafter. Besides, the old-age dependency ratio, defined as the number of people aged 65 and over who are economically inactive relative to the number of the working-age population aged 15-65, has steadily risen from less than 15% in 1970 to 25% in 2010 and will exceed 45% by 2060 as projected. This indicates a tremendous

financial burden on the economy in general and the shrinking working population in particular since only a limited number of people will work and pay taxes. In fact, the old-age dependency ratio is considered one of the main determinants of saving. Thus, the ageing of the population may have an impact on savings, which can affect investments and thereby innovation, productivity, and ultimately per capita income. Therefore, the government estimates that in the course of 2024, it is necessary to have a structural budget surplus of 1% of GDP to prevent the spending pressures of population-ageing from causing an unsustainable increase in public debt. However, an amount of 4% of GDP is needed for fiscal consolidation to ensure sustainable public finances (the fiscal sustainability gap) in the long run. (de la Maisonneuve et al., 2014, 7, 15; OECD, 2020, 38, 40.)

As a result of this pressing reality on the labour market arising from such demographic variations, Finland is approaching dire challenges at many levels, including but not limited to, health care, social expenditure, pension, and in particular business and economic growth. The government and many companies across the country are aware of how critical the situation is and already have taken the steps towards attracting international talents to Finland by highlighting the benefits of working and living in the country (Satu Salonen, 2021). Hence, the Finnish government has started to adopt more attractive immigration policies and launched several programs and initiatives in order to retain international talent and attract those from abroad to cope with population ageing and labour shortage (Andersson, Pere, Vanhanen, & King-Gruber, 2020, 5).

## **1.2 Research objectives and questions**

While there are many government initiatives to attract international talents to Finland, one must bear in mind that there is already a talent pool in the country with 20,000 international degree students studying in Finnish higher education institutions, of whom around 3000 to 4000 graduate each year. The main subjects studied are Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Manufacturing and Construction, Nursing, Engineering, and Business Administration and Law. About 90% of international students prefer to work and live in Finland after graduation. Nevertheless, only half of them will get jobs, and one-quarter of these

international students will move outside Finland within one year of graduation, causing the business community in the country a considerable brain drain. The main challenge for international students in Finland is that they do not have equal employment opportunities as native Finnish students, and the fact remains that there is a high unemployment rate among them, which prompts international students to find other alternatives outside the country despite the efforts of the Finnish government to attract and retain them. Thus, there is an apparent paradox since Finland wants and needs international talents, but international students are not able to secure a traineeship or find a job, therefore the thesis will explore and examine this existed paradox by concentrating on the perspective of employers in the Tampere region on hiring international students. (Confederation of Finnish industries, 2021a; Satu Salonen, 2021.)

The aim of this thesis should state the purpose of the research project and what it intends to achieve through the research. Also, the research aim/question are complementary ways of expressing what the thesis is all about (Saunders Lewis & Thornhill, 2019, 45). Consequently, the thesis's fundamental aim is to determine the key factors employers look at when hiring international students in order to understand and alter the status quo by providing valuable information and findings. Hence, improving the employability of international students in the Tampere region and making better use of their skills and knowledge. According to Saunders et al. (2019, 45), objectives can be seen as evidence of the thesis's clear sense of direction and purpose. Therefore, thesis objectives express 'how' the author intends to structure the thesis process to answer the main question and achieve the stated aim. Thus, the objectives of the thesis are to:

- Identify the key factors that companies in the Tampere region look at when hiring international students.
- Determine the main issues that prevent companies from hiring international students.
- Determine the main drivers that encourage companies to hire international students.
- Highlight the importance of international students for business and economic growth.

- Define the working model that can be used to help integrate international students into working life.
- Help retain and attract international students.

Saunders et al., (2019, 42-43) assert that it is critical before commencing the thesis process to express the thesis topic through a clearly defined overarching research question, sometimes referred to as a general focus research question or main question. Hence, it will allow determining what the problem or issue is that one wants to study and what the thesis project will seek to explain, answer, and find out. Consequently, the research question will play a key role in influencing the choice of literature review, research design, data collection, and methods of analysis. Moreover, research questions may be divided into different categories, such as descriptive, exploratory, or explanatory. For example, exploratory questions are likely to begin with “what” or contain it within the question to seek explorations. Since the thesis is exploratory in its nature, the questions will be formulated to be exploratory according to the research nature. Furthermore, Walliman (2011, 33) states that the main research question, which reflects the research problem, can be broken down into sub-questions to define the sub-problems. All sub-questions must be related directly to the main question of the research and can be investigated individually to answer the main research question. Therefore, the overarching research question and sub-questions of the thesis are as follows:

- What are the key factors employers in the Tampere region look at when hiring international students?

The sub-questions are:

1. What issues prevent or encourage companies to hire international students?
2. What is the best way for companies to benefit from the expertise of international students?
3. What working model can best support companies after hiring international students?

### **1.3 Thesis commissioner**

Just like anywhere else around the world, Finland amid this competition for talent has implemented various policies and launched several programs and projects aimed at attracting international talent to alleviate the skills shortages and tackle the declining labour force due to its looming retirement of baby boomers, population-ageing, and low fertility rate. Among these programs is Talent Boost, a cross-administrative program launched by former Finnish prime minister Juha Sipilä in 2017 and supplemented by the government program of the current Prime Minister Sanna Marin. Finland aims through Talent Boost Program to attract the best international talent whose knowledge and experience can support the growth and internationalization of Finnish SMEs. It also aims to increase the work-based immigration of professionals and experts and improve the chances of international students to find work in Finland. Thus, the program seeks to utilize the experience and knowledge of international students and professionals already living in Finland to help Finnish companies become international and support their growth and innovation activities. (Andersson et al., 2020, 14; Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2017.)

Thereby, the Talent Boost Program commissioned this thesis to conduct a study on “the key factors influencing employers’ hiring decisions for international students in the Tampere region”. Although this program exists, international students still find it very difficult and challenging to find an internship during their studies or job after graduation. The study will present the current economic situation of the Tampere region and delve into employers’ attitudes towards hiring international students. Hence, the thesis will explore, analyse, and determine the key factors employer look at when hiring international students.

### **1.4 Scope and structure of the thesis**

Most of the research on the employability of international students so far has focused on discrimination, racism, prejudices, etc. Thus, the previous research has not paid much attention to other influencing factors that may contribute to the employment decision for international students. Therefore, attitude, subjective

norms, and perceived behavioural control are among issues the research pays attention to in order to grasp a better understanding of other factors that may influence the hiring decision. Furthermore, an employer in this thesis refers to a person or company that offers high-profile jobs, while an international student is a student who is either still studying or has graduated a year ago. The study focuses on micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises as they represent more than 95% of companies in the Tampere region, according to Yritystieto (2022). The author stressed the importance of ensuring that only company personnel responsible for hiring decisions can fill out the questionnaire. Additionally, the thesis treats the research sample as a single case study of employers, allowing the author to comprehensively examine relevant factors influencing their hiring decisions.

Chapter one includes an introduction to the main topic, along with the research problem, objectives, and questions. Also, it introduces the thesis commissionaire and presents the scope of the study.

Chapter two provides an overview of the Tampere region and highlights the importance of diversity in the workplace. It also reviews the literature on the theory of planned behaviour, diversity management, the recruitment process, and employers' attitudes and behaviours towards hiring international students.

Chapter three explains the research methodology and defends the author's philosophical position. It further describes and justifies the research approach, thesis type of study and strategy, and data collection methods.

Chapter four presents and analyses the qualitative and quantitative findings derived from the interview and questionnaire. It also discusses the limitations of the thesis and future research.

Chapter five concludes this study with a summary of thesis findings and provides recommendations to improve the employability of international students in the Tampere region.

## **2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 The race for global talent**

In 1998, the “war for talent” was officially launched due to the famous report of America's most prestigious and largest management consulting firm McKinsey & Company. The report declared that “better talent is worth fighting for” and concluded that over the next 20 years, sophisticated, intelligent people who are operationally agile and technologically literate would be the company's most important resource (Beechler & Woodward, 2009, 274; see also Chambers et al., 1998, 45). According to Michaels, Handfield- Jones & Axelrod (2001) talent is “the sum of a person's abilities” i.e., one's knowledge, judgment, intelligence, attitude, experience, skills, knowledge, intrinsic gifts, character, and drive. Also, it includes the ability to learn and grow.

As part of the current globalization process, all countries, willingly or not, have participated in the contemporary war for talent. The “war for talent” often begins by identifying the existing talent gap and prioritizing the particular skills required at different levels based on future goals and plans. Hence, this prolonged war for talent is a realistic competition between countries for scarce global talents, and it is neither a media buzzword nor an academic fad. Besides, the war for talent can be better understood as a “war on policies” between national governments on how to attract and retain international talents more effectively. Furthermore, only the countries that offer attractive policies and adopt a proactive approach would benefit from the talent competition. Yet some countries may be more successful in attracting the talents and not in retaining them. For example, Australian organizations have succeeded in attracting talent through various recruitment and selection programs but have not been effective in retaining them through diversity management, skills and career development, and training programs due to the implemented retraining and other factors which can lead to the cause of despondency among talented workers. (Harvey, 2014, 65-70; Holland, Sheehan & De Cieri, 2007, 257.)

## 2.2 An overview of the Tampere region

Tampere region (Pirkanmaa in Finnish) is the second-largest Finnish city-region in the country. The region enjoys a unique location amidst nature with an industrial heritage spanning more than 200 years that embraces the past and looks to the future. During the past 20 years, Tampere region has developed from an industrial area into a highly concentrated area of support services and knowledge. It consists of 22 municipalities, of which 11 are cities, including but not limited to Tampere, Nokia, Ylöjärvi, Kangasala, Orivesi, and the municipalities of Pirkkala, Vesilahti, Lempäälä. More than half a million inhabitants (527,478 ppl) live in the Tampere region (12,446 km<sup>2</sup>) in a relatively low urban density (42 ppl/km<sup>2</sup>). The region has high-intensity activities in knowledge generation, high-quality education and skills development systems, and established welfare societies, representing a typical city-region of a Nordic country. In addition, Finland has a municipal system of self-governance that allows municipalities to prepare their development plans, make financial decisions, collect their own taxes, and manage their affairs independently. Thus, this makes Finnish municipalities dependent on local taxes and responsible for providing basic services, which makes the municipal level extremely important for competitiveness and development. Tampere city is the centre of the region and has a population of 297,132 inhabitants, making it the third-largest city in Finland and the largest inland city in the Nordic countries. Although Tampere previously gained industrial recognition as the “Manchester of the North” in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, it currently aims to form a knowledge city region in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Moreover, the city is considered the most attractive place for Finnish to study and live due to its surroundings, city location, and study/work opportunities. (Statistics, 2022; Yigitcanlar, Lönnqvist & Saloniemi, 2014, 446, 450.)

According to Tampere Chamber of Commerce et al., (2018, 2), Hari Airaksinen, CEO of Business Tampere, asserts that the Tampere region still has great growth potential and that the merger of Tampere University of Applied Sciences, Tampere University of Technology, and Tampere University will reinvigorate the development work with various companies. He also noted that “There is no better place than Tampere region to be an artificial intelligence constructor, leading developer and test laboratory”. Thus, the Tampere region as a business

environment constitutes a world-class operating environment and has a lot to offer (Figure 1), especially when it comes to business cop-operation and excellent diverse research produced by the universities of Tampere (Tampere Chamber of Commerce et al., 2018, 10).

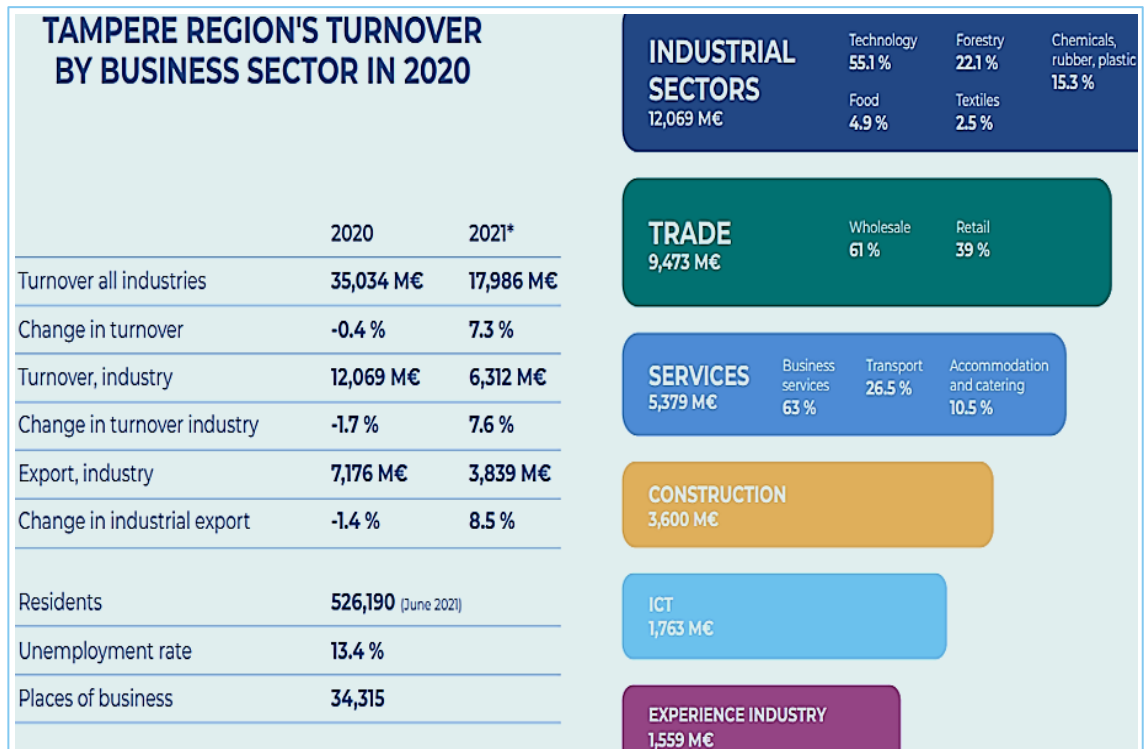


FIGURE 1. Tampere region's turnover by business sector in 2020 (Council of Tampere Region et al., 2021b, 3)

The location of the Tampere region has made it an excellent place for operations and logistics, Pirkkala and Helsinki-Vantaa airports are easily accessible, and therefore reaching customers outside Finland and/or receiving products is not complicated. Anna-Kaisa Ikonen, Mayor of Tampere, stated that Tampere has a bright future ahead, but the distribution of well-being and demographic change remain among other issues that require action in the coming years. Nevertheless, Pasi Mäkinen, Managing Director at Pirkanmaa Federation of Entrepreneurs, expressed concerns about the availability of a skilled workforce and mentioned that one in five companies of SMEs considers the shortage of skilled labour an obstacle to operational development (Table.1). According to European Commission (2003), micro company is a company with 1-10 employees and  $\leq 2$  M € in turnover or total balance sheet, while small company has  $< 50$  employees and  $\leq 10$  M € in turnover or total balance sheet, and medium company has  $< 250$  employees and  $\leq 50$  M € in turnover or  $\leq 43$  M € in total balance sheet.

Furthermore, Pasi Mäkinen believes that in the short run bringing skilled workers from abroad to Finland may cause conflicts with mismatch issues in the job market, but in the long run, such a solution seems inevitable, mainly due to the ageing population in Finland. Consequently, international talents are huge assets, and therefore Finnish companies must seize the opportunity to employ them. (Confederation of Finnish Industries, 2021b; Council of Tampere Region et al., 2021a, 2, 6, 11; Tampere City, 2021, 2.)

TABLE 1. Occupational barometer in the Tampere region (Ammattibarometri, 2022)

Occupations	Balance between supply and demand for workforce in the Tampere region
Electrical Engineers	Shortage of job seekers
Electronics Engineers	Surplus of job seekers
Nursing Professionals	Shortage of job seekers
Accountants	In balance
Financial and Investment Advisers	In balance
Advertising and Marketing Professionals	Large surplus of job seekers
System Analysts	Surplus of job seekers
Software Developers	Shortage of job seekers
Web and Multimedia Developers	Shortage of job seekers
Mechanical Engineering Technicians	In balance
Electrical Engineering Technicians	In balance
Survey and Market Research Interviewers	Shortage of job seekers
Application Programmers	Shortage of job seekers
Business Services and Administration Managers	In balance

The Tampere region has an international talent pool with more than 1,000 international students studying in various Bachelor's and Master's programs, such as Engineering, Nursing, Information and Communication Technologies, and Business Administration, offered by Tampere universities and Häme University of Applied Sciences. Not to mention the international graduates who

reside in the region (Vipunen, 2022). According to Nestorenko (2016, 182), the OECD, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, and Eurostat define as “international students those who are not residents of their country of study or those who received their prior education in another country”. Thus, the term international student refers to a student who has crossed borders to either study or continue studying at any educational institution abroad (Nestorenko, 2016, 182). Andersson et al. (2020, 16) state that international talents are skilled immigrants or Finnish returnees with international connections, expertise, and experience that generate benefits for Finnish companies, industries, and ultimately society. Posted workers, researchers, international students, and expats with families are examples of international talent. Although they might be very different from each other, the willingness to live and work in Finland is what they have in common. Consequently, such a situation in which talented and skilled international students do not find jobs in areas equivalent to their experience and training will result in “brain waste”. Thus, this may raise some concerns about whether employers in the Tampere region are underplaying the importance of international students as a talented diverse workforce within their companies and overplaying the importance of the Finnish workforce (Harvey, 2014, 66).

In response to the current situation in the Tampere region, the International House Tampere office, part of the Talent Boost Program, opened in 2021 in the city of Tampere. International House Tampere is a Single Service Point offering a service package that supports international students in identifying opportunities to accelerate their business, employment, and networking plans. Also, it helps companies in finding suitable employees and new channels for attracting skilled workers. Financial support, help with bureaucracy, Finnish language training for international employees, events, and start up community are all services offered to employers and international students in the Tampere region by International House Tampere. The collaboration partners in the International House Tampere are the Tampere Vocational College Tredu, City of Tampere, Kela, Pirkanmaa Employment and Economic Development Offices (TE Offices), Tampere Universities Community. (Tampere City, 2022.)

### **2.3 The importance of international students as a diverse workforce**

In today's world, creativity and innovation have become imperative for most businesses to succeed, thrive, and even survive due to rapid technological development and intense global competition. People from different backgrounds, cultures, mindsets, values, and beliefs are becoming more interconnected and interacting due to this progress. Thus, companies in such an environment are part of an interdependent global economy with competition coming from different corners of the world. Therefore, most companies employ diverse teams to deal with this evolving business environment. These teams serve as the primary tool for developing creative ideas and therefore have been promoted as the pivotal role of organizational innovation. Furthermore, innovation in its simple definition is the creation of better processes, technologies, products, and services, which involves a complex use of ideas. These innovations must be accepted by the government, society, and the market. Moreover, innovation indicates fundamental changes in organizational growth along with industrial structure, and thus it affects the organization and its dimensions (i.e., knowledge management (KM), total quality management (TQM), product quality, performance, and job satisfaction). Therefore, the adoption of innovation by managers is crucial to survival in the ever-changing and competitive business environment. Recent research on diversity and creativity has shown that teams consisting of employees with diverse knowledge, backgrounds, and expertise tend to be more creative and innovative which improves internal operations, productivity and increases competitive advantage. (Chaudhry, Paquibut, & Tunio, 2021, 3; Horwitz & Horwitz, 2007, 988; Sundari, 2018, 145; Wang et al., 2016, 3231.)

According to Sundari (2018, 145) Malcolm Forbes defined diversity as “the art of thinking independently together”. Nevertheless, it is not possible to contain diversity in one definition due to its many dimensions and aspects, however, according to Chaudhry et al. (2021, 3) diversity was defined by Kreitz as “any significant difference that distinguishes one individual from another” and Dobbs asserts that it can be specified in education, experience, lifestyle, sex, age, and geography. Chaudhry et al. (2021, 2) state that there are two types of diversity that distinguish employees from each other, referred to as “two-dimensional diversity”. The first one is the inherent diversity (i.e., gender, age, abilities,

ethnicity, religion, and language), and the second is the acquired diversity (i.e., work experience, marital background, and educational background). Hence, the convergence of employees of different age groups, nationalities, work experience, gender, and religions, forms the diverse workforce that constitutes workplace diversity. Therefore, companies that hire employees with inherent and acquired diversity traits out-innovate and out-perform other companies. Chaudhry et al. (2021, 20) concluded that inherent diversity contributes more effectively to company innovation than acquired diversity, and further identified four variables of the inherent diversity of employees that form the cornerstones of a creative attitude and innovative work climate. Thus, a workgroup that includes employees of different ages, who represent a range of ethnic backgrounds and religious belief systems, and speak a variety of native languages, contributes better to innovation within the company than a homogeneous group of employees.

Sundari (2018, 155) states that diversity in the workplace is gaining greater importance as economies around the world shift from manufacturing to services, and thus business success depends on effective communications and interactions between employees and diverse customers. Moreover, the diversity of the workforce is becoming increasingly prevalent as multinational corporations expand beyond their domestic borders to compete internationally with their products and services. Therefore, this diversity will stimulate greater innovation, creativity, and productivity leading to the development of new services and products that meet the expectations and needs of the customers. In addition, diversity is not only a source of innovation and creativity but also a source of right decisions due to its positive impact on the decision-making process as decisions will be made based on healthy debates and different perspectives. It is also very effective in terms of solving uncertain and complex tasks and problems due to the availability of diverse functional backgrounds and solutions. Furthermore, the concept of “value in diversity” asserts that team diversity provides a means for members to pool information and combine perspectives and ideas to create synthetic solutions that will help address work-related problems. Therefore, employees no longer work and live in isolation, the diversity of the workforce and workplace will help them benefit from diverse perspectives and encourage them to learn from other colleagues who are not the same. (Horwitz & Horwitz, 2007, 991, 995; Saxena, 2014, 83; Sundari, 2018, 145-146; Wang et al., 2016, 3231.)

Chaudhry et al. (2021, 20) assert that companies that hire diverse employees have a higher level of change acceptance because they can rapidly develop new processes or adopt new business systems to succeed in the changing environment. According to Hunt, Prince Dixon-Fyle & Yee (2018, 13), companies with culturally and ethnically diverse boards of directors are 43% more likely to generate higher profits, indicating a positive correlation between diversity and the company's financial performance. The study also found that cultural and ethnic diversity strongly correlates with value creation at the executive team and board levels. Thus, companies that have not embraced diversity are 29% more likely than their industry peers to underperform on profitability. Moreover, Global Innovation Survey conducted a survey in the industrial sectors, and the results showed that the growth of the most innovative companies is significantly higher by 28% than the growth of the least innovative companies (Chaudhry et al., 2021, 3). Thus, diversity through a diverse workforce contributes to business success in several ways (Saxena, 2014, 83).

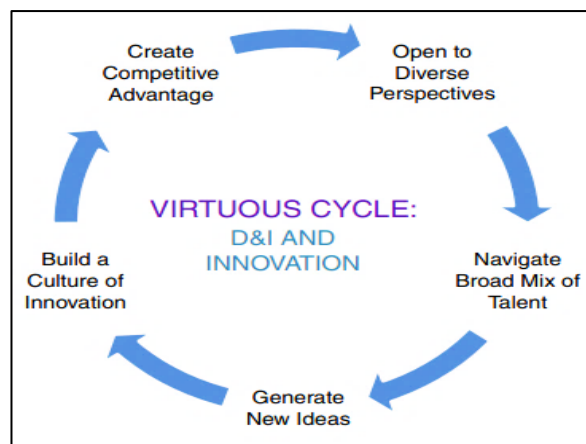


FIGURE 2. A virtuous cycle (Steele & Derven, 2015b, 2)

However, it is noteworthy that inclusion goes hand in hand with diversity when talking about a diverse workforce. Employees with all kinds of abilities and differences must feel welcome and part of a company that values and respects them. Therefore, a company that fosters an inclusive environment and embraces diversity would outperform competitors as this can improve its bottom line and enhance its business growth strategies, including mergers, acquisitions, and expansion into new markets. In this context, diversity and inclusion are two imperatives for business success and help create a “virtuous cycle” in which innovation is fostered (Figure 2). (Steele & Derven, 2015a, 1-3.)

Steele & Derven (2015a, 3) claim that both research and practical experience show that bringing innovative solutions and new ideas to fruition requires more than just having a diverse workforce. In fact, many challenging factors make it hard to harness the potential of diversity for innovation. Forming a cohesive group in a diverse team is not easy compared to a homogeneous team due to the lack of comfort, shared history, and common ground among the diverse members. Therefore, diverse teams can easily create new ideas (divergence) but may struggle to reach consensus (convergence) among the members. Another explanation is that some team members have a high degree of individualism as they place their own interests over shared group goals, and thus they work less effectively with their other employees in team-based settings. Accordingly, individualistic employees' contribution to the team is often a challenge that managers must address to reap the benefits offered by diversity. Thus, cordial interpersonal relationship between employees is necessary to ensure that the organization works smoothly without any problems. Consequently, proper management of the "human aspect" of the organization is vital to avoid having bad interpersonal relationships among the employees. Additionally, this management is a crucial aspect of improving efficiency and productivity and helping the organization achieve its goals. (Gundlach, Zivnuska & Stoner, 2006, 1604; Saxena, 2014, 77-78, 81.)

## **2.4 Managing a diverse workplace**

While diversity in the company fuels creativity and innovation and yields greater productivity and competitive advantage, it might also become an obstacle that prevents the company from achieving its organizational goals if left without management. Therefore, diversity can be perceived as a "double-edged sword". (Sundar, 2018, 145-146). Unmanaged diversity negatively affects employee social integration and effectiveness, resulting in lower group performance (Guillaume et al., 2014, 785). Thus, diversity management offers a mechanism for solving job issues that undermine such integration and effectiveness (Li, Wang, Haque, Shafique & Nawaz, 2020, 1). According to Inegbedion, Sunday, Asaleye, Lawal & Adebajji (2020, 3), the aim of diversity management is to establish a positive work environment in which all employees feel valued and

appreciated regardless of their similarities and differences. Hence, it guarantees an environment in which work issues related to inclusion, equality, bullying behaviour, and justice, which are based on ethnicity, age, and gender, are less likely to occur (Li, Wang, Haque, Shafique & Nawaz, 2020, 1), leading to low turnover expectations and high firm performance (Li, Oljaca, Firdousi & Akram, 2021, 3). Consequently, creating and maintaining a positive climate among the diverse employees in the workplace leads to higher job satisfaction and job performance (Li et al., 2020, 2). Moreover, recent research on workforce diversity management shows that besides the positive impact of effective workforce diversity management on the work environment, it also positively influences person-job match and employee commitment resulting in increased job satisfaction and performance among employees (Li et al., 2021, 5).

The person job-match refers to the process of matching the right employee to the right job based upon the employee's experience and education. Employees should be satisfied with their jobs through the effective use of their abilities, qualifications, and skills. According to Li et al., (2021, 4) employees who have a job commensurate with their abilities and qualifications are able to achieve more development practices and will perform better and more effectively compared to their other colleagues. Therefore, greater job match leads to greater work behaviour and attitude among employees. Conversely, the job performance of employees who did not get the jobs they desired based on their experience, abilities, technical skills, and academic qualifications will not match the required levels of the organization. It is logical to expect that if employees get a job that does not match their specific knowledge and experience, they will lose interest in the job and may not perform as expected. Consequently, job mismatch negatively impacts job satisfaction and employees' work attitude and behaviour and may be a main reason for them to leave their job. Li et al. (2020, 10) state that employee retention has become a difficult task for managers in organizations as job loyalty among employees is declining due to job mismatch, which leads them to switch to other jobs. Moreover, the retention of skilled and qualified employees plays an essential role in stabilizing the organization. Accordingly, it is crucial for the employer to understand the linkage between diversity, job matching, performance, satisfaction, and workforce diversity management because of their

direct impact on organizational performance. (Li et al., 2021, 2, 4; Li et al., 2020, 2, 10.)

Li et al., (2021, 5) state that employee commitment refers to the mental association of employees with their work environment. Employees from one of the more prominent minority are more likely to experience the hostile effects of higher rates of absenteeism and leave work. Thus, the employer is responsible for creating a strong relationship between employees and their workplace by appropriately managing the diverse workforce. Moreover, establishing a good relationship will be a great incentive for employees to focus on their work and do what is best for their organization. Consequently, higher employee commitment will reduce non-attendance and employee turnover, resulting in higher profitability of the organization. Therefore, enhancing workforce diversity management will increase employee commitment, which will subsequently improve employee performance in particular and the performance of the organization in general. Thus, workforce diversity management is positively related to employee commitment, and the latter positively influences employee job performance. In the same vein, previous studies have found that the inclusion of diversity as part of organizational culture and the direct involvement of senior management in diversity-related tasks can signal an organization's commitment to its diverse workforce. Additionally, Li et al., (2021, 4) list several unique diversity-related activities that can be planned by top management to create a work environment that helps attract and retain a diverse workforce, such as corporate-supported worker proclivity gatherings, homegrown accomplice benefits, adaptable work game plans, and other different projects. Therefore, it is critical that organizations carefully consider their workforce diversity management practices. (Li et al., 2021, 2, 4-5.)

Existing literature asserts that embracing structural empowerment within an organization by designing work in a particular way that promotes effective communication among diverse employees and requires a deeper understanding of tasks will encourage them to actively participate in organizational activities and processes, leading to better overall work performance. Thus, structural empowerment means that top management delegates responsibility, authority, and power to lower management, which leads to better employee job

performance, enhances job security, and strengthens employee relationships with employers. Therefore, structural empowerment aims to provide a work environment in which all employees are empowered to think differently and apply their creative and innovative ideas to help achieve the organization's goals. Furthermore, it is an environment where employees feel responsible for their job duties and thus encourages self-accountability for effective work management. Consequently, embracing structural empowerment will allow diverse employees to benefit from diversity by motivating them to learn from each other and establish effective communication with colleagues from different cultures and backgrounds. Hence, this work environment advances the development of common regard, shared information, and shared objectives and strengthens the positive impact on employee performance. Moreover, workforce diversity management will benefit from structural empowerment by having intellectual wisdom, expertise, and multiple aspects of knowledge. Accordingly, structural empowerment enhances the positive impact on the relationship between employee job performance and workforce diversity management. (Li et al., 2021, 2, 6.)

The social categorization perspective claims that people usually categorize themselves and others based on salient social categories. Thus, people see themselves and similar others as forming a more favourable and valued ingroup, while they see dissimilar others as forming a less favourable outgroup. Therefore, dissimilarity in the workplace can lead to unfavourable evaluations and perceptions of dissimilar employees, making work group identification a challenge. It also reduces the likelihood that employees will identify with a diverse work group, which engenders conflict and undermines communication, trust, satisfaction, willingness to cooperate, commitment, and ultimately performance. Thereby, work group identification refers "to the cognitive and perceptual awareness that the self-constitutes a part of the work group along with the emotional significance attached to it". Consequently, a distinct and positive work group identity is crucial for employees as this can help them feel secure and safe. Moreover, employees will be willing to contribute more to the effectiveness of the work group once they feel that their employer treats them equally and fairly. However, simply valuing diversity without establishing effective diversity management procedures and policies by policymakers and senior management

within the organization to create a strong climate for inclusion will not be sufficient to harness employee diversity for creativity, effectiveness, and innovation. Therefore, the main focus of organizations should be on researching and identifying the most effective diversity management procedures, practices, and policies to address employee identity concerns, ensuring greater identification with the work group. (Guillaume et al., 2014, 784-785, 789-792, 797-798.)

Clohisy et al., (2017, 2) state that employers must develop tactics and strategies to be more effective leaders in diverse and complex employee environments. Thus, employers should always seek to develop their skills and acquire new knowledge, which will enable them to create effective diversity management that helps them look beyond the complexities of these work environments (Inegbedion et al., 2020, 3). According to Clohisy et al., (2017, 2), there are biases buried deep within every one of us that we do not even realize that they exist. These biases may be against any “outsider” group, including immigrants, women, minorities, etc. Therefore, unconscious bias is one of the biggest challenges that employers have to deal with. Thus, the employer as a leader has to overcome this challenge by understanding these biases in order to take steps to counteract them because even the tiniest unconscious biases can have a huge impact on the work environment within the organization, especially if they come from the leader. Awareness is the first critical step that can help employers manage biases effectively. Some companies have used specific methods to remind leaders and employees of their own biases. For instance, Google has put in place a program that encourages employees to point out any biases they encounter. The second step employers can take is to ensure that compensation between different employees is balanced. Re-evaluating the promotion process and who should be promoted is the third step employers can take in this regard. The fourth step is to change the way meetings are conducted by empowering everyone to call out incidents in which they felt interrupted or ignored so that minorities feel confident in meetings. Consequently, these steps can guide employers when developing more effective leadership styles in the future. Furthermore, employers who continuously pursue attributes such as credibility, caring, fairness, effective listening, and integrity will be able to develop leadership styles that positively affect the work environment and pave the way for greater organizational cohesion. (Clohisy et al., 2017, 2-4; Inegbedion et al., 2020, 6.)

## 2.5 The theory of planned behaviour

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) is generally known as a well-validated model that can be used across a wide range of topics to explore and predict the behaviour and intention of an individual to engage in a particular action (McDonnall & Lund, 2020, 206). Hence, the theory of planned behaviour asserts that individuals' beliefs are related to their behaviours, and thus the latter can be deliberative and planned (Ang, Ramayah & Amin, 2015, 188). Furthermore, the theory suggests that measuring behavioural intention is the most accurate way to predict behaviour (Ang et al., 2015, 188). Accordingly, behavioural intention is determined by three belief-based measures or conceptually independent variables, i.e., attitudes related to the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (McDonnall & Lund, 2020, 206; Ang et al., 2015, 188). Consequently, these three factors contribute together to an individual's intentional behaviour (McDonnall & Lund, 2020, 206). Thus, as a general rule, the intention of a person to perform a particular behaviour would be strong when there is a more favourable attitude and subjective norms and a greater perceived behaviour control over the behaviour in question (Ang et al., 2015, 188).

The first determinant of behavioural intention is the attitude, which reflects the person's beliefs about and assessment of the significant consequences that result from performing a specific behaviour. Hence, whenever a person decides to perform a certain behaviour will usually weigh the benefits and costs associated with that behaviour (Ang et al., 2015, 189). Accordingly, having a positive attitude towards a specific behaviour increases the possibility of performing the intended behaviour and vice versa. Ang et al. (2015, 190) state that there is a strong correlation between attitude, intention, and behaviour as attitude influences intention, while intention predicts behaviour. Therefore, employers in the Tampere region, for example, first need to have a positive attitude towards the idea of hiring international students before translating this attitude into an actual intention to hire them. On the other hand, in the subjective norms, which is the second determinant of behavioural intention, the motivation to perform or engage in a particular behaviour is likely to be driven by beliefs about the normative norm of significant others such as business partners, relatives, co-workers, or close friends (Ang et al., 2015, 189-190). Consequently,

a person's decision to perform or engage in a specific behaviour is determined by what the person's significant referents think of the behaviour in question (Ang et al., 2015, 189-190). Thus, when the employers realize that the hiring decision for international students is seen as proper behaviour by their social circle, their intention to hire international students will increase as they have high motivation to comply with socially desirable behaviour. Conversely, when the social circle considers the behaviour improper, the intention to hire international students in the workplace tends to be lower. Furthermore, perceived behavioural control is the last determinant of behavioural intention and it refers to a person's perception of how easy or difficult it is to perform a particular behaviour. In other words, perceived behavioural control concerns how well a person can control various factors that might constrain or facilitate the ability to manage a given situation. Moreover, the results of previous studies have shown that people who have little control over their actions are less likely to hold a high behavioural intention towards the intended behaviour despite having a positive attitude or supportive subjective norms regarding the behaviour in question (Ang et al., 2015, 189-190). Accordingly, if the employer has complete control over the hiring decision for international students the intention to hire will increase.

Therefore, it is essential to note that hiring decisions for international students will be subject to personal and/or societal factors that may include negative attitudes of employers or current employees in the workplace towards international students, and thus making the hiring decision cannot be a straightforward action or under complete volitional control. Hence, the theory of planned behaviour is suitable for the study because it includes a measure of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, which will allow for this type of behaviour that cannot be completely under volitional control to be predicted just like hiring international students. Thus, the theory will provide valuable information on what the hiring managers perceive as potential personal and societal barriers. It also has gained significant support in several fields due to its relative robustness and has been applied in different marketing, psychology, sociology, and health studies to predict, for example, human behaviour in physical activities, leisure, obesity, blood donation, and hiring intention. However, little research has explored the applicability of planned behaviour theory in the context of international student employment decisions. (Ang et al., 2015, 189.)

## **2.6 Exploring employers' attitudes towards international students**

One of the most sustainable ways for international students to integrate into their host society is to find or obtain proper employment. However, despite the Finnish government efforts in this regard, international students' employment remains a challenge that concerns policymakers, employers, and international students themselves. In addition, the career attainment of international students can be influenced by the individual characteristics and traits of the decision-makers involved in the hiring and promotion processes. (Farashah & Blomquist, 2020, 18-19; see also Almeida, Fernand & Sheridan, 2012, 1950-1951.)

As key decision-makers in human resources processes, employers set the evaluation methods, determine assessment criteria, and analyse information obtained from various resumes and job interviews. Consequently, the way the hiring decision-makers perceive international students can have an effect on the results of selection and promotion processes. As a result, the attitudes and perceptions of the employers are prone to various decision errors as they may include the “similar to me” effect and stereotypes. In the “similar to me” effect, the candidate with similar personality traits, mindset, or nationality as the evaluator is more favourable during the evaluation process than any other applicant. On the other hand, stereotyping refers to the generalization and evaluation of job applicants based on their race, accent, dress, gender, or appearance. Furthermore, assessing the job applicants of the international students can be a complex task for employers, especially if they are not familiar with international students' previous educational institutes or employers, for instance. Thus, employers' decisions are even more susceptible to errors in this context. (Farashah & Blomquist, 2020, 19; see also Almeida et al., 2012, 1962.)

### **2.6.1 Employers' individual attributes and characteristics**

The values that individuals hold can theoretically explain their behaviours and attitudes. The individual attitude towards international students varies according to the people's core values. Schwartz's theory of basic values identifies ten human values that can also be categorized into four more explicit and distinct

higher-order values (Figure 3). These groups are self-enhancement, self-transcendence, openness to change, and conservation. However, the thesis will focus on conservation and self-transcendence values as they are the only values relevant to the context of the research. (Farashah & Blomquist 2020, 20, 23; see also Schwartz, 2012a, 8; Schwartz et al. 2012, 663-664.)

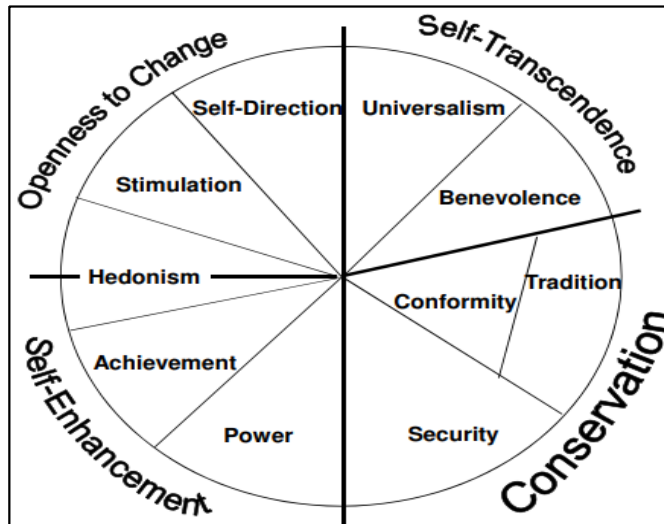


FIGURE 3. Theoretical model of relations among ten motivational types of value (Schwartz, 2012b, 9)

Farashah & Blomquist (2020, 20) states that employers with high self-transcendence values, such as tolerance, protection, appreciation, and understanding, try to understand the new culture of international students and thus value the diversity it creates and perceive it as an opportunity for innovation and social enrichment. In addition, employers of this type are also more agreeable to cultural incongruence. Therefore, these employers understand the importance of supporting the vulnerable position of international students by providing various means of development and growth. Furthermore, employers with high-transcendence values believe in social justice and therefore consider international student candidates as equal to native candidates and also view themselves responsible for helping them. However, employers with high conservation values and a preference for traditional culture and stability perceive international students who bring new norms and beliefs and belong to different cultures as a threat to the existing organizational and societal order and shared culture. Thereby, conservative employers are more likely to hold a negative attitude towards international students, and thus undervalue and underestimate their potential. Farashah & Blomquist (2020, 27) argue that three factors are

directly associated with a positive attitude towards international students. Foreign-born employers have relatively more positive attitudes towards international students than native-born. Also, the older age factor is directly related to positive attitudes, although it indirectly leads to negative attitudes because it is associated with higher expectancies and higher conservation values. Finally, a higher education degree is, directly and indirectly, related to positive attitudes towards international students through lower conservation values and higher self-transcendence values. Farashah & Blomquist (2020, 31) found that the employment of international students and their career outcomes are not only influenced by their qualifications and human capital but also by employer's cultural expectancies and values.

## **2.7 Recruitment process**

According to Sameen (2016, 286), attracting and retaining qualified employees is critical to the company's success. If employees are skilled, competent, and well managed, they will form a good foundation for the company to generate revenues. Therefore, companies always aim to hire the best candidate who will fill the requirements of the advertised job vacancy and add value to their workforce (Shen, 2015, 3). Furthermore, Shen (2015, 3) states that a hiring process can be divided into two stages: recruitment and selection. The recruitment process is a systematic procedure that includes four stages: "assessment of vacant vacancy, a job analysis, job description, and person specification" (Sameen, 2016, 286). At the recruitment stage, the company or employer publishes job opportunities to qualified applicants and collect information about competent and eligible candidates. Then at the selection stage, the employer evaluates all candidates to select the one who best meets the job requirements. Ultimately, the hiring process will end with an agreement between the employer and employee (Shen, 2015, 3). Moreover, Sameen (2016, 286) asserts that when selecting which recruitment method to use, the employer must ensure that the message conveyed is realistic, complete, and timely. At the same time, the employer may consider whether the job position can be filled formally or informally and how suitable candidates can apply for the job position. Employers can advertise job vacancies using various means such as university

recruitment, job centres, internet sites, agencies, newspapers, professional journals, job fairs, cinema, radio, and television. Hence, these means can be categorized as formal and informal recruitment sources. For example, employment agencies, television, and newspaper advertisements are formal sources, whereas referrals, self-initiated walk-ins, word-of-mouth, and internet-based hiring are informal recruitment sources. According to Behtoui (2008, 414), employers tend to use informal recruitment methods during recessions or high unemployment rates as they are more cost-effective and time-saving and vice versa. Furthermore, Behtoui (2008, 412) identified three ways of finding a job. The first one is the formal method, where job seekers use services such as private/public employment agencies, and advertisements on the internet or in newspapers. These services are impersonal intermediaries between prospective employers and job seekers. The second one is the informal job search method, including interpersonal channels that use contact with previous employers and co-workers or help from relatives and friends to convey unpublished information about job vacancies. Besides, the direct offers from the employer as well as “personal connections”, “family connections”, and “school connections” are considered as informal methods as well. The third method is the direct approach, whereby the potential employer, who has no current jobs available or no jobs posted online, is contacted directly either through a visit or by receiving an unsolicited resume from applicants.

Behtoui (2008, 412, 414-416) argues that disadvantaged minority groups have a significantly inferior labour market position because they lack access to social networks that can provide them with valuable resources to find a job. In the same vein, people at the bottom of the hierarchy are more likely to have access to social contacts in inferior positions with unstable job positions or high unemployment rates. Therefore, in order for disadvantaged ethnic and racial groups to have access to better social resources, they must take 'extraordinary' actions through cross-ethnic/-racial ties because their current social networks do not provide them with much access to information about employment opportunities. Conversely, people in advantaged social and economic positions refrain from actively seeking employment because they regularly receive valuable job information in their social circles. Accordingly, social contacts and background are important factors in modern recruitment. Additionally, although the use of informal methods will

increase the probability of finding a job, it results in a lower return on wages and thus is associated with wage differences. Nevertheless, West European studies on recruitment processes and job search strategies lack sufficient data because access to the required data has been very limited, which has prevented researchers from comparing natives with different minority groups.

Shen (2015, 3, 7-8) states that from the perspective of “certifiability”, although job requirements can vary, they are mainly divided into two groups. Certifiability refers to “the extent to which a required qualification can be measured, quantified, or proven by an authorized third party”. Some job requirements related to job knowledge, such as licenses, degrees, diplomas, or certificates, can be easily certified. While others such as career ambition, personality, work ethic, loyalty, and enthusiasm are not easily certifiable. Thus, employers may use formal recruitment methods when they are interested in candidates' certifiable qualifications such as listing specific requirements in job advertisements during the recruitment stage. On the other hand, the use of informal methods, such as colleagues vouching for new hires, at the recruitment stage is sometimes more effective if the evaluation of certain qualifications by formal means is difficult. Likewise, employers use formal methods at the selection stage such as interviewing and testing to evaluate candidates' certifiable qualifications. Inversely, employers use informal procedures to measure candidates' non-certifiable qualifications, such as work ethic and compatibility with existing employees, because they are considered more reliable in this situation. In addition, employers can sometimes use a mixture of formal and informal channels depending on their needs and job requirements. However, employers rely on formal channels alone in both recruitment and selection stages when they place more emphasis on the importance of certifiable qualifications over non-certifiable qualifications. In the same vein, they tend to use informal channels (e.g., recommendations or internal referrals) alone at both stages when the job requires non-certifiable qualifications. Consequently, hiring is a complex process that requires recruiters to match candidates' certifiable/non-certifiable qualifications and job requirements in each hiring stage.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter of the thesis presents the methodological framework used by the author for this research and provides a justification for conducting it. According to Adams, Khan, Raeside & White (2014, 5) the research methodology is the philosophy and science behind all research, while the research method is the way of conducting and implementing the research.

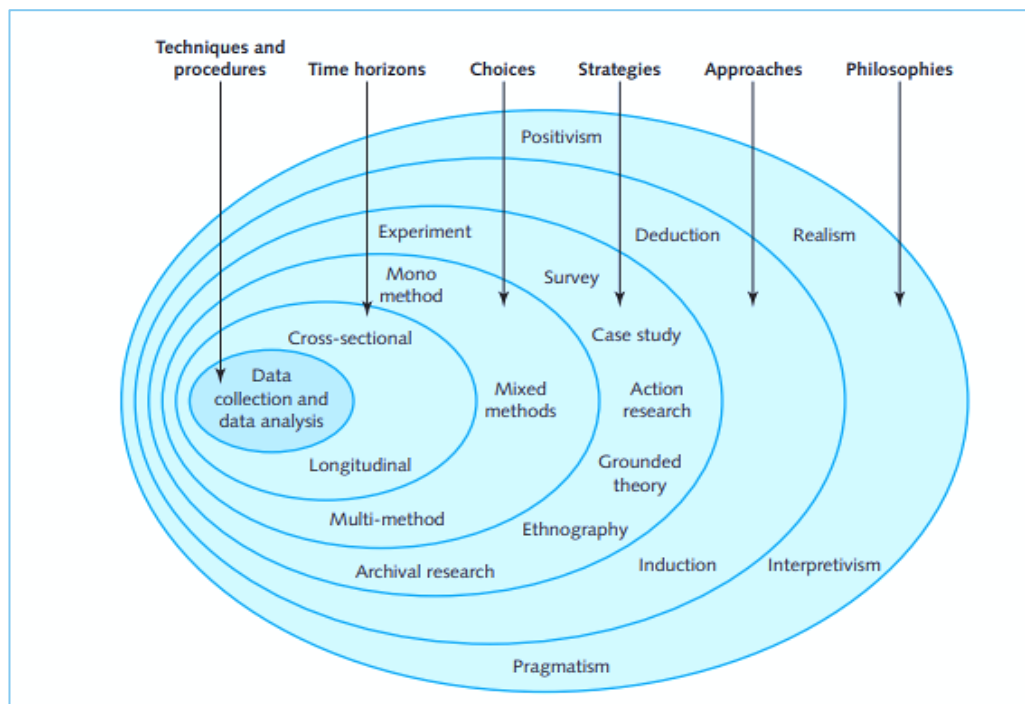


FIGURE 4. The research onion (Saunders & Lewis, 2012)

#### 3.1 Research philosophy

Saunders et al. (2019, 130) defined research philosophy as a system of assumptions and beliefs about the development of knowledge. A researcher when conducting a study or research will develop new knowledge in a particular field which might not be as dramatic as developing a new theory but even addressing a particular problem in a specific organization is considered as knowledge development.

Therefore, at each stage of the research (Figure 4), whether the author is consciously aware of them or not, different types of assumptions will be formed,

including but not limited to epistemological assumptions that are related to human knowledge and ontological assumptions which concern the realities encountered in the research. Thus, these assumptions will inevitably shape how the researcher understands the research questions, the methods the researcher uses, and how the researcher interprets the findings. Moreover, a consistent and well-considered set of assumptions will constitute a reliable and credible research philosophy that will support the researcher's methodological choice, the strategy of the research, the data collection techniques, and the data analysis procedures. Hence, this will help the author design a coherent thesis where all the elements fit together. (Saunders et al., 2019, 130.)

Generally, there are different research philosophies that a researcher can choose from such as realism, positivism, interpretivism, objectivism and subjectivism. Depending on the ontological and epistemological stance and the nature of the research question, the author will select the research philosophy. (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, 104-107; see also Saunders et al., 2019, 134-135.)

### **3.1.1 Ontology**

Ontology refers to the assumptions one forms regarding the nature of reality. In other words, it is related to how one perceives the world around, and what kind of assumptions they have formed about how the world or society works. In terms of research, the ontological assumptions of the author play a fundamental role in influencing how the author views and studies the thesis objects. Objectivism and subjectivism are two important aspects of ontology. The Objective aspect of ontology argues that social actors (people) do not affect the social entities as the latter exists independently of their role. Thus, the beliefs, assumptions, and ideas social actors hold do not influence or alter the nature of reality when it is examined or investigated. Contrarily, the subjective aspect of ontology argues that the perceptions of the social actors and their actions create social realities and phenomena and thus that the truth is in a constant state of flux, change, and revision and is ultimately subjective. (Crotty, 1998, 10-11; Saunders et al., 2019, 133-135.)

Therefore, the thesis adopts the subjective aspect of ontology and asserts that perceptions and consequent actions of the employers in the Tampere region create the social phenomenon. The philosophical position of the author is driven by the fact that the perceptions, experiences, assumptions, and beliefs of employers in the Tampere region (social actors) are distinct in many ways. Furthermore, it is crucial to understand the subjective reality of the employers in order to understand their perceptions, motives, and actions. However, to understand the social world from the perspective of employers, their views on the employment of international students must be evaluated.

### **3.1.2 Epistemology**

Epistemology is concerned with knowledge because it questions what constitutes legitimate, valid, and acceptable knowledge and how can knowledge be communicated to others. Thus, epistemology relates to information and knowledge that the researcher considers valuable, useful, and relevant to addressing the research problem. Furthermore, there are four aspects of epistemology such as positivism, realism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. (Crotty, 1998, 12-13; Saunders et al., 2019, 133; see also Saunders & Lewis, 2012, 104-107.)

Positivism is a research philosophy that uses highly structured methods to facilitate replication that can help in law-like generalization and is similar to research philosophies used in the natural and physical sciences (Saunders et al., 2019, 144). Causality is the main focus of positivity because the primary aim of researchers is to study the different variables that can be observed and measured in certain controllable conditions (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, 104-105).

Realism, on the other hand, stresses that truth is embodied in everything that the senses show as reality. Therefore, realists consider that objects exist independently of human knowledge of their existence and the reality that one observes will generate credible and reliable data and facts. Besides, interpretivism is related to the study of social reality or phenomena in its natural environment and advocates to understand the differences between people in

their role as social actors. Hence, the social reality is subjective because the social actors who have different backgrounds, cultures, and circumstances will create and experience distinct and different social realities. Thus, interpretivist research aims to develop better interpretations and understandings of social worlds and contexts. (Saunders et al., 2019, 148-149; Saunders & Lewis, 2012, 105-107.)

Pragmatism suggests that the research questions and objectives are the essential determinants of the researcher's philosophical position. Moreover, the researcher's values in pragmatic research are the driving force behind the reflexive process of inquiry where the researcher begins to notice a problem and feels that something is out of place, thus aiming to find a practical solution that guides the future practice. Furthermore, pragmatists assert that there are many ways to conduct research and interpret the world and that there may be multiple realities. In addition, it is possible and might be highly appropriate to combine both quantitative and qualitative methods within a single study, for example, a quantitative questionnaire that indicates a positive approach alongside a qualitative interview that has a more interpretive stance. Nevertheless, pragmatists use methods that enable reliable, credible, relevant, and well-founded data to be collected in order to advance the research. (Saunders et al., 2019, 151; Saunders & Lewis, 2012, 107.)

According to Salkind (2010), understanding human experience is at the core of pragmatism. It typically attempts to understand the multiple factors that influence the actions and behaviour of people in a given situation. Furthermore, Salkind (2010) claims that a pragmatic study is an inductive study that moves from complex issues to a general theory of understanding to help improve a specific situation. Consequently, for the purpose of this thesis, the epistemological research stance will be derived from the pragmatic approach as it is found to be the most compatible position with the nature of the research problem and questions, and the ontological position of the research. The decision to adopt the pragmatic approach was made based on the fact that pragmatism implies that researchers can choose the philosophical and/or methodological approaches best suited for the particular research problem they are seeking to investigate (Kaushik & Walsh 2019, 2). Also, the type of data that the thesis will deal with

plays a crucial role in choosing the pragmatic stance as both qualitative (non-numerical) and quantitative (numerical) data are needed (Kaushik & Walsh 2019, 2).

## **3.2 Research approach**

In general, theories can be generated at any level of the empirical level or abstract conceptual level. Moreover, the development of the theories may occur with deductive reasoning, which is known as the “top-down” approach, by moving from a general rule or statement to a specific conclusion. Thus, deductive reasoning is the logical process of drawing a conclusion from a previous true proposition, statement, or hypothesis. Furthermore, theories may be also developed with inductive reasoning, which is the “bottom up” theory development approach, by moving from particular specified observations to broader propositions and generalizations. Consequently, the two scientific inquiry methods deductivism and inductivism, are the only two styles of reasoning which are used while conducting any type of research. (Adams et al., 2014, 9; see also Saunders & Lewis, 2012, 109.)

### **3.2.1 Deductivism and inductivism**

The deductive approach to research is used for establishing universal laws. Basically, these laws are merely hypotheses that still require testing against predictions of the law themselves by using a research strategy specifically designed for the testing purpose. Hence, these universal laws will remain true until one or more of their predictions are proven wrong, in which case the theoretical framework derived from these laws will have to be reconsidered. The main characteristic of the deductive approach is that it works from the general to the specific and is more prevalent in natural sciences research. Therefore, the deductive approach involves collecting and analysing the data to evaluate and test a different set of hypotheses related to an existing theory so that theory can be verified or falsified. (Adams et al., 2014, 10; Saunders et al., 2019, 153-154; Saunders & Lewis, 2012, 108.)

Adams et al. (2014, 10) state that empirical verification of a general conclusion derived from specific observations plays a crucial role in the inductive approach to research. Furthermore, observations reveal repeated occurrences and patterns in a particular variable of interest, and then these observations will be the basis for formulating a general theory regarding the behaviour and nature of the observed variable. Usually, other variables are classified under the same 'class' of phenomena. Accordingly, the inductive approach involves collecting and analysing data in order to explore a phenomenon and then generate or develop a theory (Saunders et al., 2019, 153). Hence, it is reasonable to adopt it because it is the most appropriate approach to this research which is encouraged by observing a social phenomenon in a particular social setting and is thus best suited to meet the needs of the thesis. However, the research must develop meaning from the collected, analysed, and interpreted data to identify relationships and patterns and then formulate a solution to address the research problem.

### **3.3 Thesis type of study and strategy**

Exploratory research aims to gain new understanding, ask unexplored questions, and assess topics from a new perspective to discover what is happening. Thus, exploratory research is the preferred option when "What" or "How" questions seek to clarify a phenomenon, problem, or issue. Moreover, it also aims to investigate a phenomenon that has not been researched in detail and thus is not clearly understood by the researcher due to the lack of general information about it. (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010; Saunders et al., 2019, 186-187; Saunders & Lewis, 2012, 110-111.)

Saunders et al. (2019, 189-190) state that strategy, in general, is a plan of action by which one intends to achieve a specific goal. Hence, a research strategy is a plan of how the researcher aims to answer the research question. And it is also considered to be the methodological link between the research philosophical stance and the subsequent choice of the methods to gather and analyse the data. Moreover, when choosing a research strategy, it is essential to consider

achieving a reasonable level of coherence throughout the research design as this can help answer the thesis questions and achieve its objectives.

A case study is a research strategy used to conduct an in-depth investigation to explore a particular issue, topic, or phenomenon within real-life settings as it affects a person, group, department, or organization. Furthermore, understanding the context and the interactions between the case subject and its context are two fundamental elements that the researcher must consider while conducting a case study research. Additionally, it can generate rich insights with empirical descriptions and theory development. However, for such insights, a case study uses both quantitative and qualitative data and relies on a combination of data collection techniques such as interviews, questionnaires, and observation. Besides, this type of strategy is an inductive research method and is most commonly used in explanatory and exploratory research. Moreover, a single case study is the simplest form of case study, and it is often used because it provides the researcher with an opportunity to explore, observe and analyse an issue, topic, or phenomenon that has rarely been considered before. (Adams et al., 2014, 98; Saunders et al., 2019, 196-198; Saunders & Lewis, 2012, 116-117.)

Consequently, the single exploratory case study is particularly useful for the purpose and aim of the thesis. Thus, it provides the author with an opportunity to gain a comprehensive understanding of the main factors influencing the hiring decisions for international students from the perspective of employers in the Tampere region and to explore the reasons behind the lack of employment opportunities for international students who live in the Tampere region as well. To achieve these goals and study this social phenomenon within its real-life context, qualitative and quantitative data methods were used.

### **3.4 Data collection**

This section details the processes that were used to collect the data for the thesis. Data were obtained from both secondary and primary sources. According to Saunders & Lewis (2012, 84), secondary data are data that were originally collected by other authors for various purposes and used in the thesis project.

However, when selecting the data set, the author considered the relevance of the data as it must provide the research with relevant information to answer the thesis questions (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, 96). Moreover, not only the relevance of the data was considered during the data collection process but also the original purpose of the research from which the data were obtained to avoid any potential bias that might exist (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, 97). Furthermore, the secondary data were collected from reliable sources such as official government publications, academic journal articles, OECD publications, official statistics websites, official newspaper websites, academic books, and literature reviews.

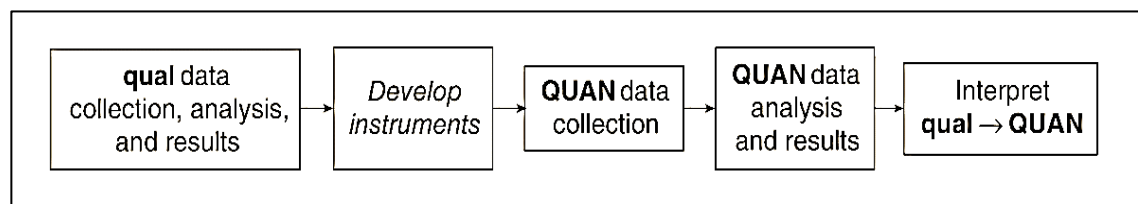


FIGURE 5. Instrument-Development Design (SAGE, 2017)

In contrast, primary data are the data that were originally collected by the thesis author for the purpose of the thesis research project. Furthermore, the primary data collection process was designed to be compatible with the exploratory nature of the research approach and strategy. The mixed-method design was adopted in this thesis by using a three-phase approach which sometimes researchers refer to as the exploratory sequential design (Figure 5). This approach allows only one type of data, either qualitative or quantitative, to be collected at a time and is best suited for exploring a phenomenon in-depth and measuring its prevalence. Since this thesis is an exploratory study, more emphasis is placed on qualitative data. The design, however, started with qualitative data as the author first explored the thesis topic qualitatively by interviewing a participant and then built into a third quantitative phase by using the instrument development model in the second phase. This model enabled the author to develop and define the questions and the measures on the quantitative instrument, in this case the survey, based on the qualitative results of the first phase. Accordingly, the third phase and its subsequent quantitative component were derived from the initial qualitative phase and ultimately connected to it. Furthermore, the author considered three different methods, the timing, weighting, and mixing of the qualitative and quantitative data, during the data collection process and used the “Decision Tree for Mixed Methods Design Criteria

for Timing, Weighting, and Mixing” to justify decisions made about choosing specific approach over the other. (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017, 81, 84-89; Saunders & Lewis, 2012, 84.)

Within a mixed-method design, timing can be either concurrent or sequential. The author chose the sequential timing by first collecting and analysing qualitative data and then collecting and analysing quantitative data later. Additionally, the author needed to take into consideration whether the weighting of the qualitative and quantitative data is equal or unequal. In other words, whether both types of data have the same level of importance and priority, or one will have greater importance and priority than the other. Thus, since the thesis emphasizes more on qualitative data, the author chose qualitative data to have more importance and priority within the study than quantitative data. Therefore, data were unequally weighted in favour of qualitative data. In addition to timing and weighting, the data were mixed by choosing the connect approach. The two types of data were connected together as qualitative results led to the subsequent collection and analysis of quantitative data and eventually the development of the survey instrument. (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, 81-84.)

### **3.4.1 Semi-structured interview**

A semi-structured interview is a “non-standardized” qualitative research interview that occupies a middle ground between unstructured and structured interviews. This type of interview is consistent with the pragmatic stance and inductive approach adopted in this research, as it allows the researcher to ask open-ended questions and naturally follow an exploratory pattern while interviewing the participants. It also gives the interviewees an opportunity to freely express their perspectives in their own words based on their professional experience to help the researcher gain valuable and rich data. Therefore, the thesis has implemented semi-structured-interview as a data collection method to explore the predetermined themes the author developed while conducting the thesis. Nevertheless, the themes the author discussed with the participant were not limited to those already on the predetermined questions list, instead some other themes emerged from the participant's answers which helped the author

investigate in-depth the key factors influencing the employability of international students in the Tampere region. Furthermore, formulating well-considered questions (appendix 1) helped avoid bias and leading questions that can direct the interviewee towards specific answers and conclusions, which played a crucial role in having validated responses from the participant. Moreover, the interview was conducted online by Zoom and data were recorded through note-taking and audio recording after the consent of the participant. (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, 151; Saunders et al., 2019, 437-438; O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015, 120.)

The author had the opportunity to interview the Chief Executive Officer of Mattersoft Ltd company. A small yet very ambitious company located in Tampere city and operates in the software industry. Mattersoft Ltd is a member of the INIT Group, the worldwide leading supplier of information technology solutions for public transport. The company has participated in many national and international research projects (CitiCAP, PRYSTINE, and Transforming Transport) related to intelligent transport systems and logistics. Mattersoft Ltd’s core business is Intelligent Transport Systems, thus specializing in traffic signal priorities and public transport information management. The interview was conducted in English and lasted approximately 40 minutes. Furthermore, the interview was recorded to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding and misinterpretation. The audio recording was useful as the researcher was able to later playback the record as many times as needed to ensure accuracy and minimize linguistic errors. Moreover, field notes were included during the conduct of the interview in order to improve the profundity of qualitative findings. However, only one interview with one participant was enough to reach data saturation and identify the variables that will later help form the questionnaire. (Mattersoft, 2018; Saunders & Lewis, 2012, 154,158.)

### **3.4.2 Survey**

Saunders et al. (2019, 502-503) assert that the questionnaire method is most often used in business and management research within the survey research strategy. However, this method can be applied to both study case and experiment research strategies. Thus, a questionnaire is a method of data collection in which

the same specific questions can be asked to different participants in order to obtain the necessary data. Furthermore, questionnaires can be distributed by telephone or face-to-face so that participants can provide their answers either with or without the researcher's presence. According to Saunders et al. (2019, 505), the way how the questionnaire is designed might affect the response rate and the validity and reliability of the collected data. Therefore, the author spent considerable time brainstorming and carefully planning the questionnaire to answer the thesis questions and meet its objectives by carefully reviewing the literature and conceptualizing the thesis before designing the questionnaire (Saunders et al., 2019, 510-512). Also, the design of the questions was relevant to the thesis purpose and based on its literature which allowed the author to choose the questions and formulate them to collect the required data (Saunders et al., 2019, 504; Adams et al., 2014, 121). Consequently, designing the questions accurately to collect the intended data ensured construct validity within the questionnaire (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, 142).

Moreover, the questionnaire was linked with interview method in a mixed method research design to understand and explore the employers' perspectives in the Tampere region towards hiring international students (Saunders et al., 2019, 505). Hence, before designing the questionnaire, the author defined different variables, such as dependent and independent variables, to understand the relationships that exist between them (Saunders et al., 2019, 512). For example, the age and educational level of the employer and their relationship to the employer's positive or negative attitude towards the employment of international students. There are seven types of questions that researchers can use in a questionnaire such as open, list, ranking, category, matrix, ranking, and quantity. Thus, since the thesis aims to understand the opinions and perspectives of employers, the rating type was used in this study (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, 143-144; Saunders et al., 2019, 523). Furthermore, the self-completed questionnaire was employed in this research (appendix 5). The questionnaire was conducted in both English and Finnish languages and distributed electronically to the employers and completed through a web browser using a hyperlink, often referred to as a web questionnaire (Microsoft forms) (Saunders et al., 2019, 506.). Additionally, to minimize the chances of questionnaire misinterpretation, the questions were close-ended, precise and easy to understand, and that provided

enough data to answer thesis questions and meet its objectives, ensuring content validity (Adams et al., 2014, 123; Saunders & Lewis, 2012, 142).

### **3.4.3 Sampling and distribution**

The purposive sampling method of the non-probability sampling technique was used to identify potential participants according to the author's judgment using predetermined criteria relevant to the thesis questions and objectives (Almeida et al., 2012, 1953). Purposive sampling is often used with a case study that works on a small sample (Saunders et al., 2019, 321). In this case, the purposive sample included companies operating in the Tampere region and representing different sizes, financial performances, and industries (appendix 4). Besides, the high probability that these companies will offer high-level jobs that match the knowledge and experience of international students was one of the basic requirements for selecting them. Yritystieto tool was used to search for companies and obtain necessary information regarding their location, number of employees, industry, etc. Thus, through this variety of companies, the author has gained greater insight and perspectives regarding the phenomenon under study.

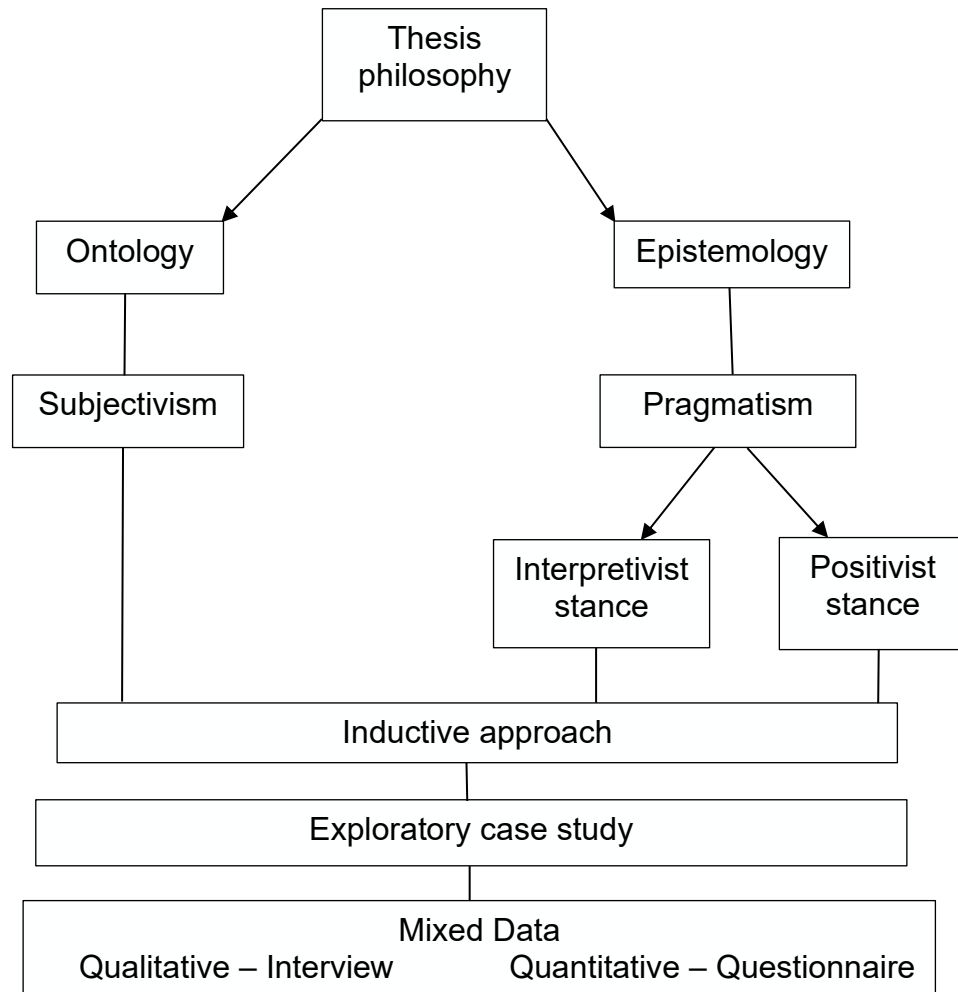
The questionnaire was distributed to more than 45 companies by e-mail, which is a large enough sample for exploratory research (Almeida et al., 2012, 1953), and only people who make hiring decisions were asked to participate in the study (appendix 3). Nevertheless, it was very challenging to get data from the selected companies. Therefore, the author contacted the Tampere Chamber of Commerce and Business Tampere to help distribute the questionnaire, and indeed the questionnaire was distributed by them, which resulted in more responses.

### **3.5 Time horizon**

Cross-sectional research is a type of research that studies a specific topic at a particular time. Data in this thesis were collected from multiple types of employers at only one period in time by using one interview and questionnaire. Due to time constraints, this type of research design was useful for answering the questions

of the thesis. In this case, the study attempts to improve the employability of international students by identifying factors that influence employers' hiring decisions. (Saunders & Lewis, 2012,123-124.)

### 3.6 Thesis methodological map



## 4 DATA ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Qualitative data analysis

The quality of the qualitative data analysis depends on the ability to draw interpretations and identify different influencing variables. Therefore, Thematic Analysis was employed in this study because it is considered most suitable for studies that seek exploration using interpretations. It is also appropriate when the study aims to understand individuals' behaviours and practices. Thus, this type of qualitative analysis method allowed the author to analyse classifications and present themes related to the obtained data. Consequently, it helped gain a greater understanding of the employers' perspectives on the employment of international students and provided a rich description to identify the factors that influence their hiring decisions. According to Alhojailan (2012, 39) analysing the data involves several principles that the researcher must follow to obtain more efficient results. The first principle suggests that the raw data of the interview must be compacted into a succinct structure by organizing the data into tables or charts. The second principle asserts that the author must clearly state how the research objectives relate to the data summary. With this in mind, the author has adopted the Miles & Huberman (1994) model for the Thematic Analysis process and it consists of three link stages, which include data reduction, data display and data conclusion. (Alhojailan, 2012, 39-40, 42.)

As a starting point for data analysis, the interview was transcribed and read at least twice as suggested by Bernard (2003, 89) because repetitions can be very effective in terms of identifying themes. The data was then reduced by underlining key phrases and summarizing the text that contain relevant information to the research (Bernard, 2003, 88). Hence, the coding technique was applied to connect different parts of the data and identify its most significant meaning (Alhojailan, 2012, 43). Furthermore, data were displayed in a table which assisted the author to draw a conclusion by providing an opportunity to gain an extra in-depth understanding of the data (Alhojailan, 2012, 45). The qualitative data analysis table can be seen in appendix 2. According to Kuada (2012, 100-101) a qualitative study is usually evaluated on the basis of two criteria. The first criterion

is trustworthiness and is assessed in terms of various dimensions such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Consequently, to establish a greater credibility, the interview transcript was sent to the participant to validate the data by confirming that the answers had been correctly understood. Transferability in this study was achieved by providing a detailed description of the context in which the study was conducted. Furthermore, all the qualitative research process (interview analysis, questions list, coding) were kept in detail in the thesis appendices to ensure dependability. Moreover, confirmability in this research depended on the fact that the author has no other interest than understanding the current reality. The second criterion for evaluation is authenticity, which examines how well the research has given the participant an opportunity to express his opinion and improve his understanding of the social phenomenon being investigated and that was achieved by asking open-ended questions.

#### **4.1.1 Interview findings**

The interview with the CEO of Mattersoft Ltd (personal communication, April 06, 2022) revealed that formal and informal professional networks play a crucial role in the hiring decision as the company had previously hired employees through word-of-mouth and recommendations due to the professional networks of its employees with other companies. According to the participant, the reason for not having international employees is that “maybe they do not know us, maybe they have not been where we have been regarding recruitment channels”. Thus, the company uses LinkedIn and public services such as MOL and TE-toimisto to find qualified employees, so it would be reasonable for international students to use these channels and start building their professional networks to find job opportunities. The interviewee stated that the collaboration with Tampere Universities had been successful in terms of working on various projects and participating in “Yrityspäivät” recruitment fairs, where the company has previously recruited two employees through these fairs. Consequently, word-of-mouth, recommendations, and career fairs have been good recruitment sources for the company. The interviewee believes that “the job market is pretty hectic and

competitive” and thus the use of LinkedIn and recommendations gives the applicant a competitive advantage over others.

The employer showed a positive attitude when assessing the benefits and costs of hiring international students. The interviewee asserts that hiring international students will help the company expand its business into new markets. Thus, having someone in the company who “maybe know people from that market and know how the systems work and provide some information other than only normal” is a valuable asset to the company. Moreover, previous study degrees and work experience of international students in their home country are seen as positive factors. However, the interviewee emphasized the importance of work experience “work history has more relevance” over the academic achievement of international students. Moreover, although the work within the company is done in English language, Finnish language is mostly used during lunchtime among colleagues when discussing non-work-related topics, not to mention that the company has many Finnish clients and is developing user interfaces in Finnish language as well. Therefore, the interviewee declared that speaking Finnish “is not a must-have” but is always rewarding and beneficial. During the interview, the employer demonstrated a high level of self-transcendence values associated with openness and curiosity. The interviewee revealed the desire to embrace different cultures and gain new perspectives because “life is constant learning”. Moreover, the participant said that he values and respects the different opinions and perspectives of employees “we value opinions, and we discuss them”. Consequently, employers with these personality traits are more likely to have a positive attitude towards hiring international students. (CEO of Mattersoft Ltd, personal communication, April 06, 2022.)

On the other hand, the employer uses modern tools to help overcome many challenges associated with managing a multicultural work community, making the experience of working with international employees more beneficial in different aspects. Furthermore, the interviewee emphasized that “the software industry, in general, is pretty international because there is this common language of Java” and hence managing a diverse workforce is easier in this case. Besides, the participant stated that the ability to manage a multicultural work community is not a factor that can influence the hiring decision for international students. Thus, the

employer will have a greater perceived behaviour control over the employment of international students. As aforementioned, the company does not have international employees yet, but as a member of the INIT group, the interviewee has experience working with a diverse workforce. According to the participant, hiring international students will not affect the existing employees within the company due to the daily use of English language during zoom meetings with international colleagues, but rather is seen as an opportunity to learn and practice English more. Additionally, the impact on the company's working atmosphere would probably be less than it could have been five years ago. As a result, there are favourable subjective norms that will positively influence the employer's intention to hire international students. Furthermore, the interviewee considers bureaucracy, complex legal procedures, and a complete lack of communication skills as factors that prevent the employment of international students. Conversely, cooperating with TE-toimisto to find qualified employees, having work experience and the ability to get work done, and communicating a little bit in Finnish are all factors that encourage the employment of international students. Also, the interviewee said that receiving financial assistance from the government may encourage hiring international students, although it is not the most influential factor. The participant has neither heard of international House Tampere nor has used Tuudo or JobTeaser to advertise vacancies. Hence, International House Tampere services, JobTeaser, and Tuudo need further promotion. At the end of the interview, the participant asked, "what recruitment channels do you recommend us to use?". Therefore, the Talent Boost Program represented by International House Tampere should start building its professional network in the Tampere region to connect employers with international students and vice versa so that both parties use the same channels for recruitment and job search. (CEO of Mattersoft Ltd, personal communication, April 06, 2022.)

## **4.2 Quantitative data analysis**

The sample questionnaire data were quantitatively analysed using Power BI Desktop software. The questionnaire comprises three sections, the first of which contains general questions. The second one has five Likert-scaled items (not at all, a little, not sure, somewhat, a lot) that measure attitude towards hiring international students, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control in

hiring decisions, while the last section has multiple-choice options about cooperation that include yes, no, and not sure.

#### 4.2.1 Questionnaire findings

##### The first section of the questionnaire

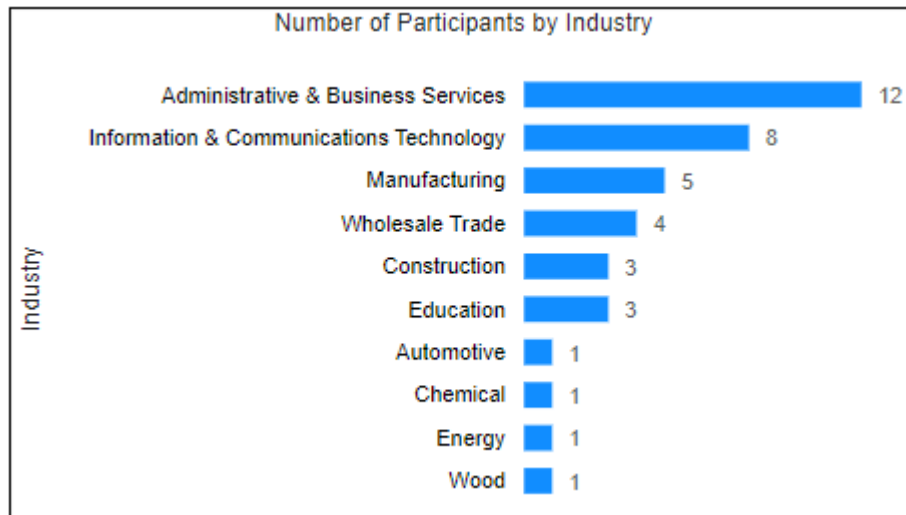


FIGURE 6. The distribution of participants in different industries

39 participants representing ten industries took part in this study, as shown in Figure 6. These industries included different business fields that arose from the responses of the participants. Thus, the Administrative & Business Services industry includes (personnel services, business services, advertising, property management, public sector, consulting, real estate, and public sector); ICT (software, information technology, high technology manufacturing, technology, and electrical technology); Manufacturing (carpentry, manufacturing, clothing, and food); Wholesale trade (sports equipment, importation, and beverage); Construction (construction and architecture); Education (culture and academic). The Administrative & Business Services industry accounted for the largest number of participants with 12 participants, followed by Information & Communications Technology with 8 participants.

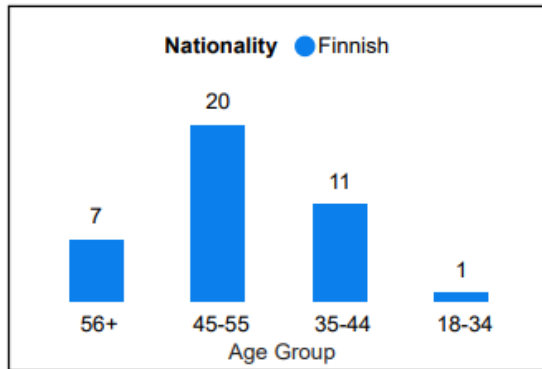


FIGURE 7. Participants by age group and nationality

The bar graph in Figure 7 shows that all respondents were Finns and that 51% (22) were between 45 and 55 years of age. In comparison, 45-56+ years of age and older represented 69% (27) of the respondents, while 28% (11) were under 45 years and only 3% (1) belonged to the age group 18-34. Thus, the majority of respondents were not young.

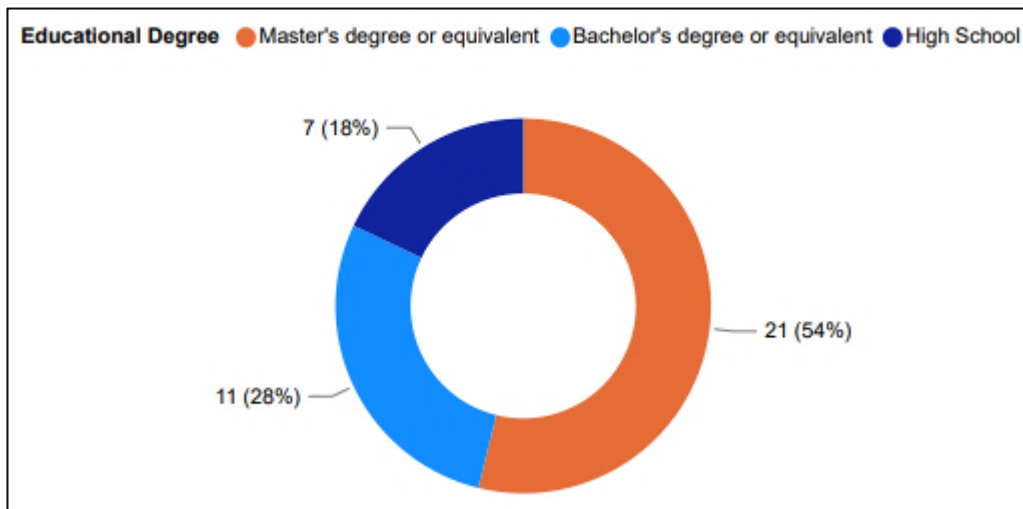


FIGURE 8. Participants by educational degree

The pie chart in Figure 8 compares the distribution of education levels among participants. The majority of respondents have a Master's degree or equivalent 21 (54%), while 11 (28%) hold a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, and finally 7 (18%) have a high school degree level.

The bar chart in Figure 9 below illustrates the size of companies within different industries based on the number of their employees. 22 (56%) companies have more than 50 employees and 13 (33%) companies have between 11 and 50 employees, however only 4 (10%) companies have 1-10 employees.

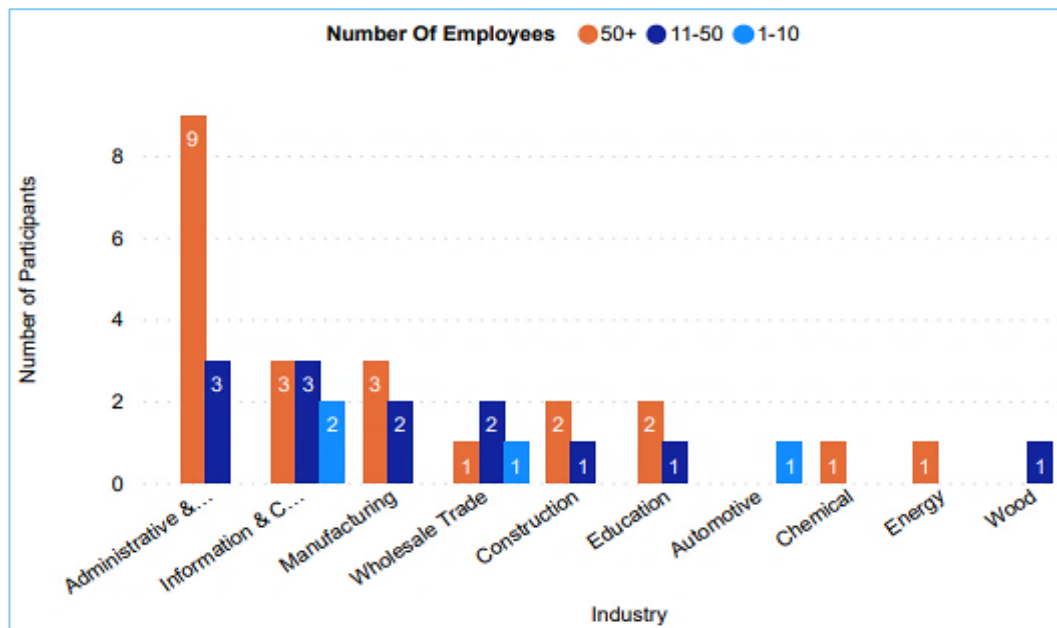


FIGURE 9. Number of employees in different industries

Furthermore, the Administrative & Business services industry had the largest companies in terms of the number of employees, with 9 companies having more than 50 employees each.

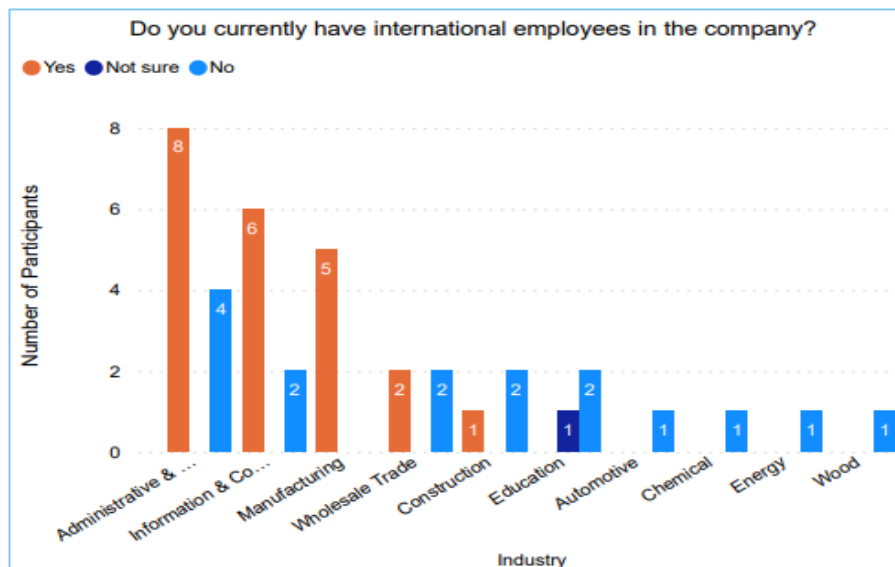


FIGURE 10. The availability of international employees

The bar graph in Figure 10 represents the respondents' answers about whether or not they have international employees within their companies. As shown above, 22 (56%) respondents answered "Yes", while 16 (41%) answered "No". Furthermore, most international employees work in the administrative & business services, information & communications, and manufacturing industries.

## The second section of the questionnaire

In this section, participants were asked to what extent the following factors influence the hiring decision of an international student applicants?

### Measuring the attitude of the participants

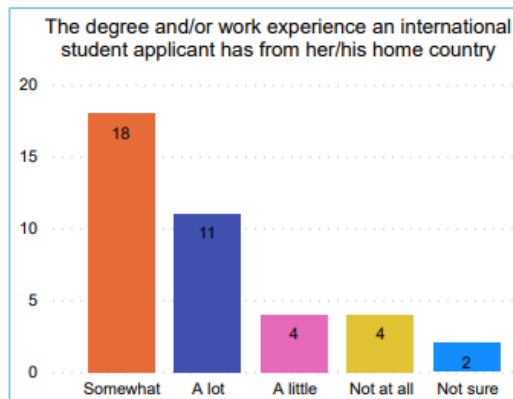


FIGURE 11. Degree & work experience



FIGURE 12. Finnish language skills

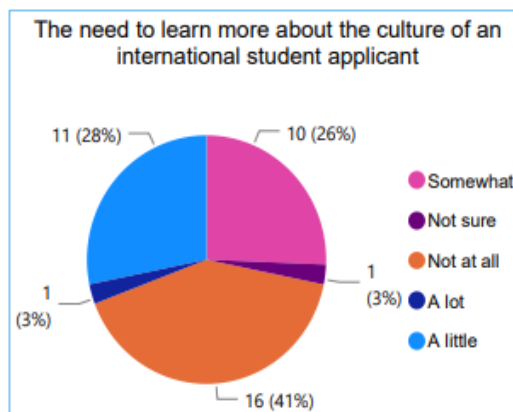


FIGURE 13. The need to learn about a new culture

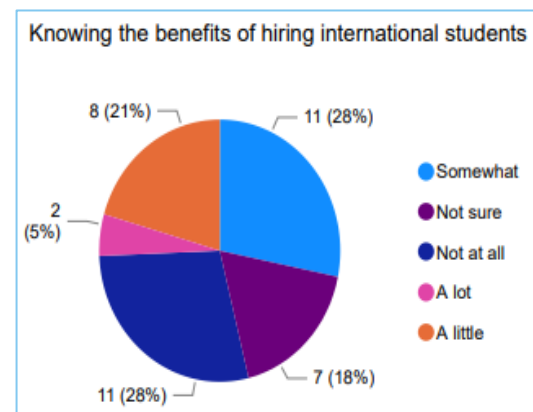


FIGURE 14. Knowing the benefits of hiring international students

The bar graphs in Figures 11 and 12 reveals that the degree/work experience international students have from their home countries and their Finnish skills are key influencing factors in hiring decisions. When asked to which extent this influences the hiring decision, 11 participants answered “a lot” and 18 “somewhat”, whereas 4 answered “a little” and 4 “not at all” (Figure 11). Likewise, 11 (28%) chose “a lot” and 17 (44%) somewhat, representing 72% of the total responses, yet 9 (23%) of respondents believe that the Finnish language skill has “a little” influence on their hiring decision (Figure 12). Furthermore, the need to

learn more about the culture of international students as well as knowing the benefits of hiring them appear to have a moderate influence on the hiring decision (Figures 13 and 14). As shown in Figure 13, 1 (3%) respondent answered “a lot” and 10 (26%) “somewhat”, while 11 (28%) chose “a little” and 16 (41%) “not at all”. Moreover, in Figure 14 2 (5%) respondents chose “a lot” and 11 (28%) “somewhat”, however 8 (21%) answered “a little”, 11 (28%) “not at all” and 7 (18%) were “not sure” whether or not knowing the benefits of hiring international students will influence their decisions.

### Subjective norms

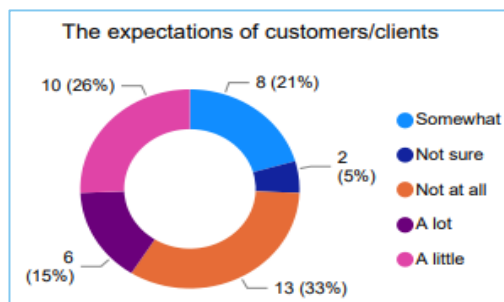


FIGURE 15. Customers and clients' expectations

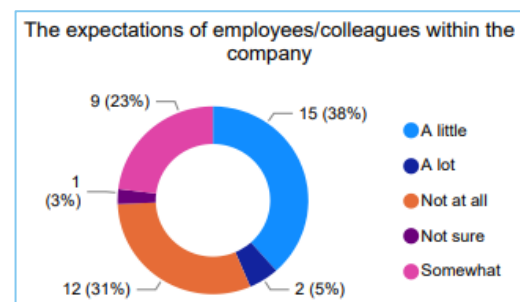


FIGURE 16. Employees and colleagues' expectations

According to the pie charts above (Figures 15 and 16), the expectations of customers and clients have a slightly greater influence on the hiring decision than the expectations of employees and colleagues, with 6 (15%) of the respondents answering "a lot" and 8 (21%) "somewhat", whereas 10 (26%) "a little" and 13 (33%) "not at all" (Figure 15). On the other hand, 2 (5%) of the respondents answered “a lot” and 9 (23%) “somewhat”, while 15 (38%) answered “a little” and 12 (31%) “not at all” when asked about the expectations of employees and colleagues (Figure 16).

### Perceived behavioural control

As shown in Figures 17 and 18 below, the need to manage a multicultural work community and communicate in English may have a moderate influence on the hiring decision, with 1 (3 %) and 10 (26%) of the participants answering “a lot” and “somewhat”, while 10 (26%) chose “a little” and 18 (46%) “not at all” (Figure 17). And 2 (5%) of the respondents answered “a lot” and 13 (33%) somewhat, while 5 (13%) “a little” and 18 (46%) “not at all” to the need to communicate in

English as a factor influencing the hiring decision (Figure 18). In addition, Figure 19 indicates that 3 (8%) and 12 (31%) of the participants who chose "a lot" and "somewhat" saw the need to overcome obstacles and problems as an important influencing factor in their hiring decision, whereas 15 (38%) chose "a little" and 6 (15%) "not at all" for the factor in question.

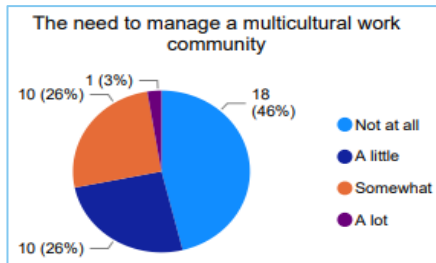


FIGURE 17. Managing a multicultural work community

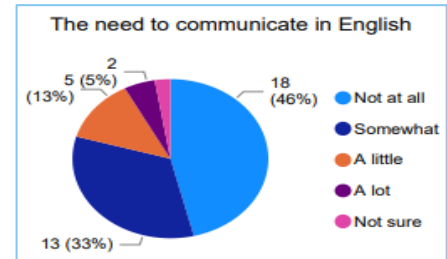


FIGURE 18. English skills

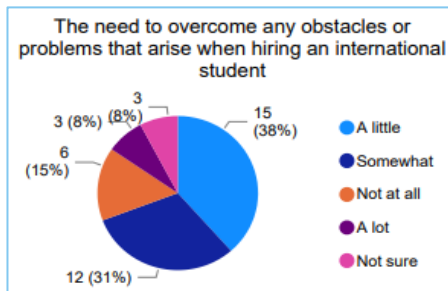


FIGURE 19. Obstacles and problems

**High self-transcendence/conservation**

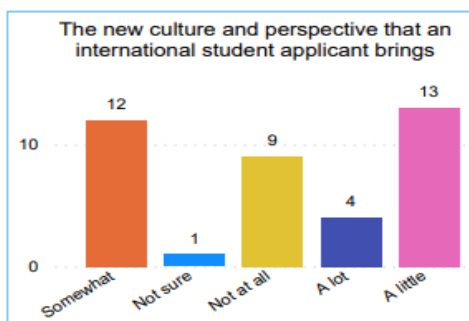


FIGURE 20. New culture and perspective

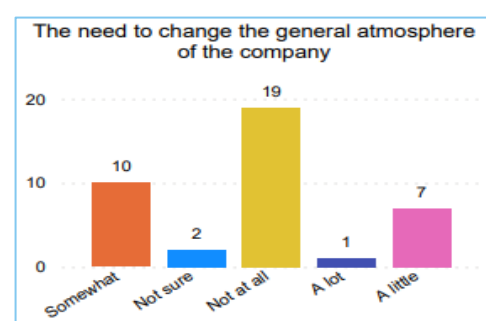


FIGURE 21. The general atmosphere of the company

According to the bar chart (Figure 20), respondents believe that bringing new culture and perspective to their companies will influence their hiring decisions to some extent, as 4 (10%) of the respondents answered "a lot", 12 (31%) "somewhat", and 9 (23%) "not at all", while 13 (33%) believe that this factor has

“a little” effect on their hiring decisions. However, the need to change the general atmosphere of the company seemed to have a modest influence (Figure 21), with 1 (3%) respondents answering “a lot”, 10 (26%) “somewhat”, and 19 (49%) “not at all”, however 7 (18%) respondents thought that it would have “a little” effect on their decisions.

### Challenges/ Encouraging factors

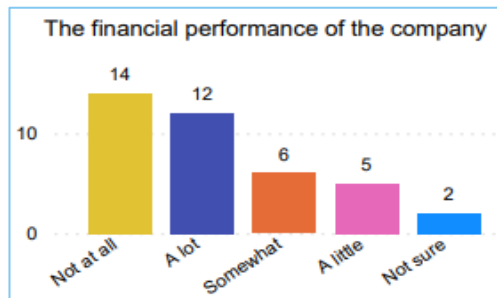


FIGURE 22. Financial performance

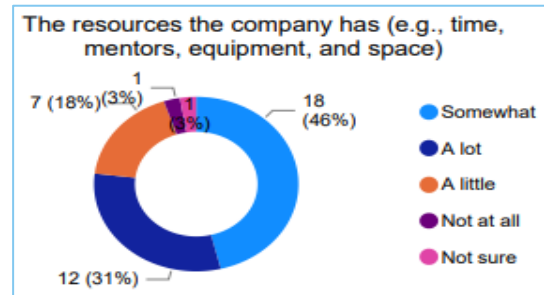


FIGURE 23. Company resources

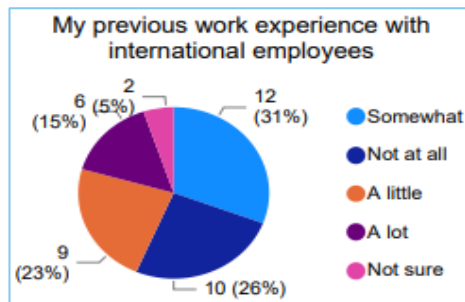


FIGURE 24. Previous work experience

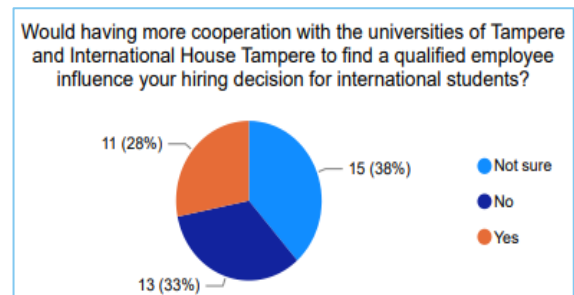


FIGURE 25. Cooperation

Figure 22 shows that a company's financial performance is a major factor that can influence the hiring decisions of participants, with 12 (31%) respondents answering “a lot”, 6 (15%) “somewhat” and 5 (13%) “a little”, whereas 14 (36%) answered “not at all” and 2 (5%) “not sure”. In addition, respondents considered company resources to be a very important influencing factor (Figure 23), with 12 (31%) and 18 (46%) choosing the answer "a lot" and "somewhat", representing 77% of the respondents. While 7 (18%) of the respondents answered “a little” and 1 (3%) “not at all” to the factor in question. Besides, participants' previous work experience with international employees (Figure 24) appears to play a role in the hiring decision, with 6 (15%) answers being “a lot” and 12 (31%) “somewhat”, while the other answers were 9 (23%) “a little”, 2 (5%) “not sure”, and 10 (26%)

“not at all”. Furthermore, cooperation with Tampere universities and International House Tampere to find qualified employees (Figure 25) can have a moderate impact on the hiring decision, as 11 (28%) of the respondents chose “yes” and 13 (33%) answered “no”, while 15 (38%) were “not sure” whether or not such cooperation might influence their hiring decisions.

## The last section of the questionnaire

### Cooperation and job advertising platforms

According to the pie charts (Figures 26, 27, 28) below, many respondents (77% to 87%) have not heard of Tuudo, JobTeaser, and International House Tampere. However, 26 (67%) of the participants (Figure 29) knew about Yrityspäivät, while only 13 (33%) had never heard of it.

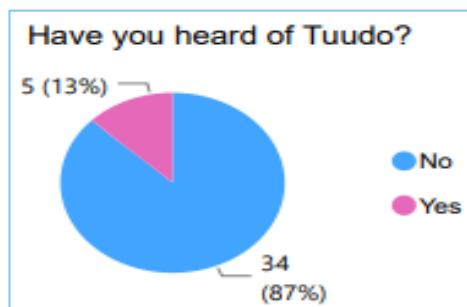


FIGURE 26. Tuudo

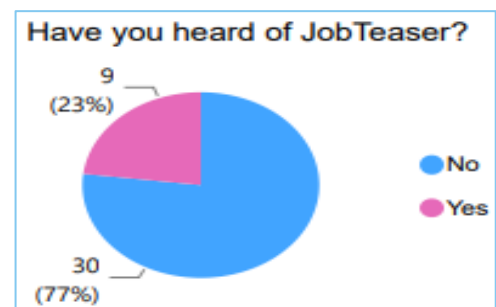


FIGURE 27. JobTeaser

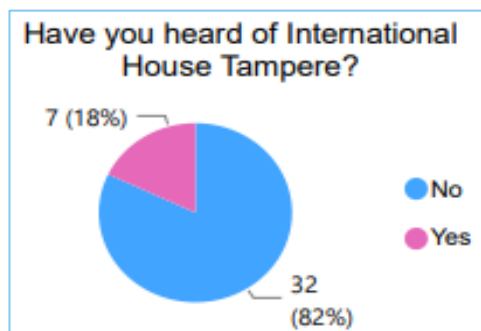


FIGURE 28. International House Tampere

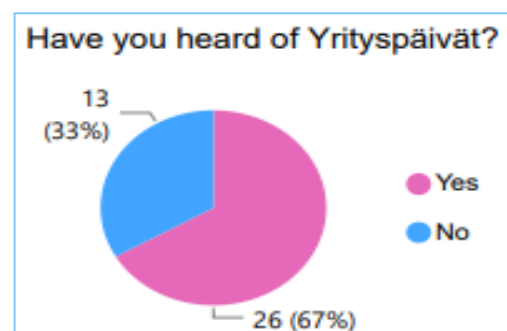


FIGURE 29. Job fair

### Recruitment channels

Figure 30 indicates that the use of formal recruitment sources to apply for the job position may have a modest influence on the hiring decision, with 3 (8%) answers for “a lot”, 8 (21%) for “somewhat”, and 9 (23%) for “a little”, while 17 (44%) of the

respondents answered “not at all”, and 2 (5%) were “not sure”. On the other hand, the use of informal recruitment sources (Figure 31) has a slightly greater influence on the hiring decision than the use of formal sources, as 3 (8%) of the participants chose “a lot”, 11 (28%) “somewhat”, and 11 (28%) “a little”, whereas 11 (28%) answered “not at all” and 3 (8%) “not sure”.

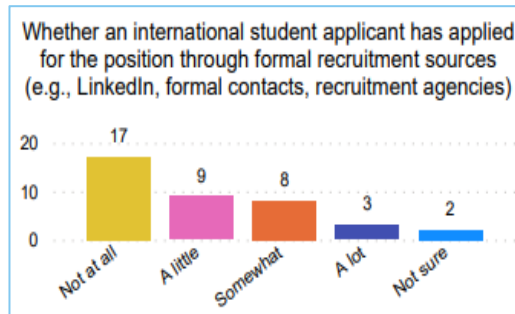


FIGURE 30. Formal recruitment

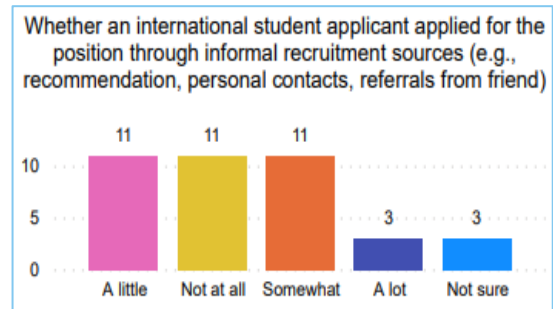


FIGURE 31. Informal recruitment

#### 4.2.2 Quantitative results summary

Participants showed a positive attitude towards international students' degree/work experience from abroad and Finnish language skills, while there was a less positive attitude towards learning more about the new culture of international students and the benefits of hiring them. Thus, the study found that these factors constitute a moderately positive attitude towards the employment of international students, which will to some extent increase the possibility of hiring international students according to the theory of planned behaviours (Ang et al., 2015, 189). Moreover, perceived social pressure from customers/clients is more likely to influence the hiring decision of participants than social pressure from employees/colleagues within the company, which indicates that hiring international students may be driven by co-workers who have favourable subjective norms for the behaviour in question, as Ang et al., (2015, 189-190) discussed in international journal of equality, diversity, and inclusion on hiring Malaysians with disabilities. On the other hand, participants revealed adequate control over the management of multicultural work community whereas less control over communication in English and the obstacles and challenges that may arise when hiring international students, which to some extent can negatively influence the hiring decision, as McDonnall & Lund (2020, 206) and Ang et al., (2015, 189-190) stated in their research papers. In line with the previous Farashah & Blomquist (2020, 20, 27, 31) explanation of ten motivational types of

value identified by Schwartz (2012a, 8-9), participants who expressed concerns about the new culture and perspective of international student applicants may tend to have low self-transcendence values. In addition, expressing slight concerns about changing the company's general atmosphere could be more related to having favourable subjective norms within the company and adequate perceived behavioural control over hiring international students rather than having low conservation values. Furthermore, employers' previous work experience with international employees and the company's financial performance and resources are significant determinants in the employment decision, which may or may not encourage hiring international students. Besides, informal recruitment sources are somewhat more important to participants than formal recruitment sources, and the majority of them have not heard of International House Tampere or JobTeaser and Tuudo job advertising platforms used by students. However, the research did not find any relation between nationality and attitudes because all participants were of Finnish background. Additionally, the thesis findings could not confirm whether or not older age and higher education degrees are associated with positive attitudes towards international students through lower conservation values and higher self-transcendence values as Farashah & Blomquist (2020, 27) argue in their research on exploring employer attitude towards migrant workers.

### **4.3 Limitations and future research**

There are a few limitations to this thesis that must be acknowledged. First, this research is a cross-sectional study which means generalizing the results must be done with caution. Secondly, the thesis focuses on identifying, exploring, and examining key influencing factors rather than measuring employers' intentions to hire international students in the Tampere region. Thus, the author was unable to measure the extent to which attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and other factors influence employment decisions for international students in the Tampere region. A future study could be a longitudinal study that can measure employers' intention to hire international students using the factors identified in this thesis. For future studies, it is worthwhile to identify and include more factors to broaden the understanding of what can influence the hiring decisions for international students.

## 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This thesis identified and explored the main factors influencing the employment decision for international students in the Tampere region. The findings confirm that international students' career outcomes and employment are influenced not only by their qualifications, experience, and human capital but also by employers' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control along with other key factors associated with recruitment channels, company resources, and financial performance. Thus, discussing and examining these factors with stakeholders is one major way to change the status quo and take full advantage of the international students already living in the Tampere region. Furthermore, effective regional cooperation between International House Tampere, Tampere universities, and companies is vital and can serve as a focal point in helping employers define their needs and explore prospective employees' potential. It also allows international students gain a better insight into Finnish working life and connect with local professional networks.

On a practical level, the author provides recommendations that can be perceived as a mechanism to drive the winds of change in the employment landscape for international students in the Tampere region. However, this a long-term action plan that requires cross-level cooperation between all parties. The study suggests that developing and implementing a new integrative working model called the Tandem approach would be beneficial for both employers and international students. Tandem is a working model supported by the Finnish ministry of education and culture, where international students and Finnish employees work in pairs on the same tasks, which can provide long-term support for international students to overcome the language barrier, learn more about local cultures and connect with local social networks. On the other hand, it provides employers with various incentives along with an opportunity to develop their English language skills, which can alleviate their concerns about company resources, language proficiency, and the new culture that international students may bring to the workplace, as these were the most prominent factors in this study. In addition, the Finnish colleague can assist with translation during meeting discussions to make international students feel valued and accepted in the

workplace, leading to a positive work environment. Tandem can also be considered work-based learning that supports employers and international students in getting the most out of their work endeavours and increases diversity and acceptance in the workplace. The Learning Lab at Tampere University of Applied Sciences has adopted the Tandem approach and found it to be an effective way to promote integration into Finnish working life and an efficient means to save time, money, and resources. Besides, a similar approach has been developed in Latvia over several years step by step with the support of EU projects. Currently, there are no strict guidelines or set of standards for the Tandem approach, therefore standards can be determined according to the company's needs and resources. Furthermore, International House Tampere with the help of the Finnish government can play a role in introducing the new working approach to companies by organizing events/workshops and offering financial incentives to financially distressed companies that accept the employment of international students, thus increasing employers' willingness to hire international students under Tandem approach.

International House Tampere should raise the awareness among employers and international students about the services available to them and thus begin to build professional networks to connect them with each other. Additionally, collaboration between International House Tampere and Tampere universities is critical to identifying the same job advertising/searching platforms, e.g., Tuudo/JobTeaser, to promote the same sources of employment within their ecosystems and to build joint employment channels. Moreover, Tampere universities can recommend their diligent students to International House Tampere to work on projects with companies in the Tampere region. Furthermore, proficiency in the Finnish language can be a strong indicator of cultural integration and can increase employment opportunities for international students. Therefore, Tampere universities should offer Finnish courses tailored to the career prospects of international students in order to enhance their Finnish language skills in their field of specialization. Likewise, international students should take a proactive approach to learning the Finnish language and building their professional networks. Finally, being at the forefront of international student recruitment will create a better public image of the Tampere region and make it an attractive place to live and study, benefiting both international students and local parties.

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**APPENDICES**

1 (2)

Appendix 1. Interview questions list

Online interview - Wednesday 06.04.2022

Theme - Exploring the factors that influence employers' hiring decisions for international students in the Tampere region

Interviewee - CEO of Mattersoft Ltd

Interviewer - Ahmad Abou Merhi

**QUESTIONS**

What channels are you using to advertise the vacancies?

What is your experience using Tuudo, JobTeaser, to advertise job vacancies?

What other recruitment channels can international students use?

How important is it that the international students have a professional network?

What are the benefits of employing international students?

How important is it to you that international students have a degree from and/or work experience in their home country?

How important is it for an international student to be able to communicate in Finnish?

How important is it to you to be able to manage a multicultural work community?

What is your experience managing a multicultural work community?

How important is it to learn more about the international students' culture? Why?

What was important about hiring international students?

What is your experience working with international students?

How can international students within the company influence the company?

How can having international students in the company affect the working atmosphere?

What could prevent you from hiring international students?

What could encourage you to hire international students?

Can you tell me the things that you think will help you hiring international students?

Do you have experience collaborating with International House Tampere and Tampere universities?

## Appendix 2. Qualitative data analysis table

1 (8)

Overarching Themes	Questions	Themes	Direct Quotations	Codes
<b>Recruitment process</b>	What channels are you using to advertise the vacancies?	Recruitment channels, both formal and informal	<p>“we use LinkedIn and the public service, which used to be called MOL which is organized by TE-toimisto Tampere.”</p> <p>“Then, of course, the word of mouth. Guys here in the company know a lot of colleagues from other companies, so that has been many times quite a good Source.”</p> <p>“Yrityspäivät. But since the corona pandemic, of course, it has only been available online, so we decided not to participate online”</p> <p>“HR department of INIT Group”.</p>	<p>The use of formal and informal recruitment channels to find a qualified employee.</p> <p>Word-of-mouth as a recruitment source.</p>
	Have you found the employee you were looking for through those events?	Yrityspäivät	<p>“we actually got one employee from the exhibition, yes.”</p> <p>“But not international student, but a Finnish student.”</p>	Finding employees by participating in Yrityspäivät event.
	What is your experience using Tuudo, JobTeaser, to advertise job vacancies?	Job advertisement channels used by students	“Actually, I have heard of them, but we have never used them.”	Tuudo and JobTeaser are not used by the company.

	How important is it that the international students have a professional network?	Self-promotion and the use of the formal and informal professional networks	<p>“LinkedIn is a good tool if somebody wants to promote himself or herself.”</p> <p>“That is also very good because if somebody has recommendations.”</p> <p>“The job market is pretty hectic and pretty competitive, so anything you can do to promote yourself is highly recommended to do.”</p>	<p>The competitive job market requires good self-promotion.</p> <p>The use of LinkedIn and recommendations gives the applicant a competitive advantage over others.</p>
<b>Attitude</b>	What are the benefits of employing international students?	Employer’s attitude towards hiring international students	<p>“If you are heading towards a different market, which has a different language, then that could be really, really helpful. Having someone on board who can maybe know people from that market and know how the systems work and provide some information other than only normal.”</p>	<p>Assessing the benefit of hiring international students as a diverse work force.</p> <p>Having international students will help the company enter new international market.</p>
	How important is it to you that international students have a degree from and/or work experience in their home country?	Previous work experience and academic achievement of the international student applicant	<p>“We do not expect them to have a degree.”</p> <p>“It is a positive signal if the person is more experienced or has studied more, but on the other hand, work history has more relevance.”</p>	<p>Previous study degrees and work experience of international students in their home country are seen as positive factors. However, work experience is more important than education attainment.</p>
	How important is it for an international student to be	The importance of communicating with colleagues	<p>“It would be quite good.”</p> <p>“We often go to lunch together even though</p>	<p>Finnish is mostly used during lunchtime to discuss non-</p>

	able to communicate in Finnish?	and clients in Finnish	<p>we would like to kind of integrate more into the discussion at some point, Finnish people start to talk in Finnish, you know when you are discussing just what happened yesterday and not work-related things.”</p> <p>“I think it would be beneficial. It is not a must-have of course”.</p> <p>“We have many customers in Finland, and we do develop these software tools and user interfaces for them, so most of the user interfaces are in Finnish.”</p>	<p>work-related topics.</p> <p>Understanding Finnish is key to success.</p>
<b>Perceived Behavioural Control</b>	What is your experience managing a multicultural work community?	Tools that can help manage a multicultural work community	<p>“The modern tools, for example, teams, Google Translate, Zoom, and whatever have been very helpful in that sense.”</p> <p>“But obviously, it is not everything, there are also challenges.”</p>	Modern tools like teams, Google Translate, Zoom can help overcome many challenges when it comes to managing a multicultural work community.
	How about your experience working with people from the USA and Australia?	Challenges and opportunities of workforce diversity	<p>“Well, this is our everyday life now and I think it is fun. If you can manage the time zone issues, then it is fun.”</p> <p>“People tend to act a bit differently.”</p>	Overcoming various challenges will make the experience of working with international employees more enjoyable.
	How important is it to you to be able to manage a multicultural	Diverse workforce management	“The software industry, in general, is pretty international because there is this common language of Java. So, in our case, it is probably much	Managing a diverse work experience is easier when employees know their job and how to get it done.

	work community?		easier than somewhere else.”	
	What was important about hiring international students?	The recruitment channels used by the company may not be the same as those used by international students.	<p>“We do not have experience with that for some reason. Well, first of all, we are a small company and we do not have so many open positions but whenever we have had, then there have not really been that many international applicants.”</p> <p>“Maybe they do not know us, maybe they have not been where we have been regarding recruitment channels.”</p>	The reason for not having international employees is that the company did not have many vacancies due to its small size. Also, international applicants and the company are not using the same recruitment channels.
	Will your ability to manage this kind of work community influence in your hiring decision?	The extent to which the ability to manage a multicultural work community and legal procedures can influence hiring decisions.	<p>“No, No.”</p> <p>“One challenge could be the work permit because all students are not allowed to work in Finland unless they are from the European Union.”</p>	The ability to manage a multicultural work community is not a factor that can influence the hiring decision due to the nature of the company's business. However, legal procedures are taken into consideration when making the hiring decision.
	What is your experience working with international students?	Working with employees who have different opinions.	<p>“Unfortunately, I do not have experience with that.”</p> <p>“In matters we value opinions, and we discuss them.”</p> <p>“I have not had that much experience. Back in the day when I was in another</p>	In general, the company values and respects the different opinions and perspectives of employees.

			company, there were some international students as well, but that was way back ago.”	
<b>Subjective norms</b>	How can international students within the company influence the company?	The effect of having international students on existing employees within the company	<p>“Well, since we have been part of The INIT Group these 4 years, we have had quite a lot of team meetings and zoom meetings every week with the international colleagues.”</p> <p>“I think for everybody here the English language has become more daily life language than before.”</p>	Nowadays, employees within the company use English on a daily basis. Therefore, the recruitment of international students will not affect the existing employees.
	How can having international students in the company affect the working atmosphere?	The effect of international students on the work atmosphere	<p>“I think the change that will happen now when you hire someone who could not speak Finnish would probably be less than it could have been five years ago for example.”</p> <p>“People are used to communicating in English now and, I am sure we could also learn you know in that sense.”</p>	<p>International students' employment is seen as an opportunity to learn and practice English.</p> <p>At present, the impact on the working atmosphere of the company is less than it could have been five years ago for example.</p>
<b>High self-transcendence/conservation</b>	Do you like working with people from different cultures?	Openness personality	“I like to work with people from different cultures. Before the pandemic, I travelled quite a lot in business.”	Traveling and embracing different cultures are traits associated with openness.
	How important is it to learn more about	Continuous learning	“I think it would be quite interesting in order to get some more perspectives in	Gaining new perspectives as a continuous learning process.

	the international students' culture? Why?		general, I mean as an individual and as a company as well."  "Life is constant learning."	
<b>Challenges/ Encouraging factors</b>	What could prevent you from hiring international students?	Issues	"The bureaucracy, if there were no job permits that would be one topic or total lack of communication skills."	Bureaucracy and a complete lack of communication skills are factors that prevent the employment of international students.
	What could encourage you to hire international students?	Encouraging factors	"The ability to build programming is the key factor in our company, so you must know your stuff."  "I would not say that there will be much difference between hiring a Finnish or an international student."	The ability to get work done is a factor that can encourage the employment of international students.
	How about collaborating with TE-toimisto and the government here in Finland will that be an encouraging factor for you?	Collaboration with Government to enhance international students' employability	"Maybe, maybe yeah. As I mentioned, mostly the key thing is expertise"	The cooperation with TE-toimisto to find qualified employees may be an encouraging factor for international student recruitment.
	In this sense, collaborating with the government or some initiatives to hire international students, and maybe	The financial assistance as an encouraging factor.	"Yeah, it could be yes. But it is not the most important thing."	Although receiving financial assistance from the government may encourage the employment of international students, it is not the most important factor.

	provide some sort of financial help for the company, would be an encouraging factor for you?			
<b>Cooperation</b>	Do you have experience collaborating with International House Tampere and Tampere universities?	The collaboration with Tampere universities.	“Yes, we have worked with Tampere University on some projects related to intelligent traffic. And the Yrityspäivät, recruitment Exhibition there we were. And two of our employees were hired while they were still studying at Tampere University.”	The company was able to find two employees through its collaboration with Tampere universities.
	How about International House Tampere?	International House Tampere	“I have not heard of it.”	International House Tampere services need further promotion.
	Do you know Talent Boost Program?	Talent Boost Program	“Yeah, I have heard of it.”	Talent Boost should start building its professional network with employers in the Tampere region.
	Can you tell me the things that you think will help you hiring international students?	The employer's opinion on what can help improve international students' chances of getting a job	“That depends quite a lot on the company and the business that the company is doing. As I mentioned, our software industry is very international anyway.”  “Even a little bit of Finnish language could be a game changer.”  “Their work experiences.”	Having work experience and little communication skills are two factors that can help improve international students' chances of getting a job.

			“Just some communication.”	
	The employer question to the interviewer, "what recruitment channels do you recommend us to use?"	JobTeaser, Tuudo, Intranet news, and students' counsellors to help find qualified employees	“If we are looking to recruit students, what channels would you recommend us to use?”	JobTeaser and Tuudo are the channels that students mostly use. Also, it is a good idea to contact the University of Tampere or student counsellors to post vacancies via email or on the university's intranet news.

### Appendix 3. The email sent to companies

Hei!

Please find this email in English below.

Pyydän välittämään tämän viestin henkilölle/henkilöille, joka on/ovat vastuussa yrityksenne palkkauspäätöksistä.

Olen tekemässä kandidaatin opinnäytetyötäni, ja arvostaisin suuresti vastauksianne kyselyyn. Kyselyyn vastaaminen vie noin 5-10 minuuttia. Kaikki vastaukset käsitellään nimettöminä ja luottamuksellisina.

Löydät kyselyn täältä: <https://forms.office.com/r/3QcEU4eLYV>

Sinun ei tarvitse luovuttaa nimeäsi tai sähköpostiosoitettasi kyselyssä. Kaikki tiedot, joista henkilöllisyytesi on tunnistettavissa, pidetään luottamuksellisina ja luovutetaan vain sinun luvallasi tai lain niin määrätessä.

Tämä kysely on osa Kandidaatin tutkinto -opintojani Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulussa. Olen kirjoittamassa opinnäytetyötäni keskeisistä tekijöistä, jotka vaikuttavat työnantajien päätöksiin palkata ulkomaalaisia opiskelijoita.

Tässä yhteydessä ulkomaalainen opiskelija tarkoittaa korkeakoulututkinto-opiskelijaa, joka ei ole vielä valmistunut, tai on valmistunut vuoden sisällä ja etsii tutkinnolleen soveltuvaa korkean tason työpaikkaa. Tämän tutkimuksen toimeksiantajana on Talent Boost-ohjelma ja tutkimus keskittyy Pirkanmaan alueelle.

Ystävällisin terveisin,

Ahmad Abou Merhi

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Hello,

Please, forward this message to a person(s) who are making hiring decisions in your company.

I am doing my bachelor's thesis and would highly appreciate replies to a questionnaire. It requires approximately 5-10 minutes to complete this questionnaire. All the answers will be handled anonymously and in confidence.

Please find the questionnaire here: <https://forms.office.com/r/3QcEU4eLYV>

You will not be required to provide your name or email in the questionnaire. Any information that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

This questionnaire is part of my bachelor's studies in International Business at the Tampere University of Applied Science, I am writing my thesis on the key factors influencing the employers' hiring decisions for international students.

In this case, an international student is a degree student at a higher education institution who either still studying or graduated a year ago and is looking for a high-profile job suitable for her/his degree. The study is commissioned by Talent Boost Program and focuses on the Tampere region.

Best regards,

Ahmad Abou Merhi

Appendix 4. The table of selected companies

Name	Industry	Number of Employees	Profit (€)	Location
Tuomi Logistiikka	Logistic	277	2.5 M	Lahdesjärvi
Creanex Oy	Architectural	23	422K	Kaukajärvi
Asennusliike Lahtinen	Civil engineering	No Information	186K	
Proseduuri Oy	Consulting	No Information	139K	Tampere
Mattersoft Ltd.	Programming	10	No Information	Tampere
Framery Trade Ltd	Manufacture of furniture	18	953K	Pirkkala
Euro-East Ltd.	Wholesale trade	8	329K	Tampere
Geniem Oy	Software, consulting	56	187K	Tampere
Värikäs Oy	Advertising and market research	12	36K	Tampere
Pof Group Oy	Interior Home design	10	101K	Ylöjärvi
Jpond Ltd	Legal and accounting	13	102K	Kangasala
Gli Express Ltd	Storage and transport services	52	313K	Pirkkala
Creative Crue Ltd.	Advertising and market research	No Information	112K	Tampere
Luova Arvotoimisto Trust	Advertising and market research	13	-100K	Tampere
Workpower Palvelut Oy	Employment activities	50-99	No Information	Tampere
Terra Patris	Machinery	10-19	-900K	Tampere

Treili	Institutional social welfare services	203	293K	Tampere
Blue Import	Importing services	33	2.223 M	Kangasala
Foxtel	Wholesale trade	20	472K	Orivesi
Seppälän Kiuaskivi Oy	Mining and quarrying	13	657K	Orivesi
Um Group Ltd	Services for business	145	-1.502 M	Tampere
Ahopelto Group Oy	Advertising and market research	3	9K	Ylöjärvi
Arkkitehtitoimisto Raudasoja Oy	Architectural services	3	17K	Ylöjärvi
Arkkitehtihuone	Architecture	4	22K	Orivesi
Finntakuu Oy	Financing and insurance	No Information	609K	Tampere
Provesan Oy	Management consulting	3	208K	Kangasala
Suomen Yrityskauppapalvelut	Business services	No Information	163K	Ylöjärvi
Alen Consulting Oy	Employment activities	93	203K	Tampere
1 Ketju Oy	Employment activities	85	726K	Tampere
Ilzen Ltd	Activities in the real estate sector	38	556K	Tampere
Insta Group Oy	Administrative and services for business	35	-519K	Pirkkala
Jep Henkilöstöratkaisut	Employment activities	34	1K	Nokia
Kiilto Oy	Manufacture of chemical products	214	11.127 M	Lempäälä
Moment Digital Oy	Administrative and support services for business	152	66K	Tampere

Sunura Ltd	Employment activities	62	311K	Tampere
Aallon Leipomo Oy	Food	21	55K	Ylöjärvi
Brand ID	Manufacture of paper	34	789K	Pirkkala
Homeros Ltd	Legal and accounting services	36	555K	Ylöjärvi
Eurotank oy	Manufacture of motor vehicles	40	559K	Kangasala
Emballator Metalpak Oy	Manufacture of metal products	51	1.875 M	Lempäälä
Composities Oy	Manufacture	24	875K	Pirkkala
Haapanen Oy	Manu	27	126K	Pirkkala
Jis-Automation Oy	Manufacture electrical and automation centers	109	1.433 M	Pirkkala
Jotel Oy	Manufacture of motor vehicles	32	180K	Kangasala
Jouka Oy	Manufacture of metal products	30	1.30 M	Ylöjärvi
Jptuf Oy	Repair and installation of machinery	30	81K	Kangasala
Järvensivun Konepaja Oy	Manufacture of other machinery and equipment	39	131K	Pirkkala

## Appendix 5. Questionnaire

1 (8)

## Talent Boost Program

Tämän kyselyn tarkoituksena on ymmärtää ja tutkia keskeisiä tekijöitä, jotka vaikuttavat työnantajien päätöksiin palkata ulkomaalaisia opiskelijoita Pirkanmaan alueella. Tutkimuksen toimeksiantajana on Talent Boost -ohjelma. Kaikki vastaukset käsitellään nimettöminä ja luottamuksellisina.

Sinun ei tarvitse luovuttaa nimeäsi tai sähköpostiosoitettasi kyselyssä. Kaikki tieto, joka on yhdistettävissä henkilöllisyyteesi, säilytetään luottamuksellisesti ja luovutetaan vain sinun luvallasi tai lain niin määrätessä.

This questionnaire aims to understand and explore the key factors influencing employers' hiring decisions for international students in the Tampere region. The study is commissioned by Talent Boost Program. All the answers will be handled anonymously and in confidence.

You will not be required to provide your name or email in the questionnaire. Any information that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

\*Required

1. Mihin ikäryhmään kuulut? \*

What is your age group?

18-34

35-44

45-55

56+

2. Mikä on kansallisuutesi? \*

What is your nationality?

Enter your answer

3. Mikä on koulutustasosi? \*

What is your educational degree?

Lukio / High School

Kandidaatin tutkinto tai vastaava / Bachelor's degree or equivalent

Maisterintutkinto tai vastaava / Master's degree or equivalent

4. Mikä on yrityksen teollisuudenala? \*

What is the company's industry?

Enter your answer

5. Kuinka monta työntekijää yrityksessä on? \*

How many employees does the company have?

1-10

11-50

50+

6. Onko yrityksessäsi tällä hetkellä ulkomaalaisia työntekijöitä? \*

Do you currently have international employees in the company?

Kyllä / Yes

Ei / No

En ole varma / Not sure

**Keskeiset tekijät**

**Kuinka paljon seuraavat tekijät vaikuttavat päätökseesi palkata ulkomaalainen opiskelija?**

**Key Factors**

**How much do the following factors influence your hiring decision for an international student applicant?**

7. Tarve selvittää kaikki esteet tai ongelmat, joita ulkomaalaisen opiskelijan palkkaamisessa ilmenee \*

The need to overcome any obstacles or problems that arise when hiring an international student

Ei lainkaan / Not at all

Hiukan / A little

En ole varma / Not sure

Jonkin verran / Somewhat

Paljon / A lot

8. Tarve johtaa monikulttuurista työyhteisöä \*

The need to manage a multicultural work community

Ei lainkaan / Not at all

Hiukan / A little

En ole varma / Not sure

Jonkin verran / Somewhat

Paljon / A lot

9. Tarve oppia lisää ulkomaalaisen opiskelijan kulttuurista \*

The need to learn more about the culture of an international student applicant

Ei lainkaan / Not at all

Hiukan / A little

En ole varma / Not sure

Jonkin verran / Somewhat

Paljon / A lot

10. Tarve kommunikoida englanniksi \*

The need to communicate in English

Ei lainkaan / Not at all

Hiukan / A little

En ole varma / Not sure

Jonkin verran / Somewhat

Paljon / A lot

11.Asiakkaiden/yhteistyökumppanien odotukset \*

The expectations of customers/clients

Ei lainkaan / Not at all

Hiukan / A little

En ole varma / Not sure

Jonkin verran / Somewhat

Paljon / A lot

12.Yrityksessä olevien työntekijöiden/kollegoiden odotukset \*

The expectations of employees/colleagues within the company

Ei lainkaan / Not at all

Hiukan / A little

En ole varma / Not sure

Jonkin verran / Somewhat

Paljon / A lot

13.Tutkinto ja/tai työkokemus, joka ulkomaalaisella opiskelijalla on kotimaastaan\*

The degree and/or work experience an international student applicant has from her/his home country

Ei lainkaan / Not at all

Hiukan / A little

En ole varma / Not sure

Jonkin verran / Somewhat

Paljon / A lot

14.Ulkomaalaisen opiskelijahakijan suomen kielen taidot \*

The Finnish language skills of an international student applicant

Ei lainkaan / Not at all

Hiukan / A little

En ole varma / Not sure

Jonkin verran / Somewhat

Paljon / A lot

15.Tiedot ulkomaalaisten opiskelijoiden palkkaamisen hyödyistä \*

Knowing the benefits of hiring international students

Ei lainkaan / Not at all

Hiukan / A little

En ole varma / Not sure

Jonkin verran / Somewhat

Paljon / A lot

16.Tarve muuttaa yrityksen yleistä ilmapiiriä \*

The need to change the general atmosphere of the company

Ei lainkaan / Not at all

Hiukan / A little

En ole varma / Not sure

Jonkin verran / Somewhat

Paljon / A lot

17.Aiempi työkokemukseni ulkomaalaisten työntekijöiden kanssa \*

My previous work experience with international employees

Ei lainkaan / Not at all

Hiukan / A little

En ole varma / Not sure

Jonkin verran / Somewhat

Paljon / A lot

18.Uusi kulttuuri ja perspektiivi, joita ulkomaalainen opiskelijahakija tuo \*

The new culture and perspective that an international student applicant brings

Ei lainkaan / Not at all

Hiukan / A little

En ole varma / Not sure

Jonkin verran / Somewhat

Paljon / A lot

19.Yrityksen taloudellinen tilanne \*

The financial performance of the company

Ei lainkaan / Not at all

Hiukan / A little

En ole varma / Not sure

Jonkin verran / Somewhat

Paljon / A lot

20.Se, onko ulkomaalainen opiskelijahakija hakenut paikkaa virallisten rekrytointikanavien kautta (esim. LinkedIn, virallinen yhteydenotto, työnvälitystoimistot) \*

Whether an international student applicant has applied for the position through formal recruitment sources (e.g., LinkedIn, formal contacts, recruitment agencies)

Ei lainkaan / Not at all

Hiukan / A little

En ole varma / Not sure

Jonkin verran / Somewhat

Paljon / A lot

21.Se, onko ulkomaalainen opiskelijahakija hakenut paikkaa epävirallisten rekrytointikanavien kautta (esim. suositus, henkilökohtaiset kontaktit, osoitukset ystävältä) \*

Whether an international student applicant applied for the position through informal recruitment sources (e.g., recommendation, personal contacts, referrals from friend)

Ei lainkaan/Not at all

Hiukan / A little

En ole varma / Not sure

Jonkin verran / Somewhat

Paljon / A lot

22.Yrityksen resurssit (esim. aika, mentorit, kalusto, ja tilat) \*

The resources the company has (e.g., time, mentors, equipment, and space)

Ei lainkaan / Not at all

Hiukan / A little

En ole varma / Not sure

Jonkin verran / Somewhat

Paljon / A lot

## **Yhteistyö**

### **Cooperation**

23. Vaikuttaisiko suurempi yhteistyö Tampereen korkeakoulujen ja International House Tampereen kanssa päätöksesi palkata ulkomaalaisia opiskelijoita? \*

Would having more cooperation with the universities of Tampere and International House Tampere to find a qualified employee influence your hiring decision for international students?

Kyllä / Yes

Ei / No

En ole Varma / Not sure

24. Oletko kuullut International House Tampereesta? \*

Have you heard of International House Tampere?

Kyllä / Yes

Ei / No

25. Oletko kuullut Tuudosta? \*

Have you heard of Tuudo?

Kyllä / Yes

Ei / No

26. Oletko kuullut JobTeaserista? \*

Have you heard of JobTeaser?

Kyllä / Yes

Ei / No

27. Oletko kuullut Yrityspäivistä? \*

Have you heard of Yrityspäivät? Kyllä / Yes

Ei / No

28.Oletko tehnyt yhteistyötä yhden tai useamman edellä mainitun tahon kanssa?

(Ei, miksi/ Kyllä, mitkä) \*

Have you collaborated with one or more of the above? (No, why/ Yes, which)

Enter your answer

29.Haluatko lisätä mitään muuta?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Enter your answer