

Oluwasoyin Aanuoluwapo

Employability Constraints Confronting International Business Students in Relation to Cultural Differences – A Case Study of Kajaani

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Abstract

Author: Oluwasoyin Aanuoluwapo

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This thesis aims to explore the employability constraints facing international business students caused by cultural differences using Kajaani as a case study. Kajaani University of Applied Sciences commissioned the study involving international business students from three countries.

The three countries Nepal, Nigeria, and the Philippines were chosen as case studies to determine if cultural differences influence the employability of these international business students. The methodology of the research employed the use of questionnaires to collect data from international business students from the selected countries studying in Kajaani. According to cross-cultural dimensions theory, these countries display different values for each dimension, indicating a difference in national culture and, therefore, organizational culture.

The latest statistical data from 2020 revealed a decline in the number of international students in this country in 2020. Various data also suggest a preference to hire students from EA and EAA countries in Finland. The study employed a qualitative approach to data analysis, using a cross-cultural dimension theory to analyze the data and identify how cultural differences affect the employability of international business students. The data obtained were analyzed using the regression analysis method.

The findings of the research paper suggest that cultural differences significantly impact the employability of international business students. The study identified several cultural dimensions, such as the power distance index, individualism vs. collectivism, and masculinity vs. femininity, and showed how these dimensions affect employability. For example, the study highlights the disparity between the power distance index of Finland and the three countries and how this can affect various employability skills.

The conclusion highlights the effect of cultural differences and suggests methods with which various bodies can circumvent the research problem.

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1 Introduction

According to statistics by The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland in April 2022, the number of unemployed individuals in the country is approximately 238,800, of which the number of unemployed foreigners equals 27,600. While the country's unemployment rate has decreased considerably in the past few years, there has been no noticeable decrease in the number of unemployed foreigners (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2022; Statistics Finland, 2022).

The supply of labor in the economy varies due to various external factors. Recently, all over the world, the COVID-19 pandemic affected labor in several ways as the forced restrictions on movement changed the demand for the types of skills from those that required physical presence to those that could be applied remotely (Chi-Wei Su et al., 2021). In Finland, the case was no different, as statistics show that the rate of unemployment plummeted, specifically affecting sectors that required manual labor. In 2019 the highest unemployment rate recorded was about 9.3%, elevating to 10.3 during the lockdown era and 7.3% post-lockdown. (Statistics Finland, 2023; OECD, 2021; OECD 2020).

The subject of employability, which can briefly be defined as the ability to gain and maintain employment, is an important part of labor. It has been researched by numerous scholars and writers in numerous bodies of literature where every aspect of the subject has been discussed to provide a better understanding of the subject to the parties involved, including the scholars themselves, the labor policymakers, and the employees and employers in the labor market (Peeters et al., 2019; Gedye & Beaumont, 2018).

Employability plays an essential role in how labor market policies are developed in both the domestic and international markets, as it helps guide the policies companies in any of these two markets employ to secure talents for various available positions (Akkermans et al, 2013).

The employability of individuals is influenced by several factors, from the competence of the individual in question as regards knowledge, ability, and skills in contrast with the skills required for the job (Fenta et al., 2019).

The culture, or the organizational culture, of the organization in question, also affects an individual's employability, as this indicates whether the individual can fit into the particular organization's structure (Fox & Morrison, 2010).

Culture plays a vital role in the employability of international students in the country, as many employers have a negative attitude towards employing international students due to the various barriers that emerge from a difference in culture. Barriers like language, social network, restrictive bureaucracy, previous job experience, professional skills, and cultural competence, which refers to the level of integration the individual in question has had with the Finnish culture and the level at which he understands and can follow the norms in the society (YLE NEWS, 2021; Vehaskari, 2010; Duvander, 2001).

1.1 Problem Statement

The rate at which international students in Finland secure jobs after graduation is low, and these various graduates in different fields of study return to their home country after a few years of unemployment.

The employability rate of international students is constrained by numerous factors, one of which includes culture. The thesis aims to confirm, if any, the relationship between cultural differences from three countries to Kajaani and how these differences affect the employability of international students in Finland.

1.2 Objective of Study

The study aims to explore the constraints caused by cultural differences that international business students of Kajaani face while seeking jobs. The thesis will examine the employment and work culture of Finland, the country where the case study location is located, and cross-reference this with the employment culture of the home country of the various international students to determine if differences in culture cause a low employability rate. For this study, three countries will be analyzed alongside Finland: Nepal, Nigeria, and the Philippines.

1.3 Research output

This study aims to provide insights into the various ways the difference in culture from the place of origin of international business students affects their employability which is simply the ability

of these students to obtain and sustain employment. The study uses quantitative research data to attest to these employability constraints' presence. This research also recommends various ways these constraints can be alleviated by the commissioning body, Kajaani University of Applied Sciences, and what role can be played to increase the employability of these international business students.

Overall, the study provides a framework that can be applied to which the relationship between employability and culture can be discerned in any part of the world and applied to improve the employability of international students worldwide.

2 Theoretical Background

The theoretical aspect of every research or thesis is a vital aspect of the research, providing insight and understanding of the topic to be researched. In the theoretical background of this thesis, the significant aspects of the thesis, which include the employability of international students in Kajaani, Finland, and cultural differences between countries, will be discussed.

Concepts pertaining to the topic will be explored, and concepts such as the fate of international students in Finland as pertaining to education and employment after education, employability as a whole and its related terms, and culture. Culture in the context of the thesis and cultural differences between and how they come into play in the study. The research aims to investigate the relationship between the two variables of the topic and how the dependent variable, which in this case is the employability of international students, and the independent variable, which in this case is the cultural differences between countries.

2.1 International Students in Finland

An international student is described as a student who is not native to his country of study or has studied in another country (Perez-Encinas & Rodriguez-Pomeda, 2017). In Finland, statistics show that as of 2020, international students constituted about 6.8 percent of the total student body and that of the percentage of new students admitted into Finnish universities; international students constituted about 7.9 percent. International students refer to migrants who travel to countries other than theirs for educational purposes (IGI Global, 2023). Upon graduation, many students wish to return to their host country to seek career or job opportunities (Kinos & Kirjavainen, 2021).

Finland, one of the educational hubs for international students, had a pronounced experience in the level of acceptance of international students. Of course, migration is associated with employability issues (Sin & Amaral, 2017). Thus, on the subject of the employment rate of these international business students, it has been observed that as the years roll on, the rate at which they are able to secure jobs becomes lower, and depending on the Sub-region and the level of education, this rate may fall even lower.

SHARE OF PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN FINLAND 1 YEAR AFTER GRADUATION						
	UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES			UNIVERSITY STUDENTS (EXCLUDING POST-GRADUATES)		
	SITUATION IN 2019, %	SITUATION IN 2018, %	SITUATION IN 2017, %	SITUATION IN 2019, %	SITUATION IN 2018, %	SITUATION IN 2017, %
EU/ETA CITIZENS	50	43	49	30	37	33
OTHER COUNTRIES	59	53	52	54	40	45
SHARE OF PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN FINLAND AFTER 3 YEARS AFTER GRADUATION						
	UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES			UNIVERSITY STUDENTS (EXCLUDING POST-GRADUATES)		
	SITUATION IN 2019, %	SITUATION IN 2018, %	SITUATION IN 2017, %	SITUATION IN 2019, %	SITUATION IN 2018, %	SITUATION IN 2017, %
EU/ETA CITIZENS	46	43	45	31	37	39
OTHER COUNTRIES	49	47	46	44	39	40
SHARE OF PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN FINLAND AFTER 5 YEARS AFTER GRADUATION						
	UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES			UNIVERSITY STUDENTS (EXCLUDING POST-GRADUATES)		
	SITUATION IN 2019, %	SITUATION IN 2018, %	SITUATION IN 2017, %	SITUATION IN 2019, %	SITUATION IN 2018, %	SITUATION IN 2017, %
EU/ETA CITIZENS	42	48	46	32	37	40
OTHER COUNTRIES	42	43	46	34	35	37

Figure 1 Share of people employed in Finland one year, three years, and five years after graduation.

(Source: Finnish National Agency for Education; Employment of international students in Finland after graduation, situation 2019)

These statistics from 219 present the latest data on the subject; it can be observed that the rate of employment of international students reduced as the years increased from 2017 to 2019, with certain years deviating from this by remaining constant or increasing.

As of the fifth year, the employment rate is below average, with no value up to 50%. This indicates that the chances of foreigners in Finland to secure employment reduce as the year goes by, contributing to many of them leaving the country after completing their education.

2.2 Employability

Employability is a crucial factor in the world of labor. As such, the topic has been examined by various scholars and writers across time in numerous bodies of work to come up with a definition that seeks to encompass every aspect of the concept from the numerous angles of the parties involved. Over the years, different definitions of the term employability have come into play, each attempting to define the term from the different angles or perspectives involved in employment and labor. These definitions, although different, share certain similarities allowing for various research on the subject to provide a more in-depth understanding of the subject (Bailey & Ingimundardottir, 2015)

Sin and Amaral (2016) describe employability as an individual's ability to get a job, maintain a said job, or change jobs and that this ability can be influenced or determined by the individual's characteristics or circumstances and by external factors like social factors, institutional factors, and economic factors. In the view of Small et al. (2017), employability concerns the capacity of an individual to be self-reliant in navigating the labor market, utilizing knowledge, skills, and attributes, and adapting them to the employment context, showcasing them to the employers while considering external factors and constraints to employability.

These various definitions of employability each approach the subject from different perspectives and use various dimensions. Hillage and Pollard (1988), Harvey (1999), Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2005), Yorke (2006), De Vos et al. (2011), Hogan et al. (2013) all describe employability as being based on the individual in question, i.e., employability is dependent on the skills, knowledge, and ability of every individual without regards to other external factors that may affect employment. Brown et al. (2003) and Sin and Amaral (2016) describe employability as the chances of an individual to secure employment or get where regardless of the skills, knowledge, and understanding the individual possesses; the chances are usually determined by external factors of the labor market (Cheng et al., 2022).

Small et al. (2017) attempted to encompass these two perspectives describing employability as being dependent on the individual's skills, knowledge, and ability, as well as the ability to adapt and change with regard to possible changes in the external factors or various other factors that might affect the employability (Inge et al., 2020).

Based on perspectives, the various definitions and research can be grouped into Governmental, organizational, and individual perspectives. The governmental perspective views employability from the various actions the government puts in place to encourage employability and facilitate or eliminate unemployment. It includes definitions of employability that factor in the role of external factors such as policies and external factors.

The organizational perspective describes the various ways companies can encourage employability due to circumstances like technological advancement and globalization., either through training or workshops. It includes definitions of employability that involve seeking jobs and maintaining jobs. The individual perspective describes the various ways individuals can influence employability, either through skills or competencies, and it includes definitions of the term that refer to individual capabilities (Guilbert et al., 2015; Dinh et al., 2022).

As research on the subject has progressed in recent times, various models have been proposed and employed to streamline the subject of employability further, allowing for a more compact body of knowledge on the subject. Fourier et al. (2015) grouped the various definitions of employability into three, **job transition, movement capital, and perceived employability**. Each with various dimensions allows for a better understanding of employability, where authors whose definitions were grouped under job transition referred to employability as the movement from one job to another. The next group of divisions is the movement capital, which

includes a definition where employability is based on the individual's competence, skills, knowledge, and ability.

Four dimensions exist under this group, and they include; human capital which is the ability of the individual to meet the required performance and expectation, social capital, which is the social network the individual has access to and how it can help in employability; self-awareness dimensions which refer to the amount of awareness the individual has on the number of skills he possesses and his ability, and the final dimension being adaptability which refers to the individual's ability to evolve. According to Fourier, the last group of definitions was the Perceived employability group, where the authors referred to employability from the individual's perception of employment opportunities (Van Harten et al., 2022).

As the various definitions of the term have highlighted, various factors affect or influence employability. From the individual perspective, factors like individual skill, knowledge, ability, and how the individual is able to use these competencies. From the employee's perspective, employability is influenced by the position that the company seeks to fill and how individuals can use their skills to fill and adequately perform in said position properly. Employability can also be influenced by society or societal factors, encompassing various factors such as governmental policies, the state of the labor market, culture, and other external factors (Williams et al., 2016; Huang, 2013; Mahajan et al., 2022). The various definitions of the terms have also highlighted the various skills related to employability and, in turn, provided a background for how employability is measured. The study, this provides a method that can be employed in the measuring of what employability skills are utilized in the measurement of the employability of individuals in their various countries (Ramisetty et al., 2017)

2.3 Culture and Cultural Differences

Numerous definitions of the term culture exist as it is a core topic in human society and has been researched by numerous scholars and researchers alike over a long period of time. Mead (1937) defined culture as the various forms of traditional behavior characteristic of a certain society, a certain race, a certain area for a certain period of time. Keesing (1981) refers to culture as socially transmitted patterns or behavior characteristics particular to a specific social group.

Guilliano (2020) defined culture as customary beliefs and values that various groups of people, such as ethnic, religious, and social groups, transmit fairly unchanged from generation to generation. Hofstede (1980) described culture as the collective programming of the human mind and as something that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another. He further described culture as a system of collectively held values.

While the various definitions differ, they agree on certain elements allowing for a general description of the term to be coined. Culture can then be referred to as the transmission of a wide range of phenomena, including norms, values, shared meanings, and patterned behavior between individuals of the same group over time (Birukou et al., 2013). In an excerpt from Schein (2010, 17), culture pertains to "A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems." On the other hand, cultural differences refer to the differences between the values, behavior, laws, and customs of two groups. More finely put, cultural differences refer to the differences in the culture of two groups of people. They can come in the form of differences in values, customs, languages, behavior, and various other attributes about the people in the groups (Iivonen et al., 1998).

In the context of the thesis topic, culture can be interpreted as organizational and national cultures. National culture is defined as the culture of nations, i.e., the norms, values, and behavioral patterns of citizens of a particular country (Venaik & Brewer, 2016). Organizational culture is the pattern of basic assumptions or systems of operation that a given organization has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which have worked well enough to be considered the accepted standard and therefore to be taught to its new members as the right and accepted way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems.

The assumptions lie behind values and determine the behavior patterns and visible artifacts such as architecture, office layout, and dress code (Bellot, 2011). Schein (2010) argued that culture strongly correlates with organizational culture and that the definition of organizational culture runs across three distinct levels. These levels cover artifacts, exposed values, and associated assumptions that follow the phenomenon of culture. In explaining this, Schein argued that the relationship between the various levels of culture based on varying beliefs, values, norms, and rules of behavior that members of a particular culture adopt in order to interpret themselves as well as others (Schein, 2010, p. 23)

Various scholars have researched the relationship between organizational culture and national culture. Nikčević (2014) describes how every organization possesses its own culture that depends on the culture of the country it was formed. Various cross-cultural theories have been put forward and employed in determining the relationship between organizational and national culture.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework refers to a researcher's theory in carrying out the research. It can also be described as applying a theory to explain the event in review or to aid in the understanding and resolution of the research problem (Imenda, 2014).

Employability and Cultural differences are significant parts of this research, and both concepts can be measured or analyzed through various methods and theories.

On employability, researchers over various papers have used the various employability skills from various definitions to come up with the dimensions for measuring the concept and have been able to create scales for their various studies (Bennett & Anthram, 2021).

Few cross-cultural theories exist that can, with their dimensions, analyze the differences between the cultures of two regions or countries, allowing for direct analysis of how these differences can affect various parts of the organizational culture or structure. Theories for cross-cultural studies include Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner's theory of cross-cultural studies and Geert Hofstede's theory of cross-cultural studies. These theories, with their various dimensions, measure certain aspects of the national culture and allow for the prediction of the type of organizational culture that would be employed in various countries (Hassan & Hassan, 2020).

Hofstede's cross-cultural theory is a framework that helps explain how culture influences human behavior, values, beliefs, and attitudes across different countries and regions. It is an easy-to-use framework and the most widely used framework for cross-cultural analysis. Hofstede's cross-cultural framework operates on six dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, and long-term orientation/short-term orientation, whereby each of these dimensions measures a specific relationship or aspect of culture. By examining a society's scores on these dimensions, Hofstede's theory helps to explain why people from different cultures may have different attitudes, behaviors, and

communication styles and how these differences can lead to misunderstandings or conflict in cross-cultural interactions (Brooks, 2006). Over the years, there has been various criticism of Hofstede's theory and its dimensions. Criticism on its relevancy, homogeneity, and lack of broadness and that the dimensions do not accurately present all the information on cultural differences that may exist (Shaiq et al., 2011). Regardless of this, the theory remains the go-to for cross-cultural studies as the theory and its dimensions allow for the inclusion of a large sample of countries; the dimensions are statistically distinct and are very less interrelated, and it has formed the backbone for various other research works (Zainuddin, 2018).

Power Distance is the dimension that reflects the extent to which people in society accept and expect unequal distributions of power and status, i.e., the extent to which those at the bottom relate with those at the top. **Individualism/Collectivism**, this dimension reflects the degree to which individuals in a society prioritize their own interests over those of the group or vice versa.

Masculinity/Femininity is the dimension that shows how much society values stereotypically masculine traits like competitiveness, assertiveness, and material success over stereotypically feminine traits like nurturance, cooperation, and quality of life (Arrindell, 2003).

Uncertainty Avoidance, this dimension describes the extent to which people in society feel threatened by ambiguity and uncertainty and therefore rely on formal rules and structures to minimize risk.

Long-Term/Short-Term Orientation is the dimension that reflects the extent to which a society values traditions, long-term planning, and perseverance versus immediate gratification and quick results. **Indulgence/restraint** measures the degree to which a society encourages and enjoys individual pleasures and gratifications versus promoting self-control and restraint (Jie & Jing, 2015; De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010).

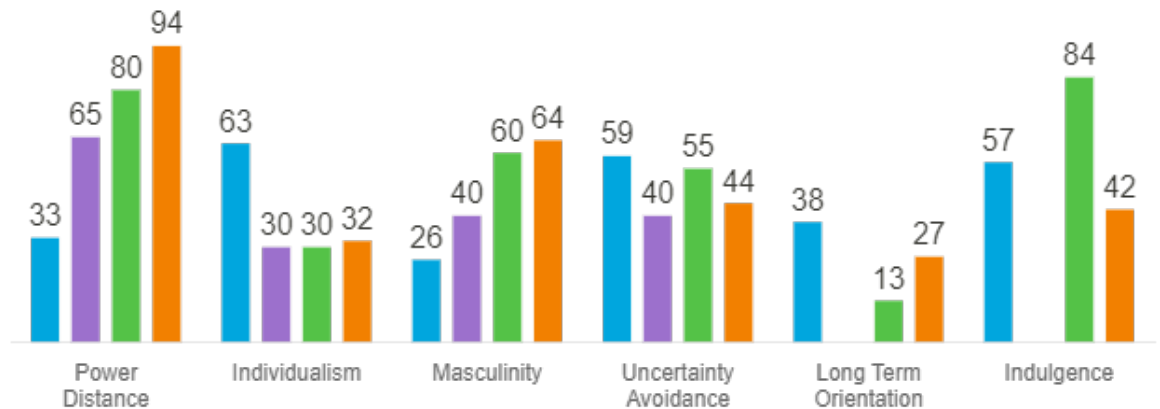


Figure 2 Comparison of Finland, Nigeria, Nepal, and the Philippines using Hofstede's cross-cultural theory.

Finland, Nepal, Nigeria Philippines

(Source; Cross country comparison
<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/finland,nepal,nigeria,the-philippines/>)

Power distance: Finland has a low power distance score, which means that people in Finland value equality and do not tolerate large differences in power or status. Nepal has a high power-distance score, and while not as high as Nigeria or the Philippines, it suggests that, to a level, the individuals of Nepal accept a hierarchy system. The Philippines and Nigeria have higher power distance scores, suggesting that people in both countries are more accepting of hierarchy and power differences.

Individualism vs. collectivism: Finland is a highly individualistic country, which suggests that people place a high value on personal freedom, independence, and autonomy. The Philippines, Nepal, and Nigeria lean more toward collectivism. In these countries, there is more tendency to prioritize group loyalty and interdependence over individual achievement.

Masculinity vs. femininity: Finland and Nepal have a feminine culture, which means that people in these countries value traits like cooperation, quality of life, and nurturing relationships. Nigeria and the Philippines have a masculine culture where traits like competition, achievement, and assertiveness are of more value.

Uncertainty avoidance: Finland and Nigeria have a moderate level of uncertainty avoidance, suggesting that people in these three countries prefer structure and predictability. Nepal and the Philippines have low uncertainty avoidance meaning in these societies, they operate in a non-rigid way; rules are flexible, and there is acceptance of new ideas.

Long-term vs. short-term orientation: Finland, Nigeria, and the Philippines all have short-term orientation, which suggests that people prioritize immediate gratification over long-term planning. The value for this dimension is not available for Nepal.

Indulgence vs. restraint: Finland and Nigeria have a high indulgence score, meaning that people in both countries value enjoyment and pleasure. The Philippines has a low indulgence score, which suggests that people in this country prioritize self-control and restraint.

2.5 Background of Kajaani

It was founded in the 17th century and has since witnessed growth due to the various industrial operations in the Sub-region, from the growth of the tar industry to modern saw milling, lumber, and paper milling industries that are the Sub-region's leading sources of income.

The first language is Finnish, with a few percentage of individuals having Swedish as their first language. Kajaani formerly housed a castle; it houses a church, an airport, and The University of Applied Sciences Kajaani. Studies have shown that the city suffers from depopulation, and high unemployment, most likely as a result of its distant location (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018; Häyrynen & Semi, 2019).

Kajaani is a sub-region in the Kainuu region of Finland and is one of the job hubs in Finland aside from Helsinki and other key cities. See Figure 1.9 for the demographic features of the Kajaani.

Further information about the population structure:

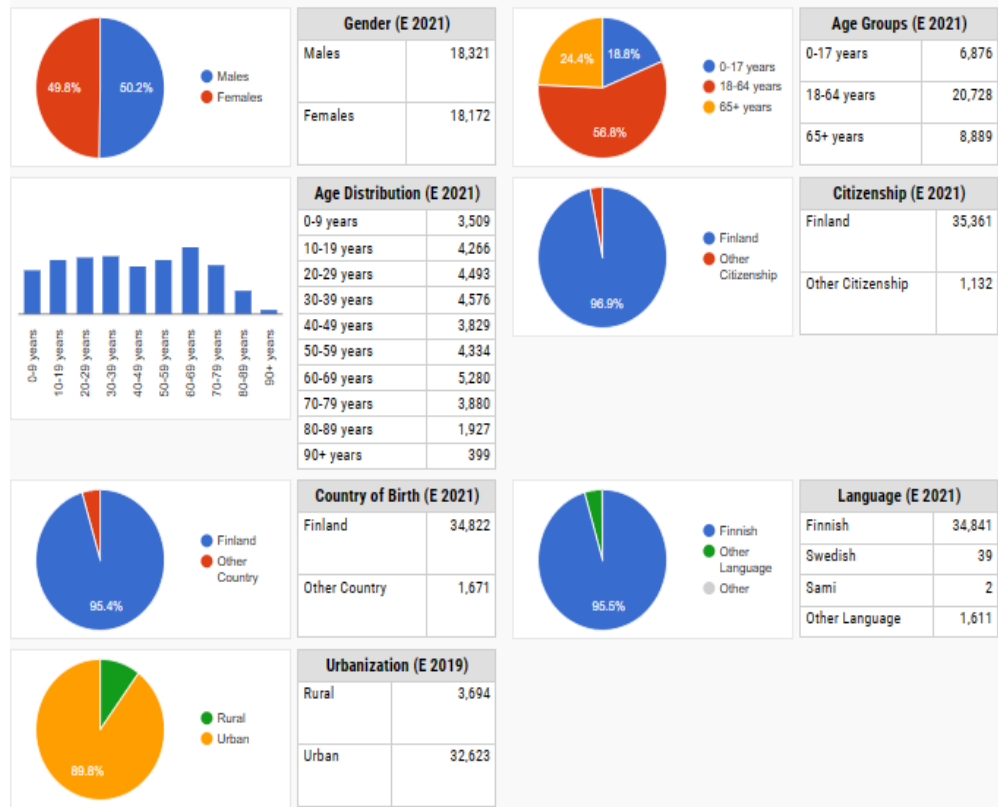


Figure 3 Demographic Features of Kajaani

Source: Statistics Finland (web).

3 Methodology

The methodology section of a research paper is important for ensuring the research's reliability, validity, and ethicality. The methodology used in any research is influenced by the research question or problem being investigated, the available resources, and the researcher's expertise. There are different types of methodologies used in research, such as qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, and action research, and these research methods differ in the type of data they collect and their method of collection (Bryman, 2008; Avison *et al.*, 1999.)

The qualitative method is employed in studying non-numerical data, which includes words, images, and observations. It involves the use of interviews and various other methods capable of measuring things that can be used for variables like perspectives, experiences, beliefs, and attitudes. The data obtained from a qualitative research method is analyzed using tools like thematic analysis, where patterns and themes within the data are identified (Belloto, 2018).

The mixed research method involves the combination of both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods, usually employed when the data to be collected and analyzed has multiple facets and involves an interpretation where the overview and in-depth analysis are necessary (Onwuegbuzie & Combs, 2011).

On the other hand, the quantitative methodology involves collecting data through various methods such as questionnaires, structured observations, and experiments to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. The quantitative methodology involves collecting numerical data through these methods and analyzing this data using statistical analysis to validate hypotheses or make generalizations (Snyder, 2019).

These various methodologies have different approaches to interpreting the information obtained, including descriptive analysis, inferential analysis, regression analysis, and various other analytical tools and models (Ott & Longnecker, 2015).

In this research, the quantitative methodology will be employed, and the quantitative methodology tool to be used will be the questionnaire.

3.1 Method of Data Collection

For this research, data will be collected using a questionnaire whose questions were derived from a side-by-side comparison of employability factors and dimensions on Hofstede's cross-cultural dimension scale where various employability skills were equated with the various dimensions of Hofstede's cross-cultural dimension.

Employability skills such as interpersonal skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills, teamwork, and decision-making skills were considered in this research (Asonitou, 2015) alongside various implications of the six dimensions of Hofstede's cross-cultural dimensions and how they could be translated into various areas of the organizational culture such as teamwork, communication, and leadership.

Data were collected from 20 participants; all 20 were international business students from Nigeria, Nepal, and the Philippines. When compared to Finland, the country of the case study region, these countries revealed values different from Finland on the six dimensions expressing a noticeable difference in National culture, which implies a difference in work culture.

The 20 participants were chosen using a convenience sampling method, as the correspondents were chosen based on their availability. It was also necessary for the correspondents to have working experience in both their home country and Finland.

The items on the questionnaire attempt to procure information on the employability skills necessary in the three countries and how much these skills result from the effect of the national culture on the organizational culture.

The questionnaire attempts to reveal the relationship between employability factors and culture on a single scale, creating a common groundwork between the two by comparing employability skills like communication, teamwork, adaptability, leadership, and interpersonal skills and how these skills relate to the various dimensions on Hofstede's cross-cultural scale.

3.2 Data Analysis Method

Data analysis refers to extracting and obtaining the valuable information buried in a collected data set to allow for interpretation and conclusion. The data analysis method to be employed depends on the methodology used to collect data (Ibrahim, 2015).

For the data set collected using the quantitative methodology, particularly the questionnaire, various methods will be employed to interpret the data collected, such as graphs and other visual methods, showing how each of the correspondents responded to a particular question. Descriptive analysis was also carried out where the employability scores' mean, mode, median, and standard deviation will also be shown.

4 Result

The study utilized questions to inquire about individuals' employability skills based on their countries. Replies from 20 correspondents were obtained.

4.1 Personal background information

Country of origin

Three countries were considered for this study, Nigeria, Nepal, and the Philippines. 8 of the respondents were from Nigeria, 6 of the respondents were from Nepal, and 6 of the respondents were from the Philippines. The breakdown of this finding is presented in Figure 4 and supported by the frequency table in the appendix. The graph below shows the distribution of individuals in the three countries selected for the research.

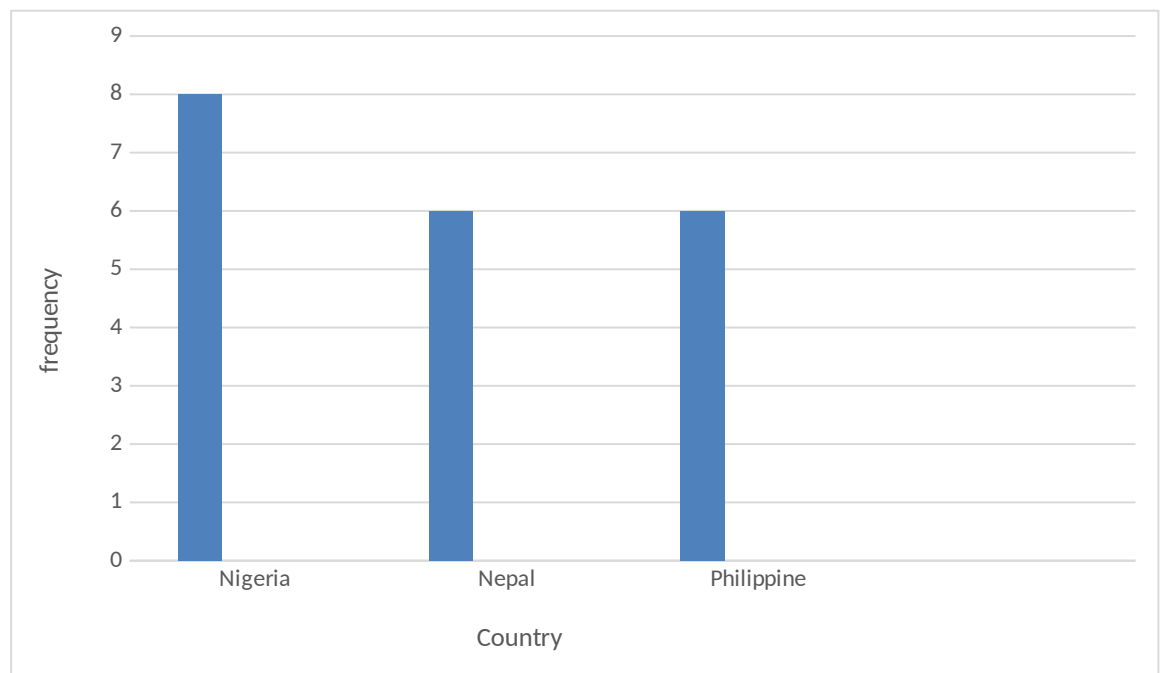


Figure 4 Respondent's country of origin (n=20)

Prior working experience in the country of origin

All 20 correspondents reported that having experience working in their country of origin a necessary requirement for the research as experience in their country of origin was necessary

to determine how they perceived the employability of their various countries.

Prior working experience in Finland

All 20 correspondents also reported having experience working in Finland, a necessary requirement for the research as experience in Finland was necessary to determine how they perceived the employability of Finland.

4.2 The level at which I could approach my superiors

The respondents were asked about the level at which they communicated with their superiors, a question that could reveal the level of communication and leadership style employed in their countries. 7 of the respondents were on the higher side, 1 of the respondents was on the neutral side, and 12 of the respondents were on the lower side, indicating that a more significant amount of these respondents belonged to cultures where the level of communication was considerably low. Those in a superior position dictated how the operations were carried out. The breakdown of this finding is presented in Figure 5 and supported by the frequency table in the appendix. The graph below shows the distribution of the individuals to each of the various degrees possible in the question.

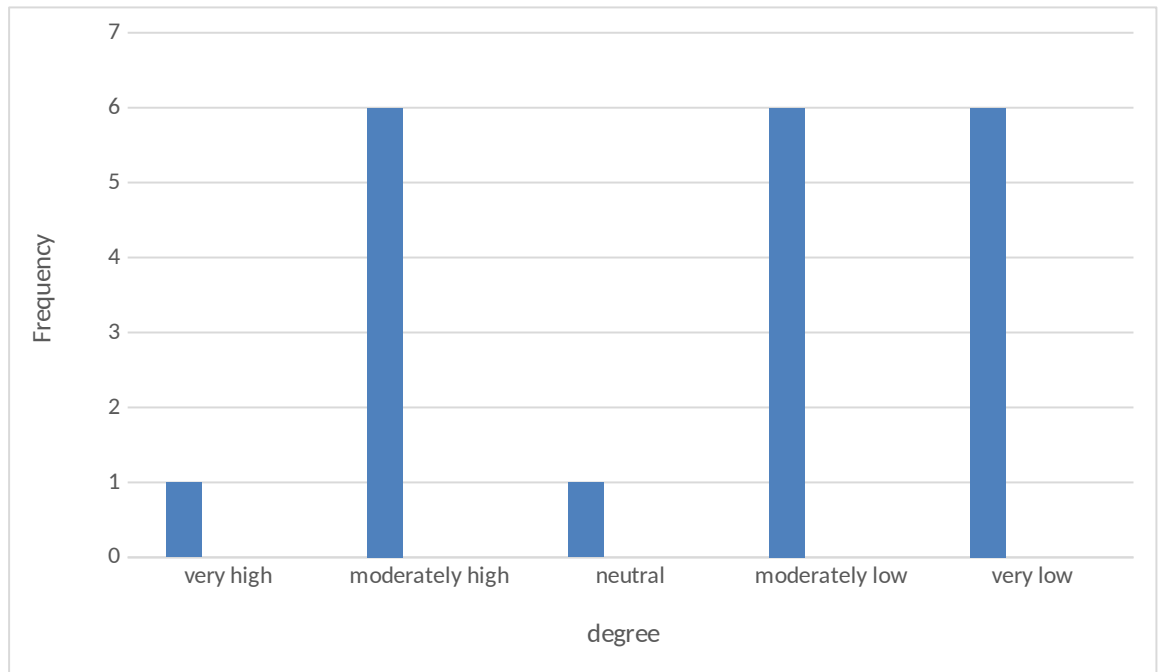


Figure 5 level at which respondents could approach superiors(n=20)

4.3 The level at which I could be approached as a superior is

The respondents were asked about the level at which they communicated with superiors, a question that could reveal the level of communication and leadership style employed in their countries. 8 of the respondents were on the higher side. None of the respondents were neutral, and 12 were on the lower side, indicating that a more significant number of these respondents belonged to cultures where the level of communication was considerably low. Those in a superior position dictated how the operations were carried out. The breakdown of this finding is presented in Figure 6 and supported by the frequency table in the appendix. The graph below shows the distribution of the individuals to each of the various degrees possible in the question.

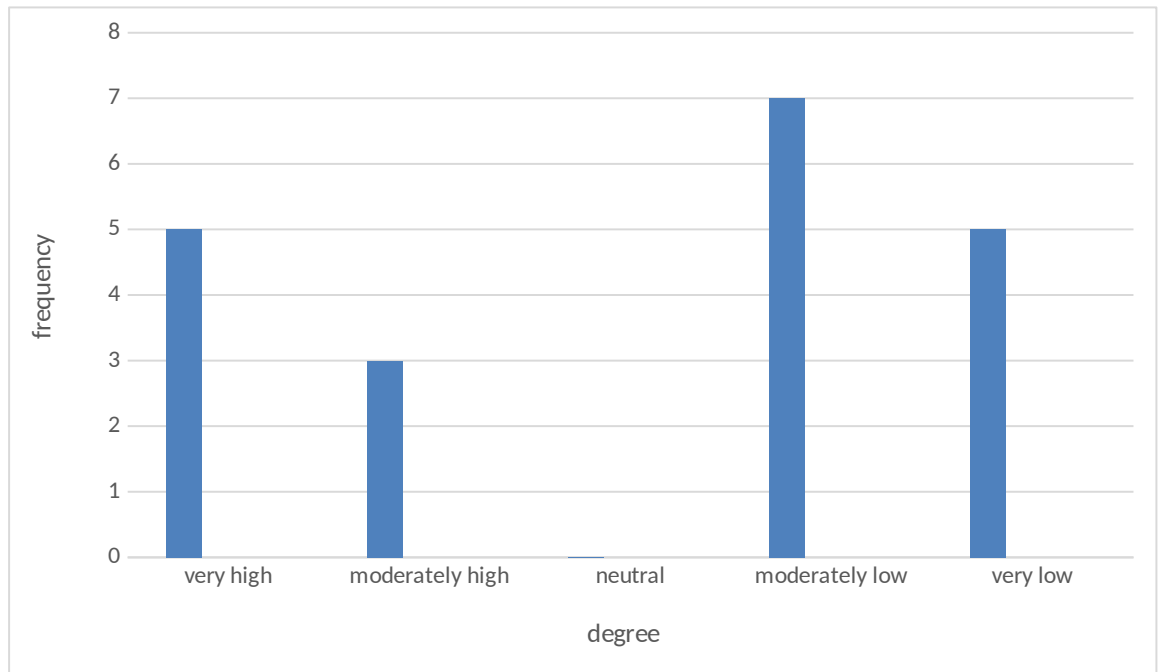


Figure 6 level at which respondents could be approached as superiors (n=20)

4.4 The level at which I was compelled to work in teams.

The respondents were asked about the level at which they were compelled to work in teams, a question that could reveal the system which their various cultures employed, whether it was where individual work was employed or where tasks were carried out collectively by teams. 13 of the respondents were on the higher side, 1 of the correspondents was neutral, and 6 of the respondents were on the lower side indicating that a larger amount of these respondents belonged to cultures where tasks were carried out in teams, teamwork was the desired approach to getting work done and that individual effort had very little play in the company's progress. The breakdown of this finding is presented in Figure 7 and supported by the frequency table in the appendix. The graph below shows the distribution of the individuals to each of the various degrees possible in the question.

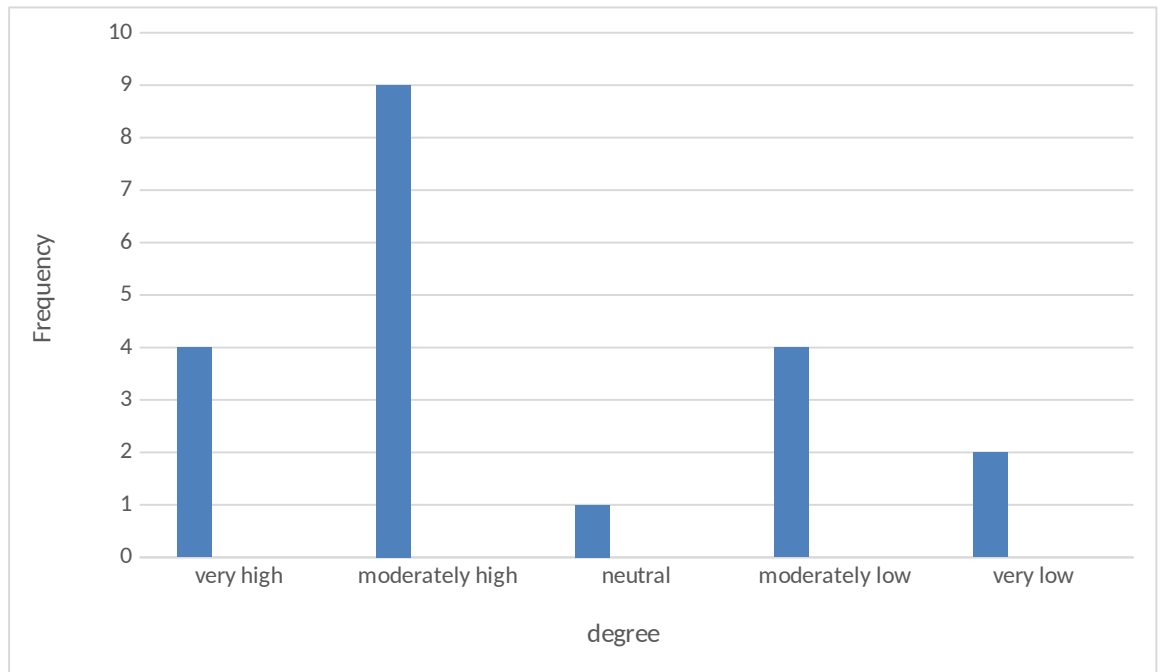


Figure 7 level at which respondents were compelled to work in teams (n=20)

4.5 The level at which attributes like solidarity, equality, and the ability to negotiate were encouraged was

The respondents were asked about the level at which attributes like solidarity, equality, and the ability to negotiate were encouraged as the favored attributes of their various cultures instead of attributes like drive for success and competition. A reflection of what those societies value, a question that could reveal the system which their various cultures employed or encourage in areas like customer relations, employee relations, leadership, and communication. 6 of the respondents were on the higher side, 4 of the correspondents were neutral, and 10 of the respondents were on the lower side, indicating that a larger number of these respondents belonged to cultures where leadership, customer relationships, employee relations, and communication were all carried out in a stern manner allowing no room for familiarity. The breakdown of this finding is presented in Figure 8 and supported by the frequency table in the appendix. The graph below shows the distribution of the individuals to each of the various degrees possible in the question.

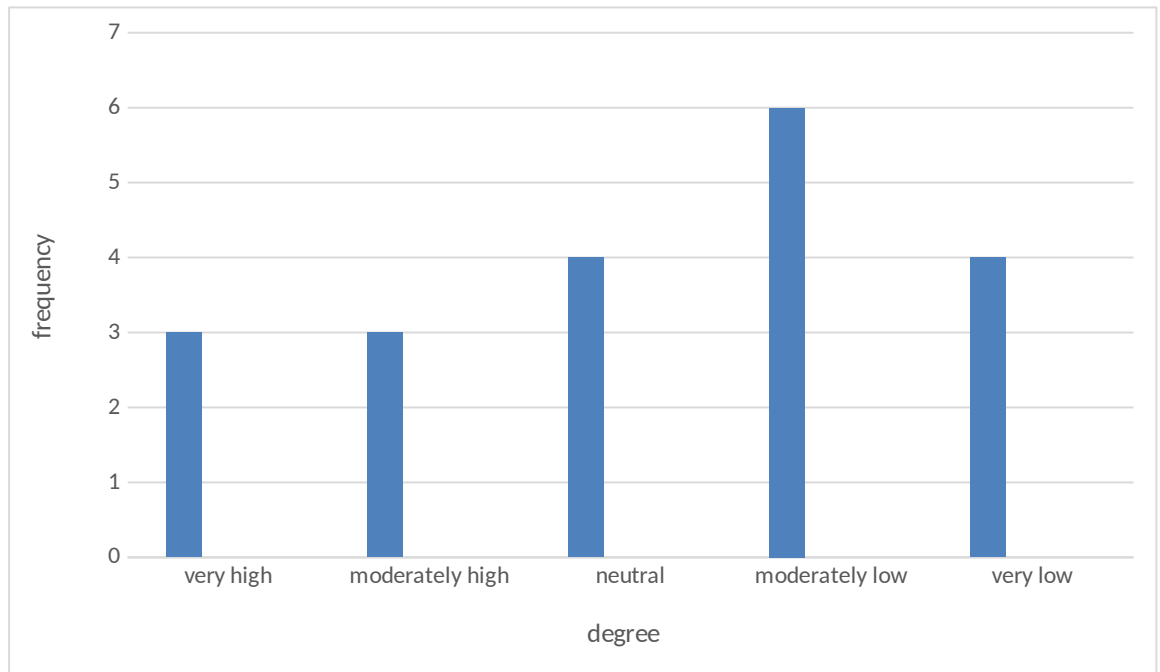


Figure 8 shows the level at which attributes like solidarity, equality, and the ability to negotiate were encouraged in respondents' country of origin (n=20)

4.6 The level at which training and development of new skills were encouraged was

The respondents were asked about the level at which training and development of new skills were encouraged among workers. This question could reveal the system that companies in their various cultures employed in developing the workers and innovation or improvement of the system. 9 of the respondents were on the higher side, 5 of the correspondents were neutral and 6 of the respondents were on the lower side indicating that a larger amount of these respondents belonged to cultures where workers were encouraged to develop new skills to remain ahead in the labor market enhancing their employability and ensuring they are able to compete with the competition continually. The breakdown of this finding is presented in Figure 9 and supported by the frequency table in the appendix. The graph below shows the distribution of the individuals to each of the various degrees possible in the question.

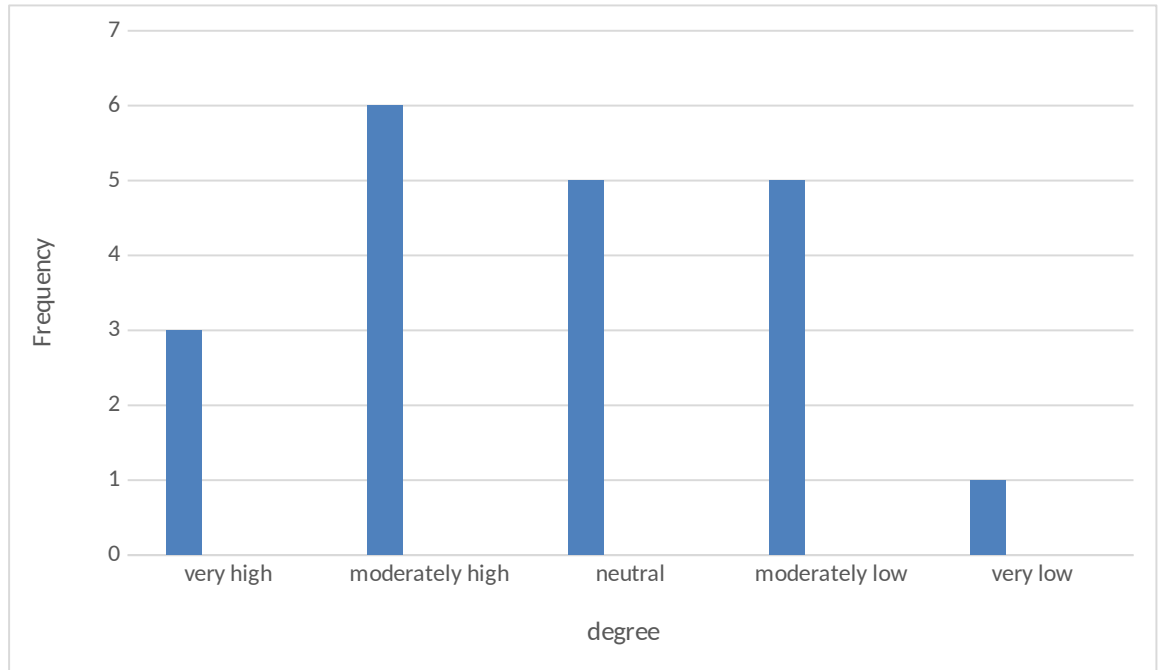


Figure 9 level at which training and development of new skills were encouraged in respondent's countries (n=20)

4.7 The level at which workers were encouraged to attempt new methods were

The respondents were asked about the level at which workers were encouraged to attempt new methods, a question that could reveal the degree of freedom workers had handling tasks, and the level at which the workers were allowed to deviate from the company's usual system of executing various tasks. 4 of the respondents were on the higher side, 7 of the correspondents were neutral, and 9 of the respondents were on the lower side, indicating that a larger amount of these respondents belonged to cultures where workers were tradition was highly valued. Workers were always expected to follow the company's laid down process or procedure reducing the level at which these workers had towards making new discoveries and so on. The breakdown of this finding is presented in Figure 10 and supported by the frequency table in the

appendix. The graph below shows the distribution of the individuals to each of the various degrees possible in the question.

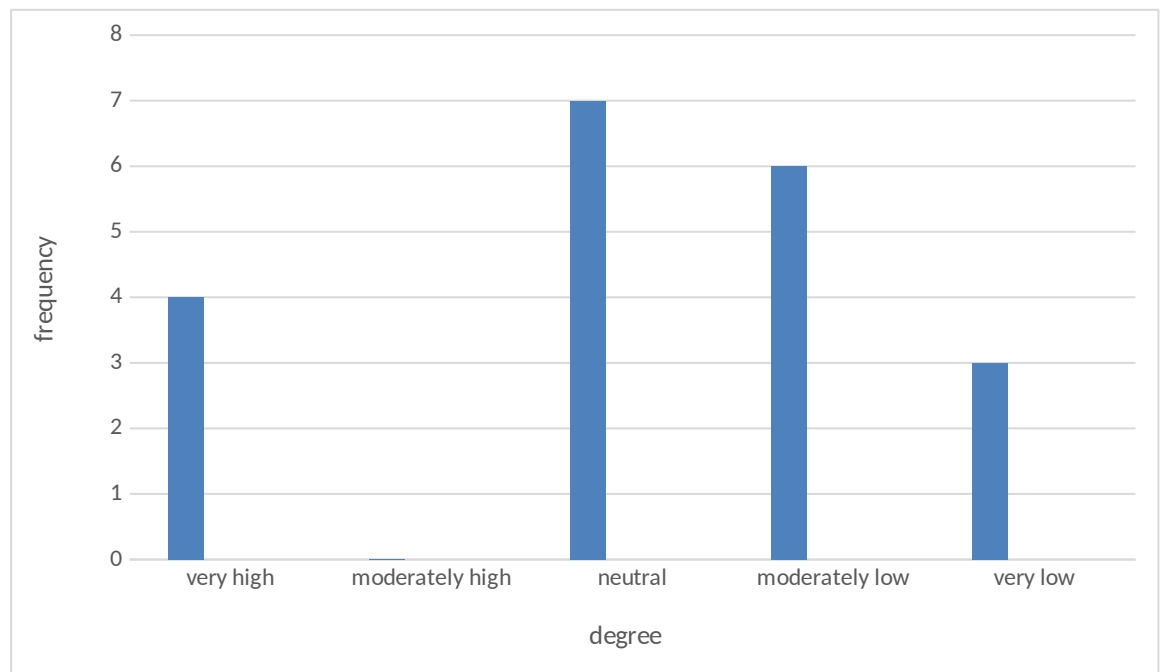


Figure 10 Level at which respondents were encouraged to attempt new methods were (n=20)

4.8 The level at which each worker was encouraged to take risks was

The respondents were asked about the level at which each worker was encouraged to take risks, a question that could also reveal the degree of freedom workers had in handling tasks and the level at which the workers were allowed to deviate from the company's usual system of executing tasks. 9 of the respondents were on the higher side, 2 of the correspondents were neutral, and 9 of the respondents were on the lower side, indicating an equal distribution on this measurement, meaning it could go both ways. Some individuals belong to cultures where workers were expected to take risks, and others belong to cultures where workers were not allowed to deviate or go outside the company's system. The breakdown of this finding is presented in Figure 11 and supported by the frequency table in the appendix. The graph below shows the distribution of the individuals to each of the various degrees possible in the question.

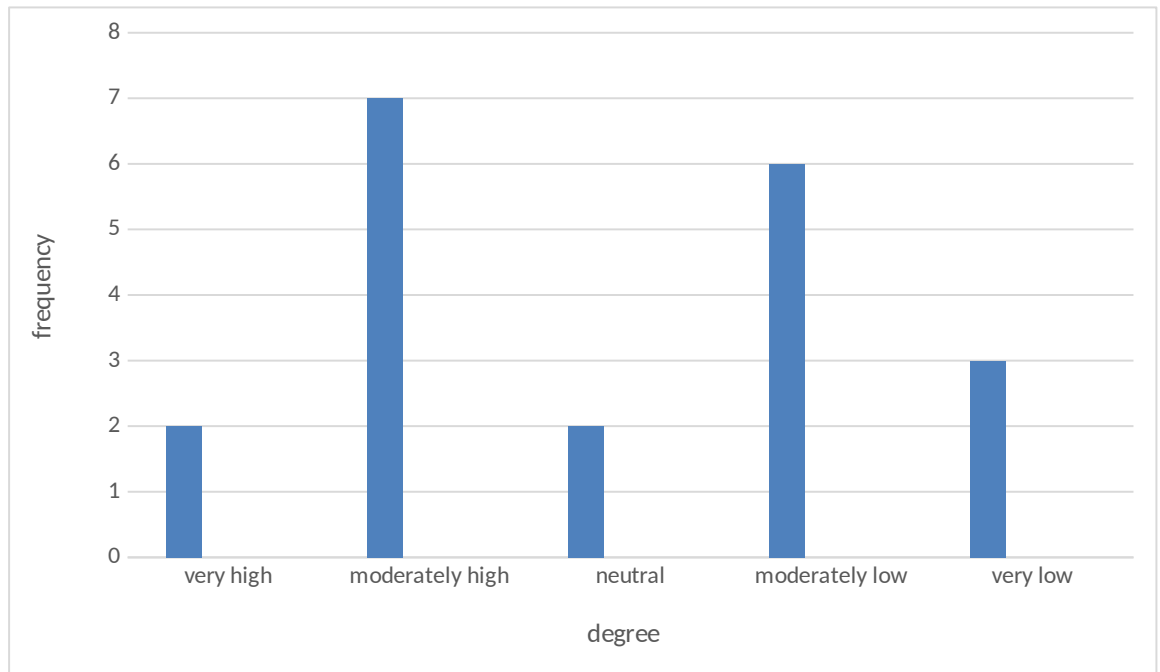


Figure 11 level at which respondents were encouraged to take risks was (n=20)

4.9 The level at which workers are rewarded for work was

The respondents were asked about the level at which workers were rewarded for work. This question could provide insights into how the company treated its employees and whether the company provided extra benefits and incentives to improve its members' productivity or incite the drive to accomplish the tasks. It could also provide insights into how the company addressed individual contribution or whether the system employed was one where the company only rewarded team effort. 10 of the respondents were on the higher side, 5 of the correspondents were neutral, and 5 of the respondents were on the lower side, indicating that the individuals or correspondents belong to cultures where individual work was appreciated to a certain extent and that companies in these locations provided benefits for individual input. The breakdown of this finding is presented in Figure 12 and supported by the frequency table in the appendix. The graph below shows the distribution of the individuals to each of the various degrees possible in the question.

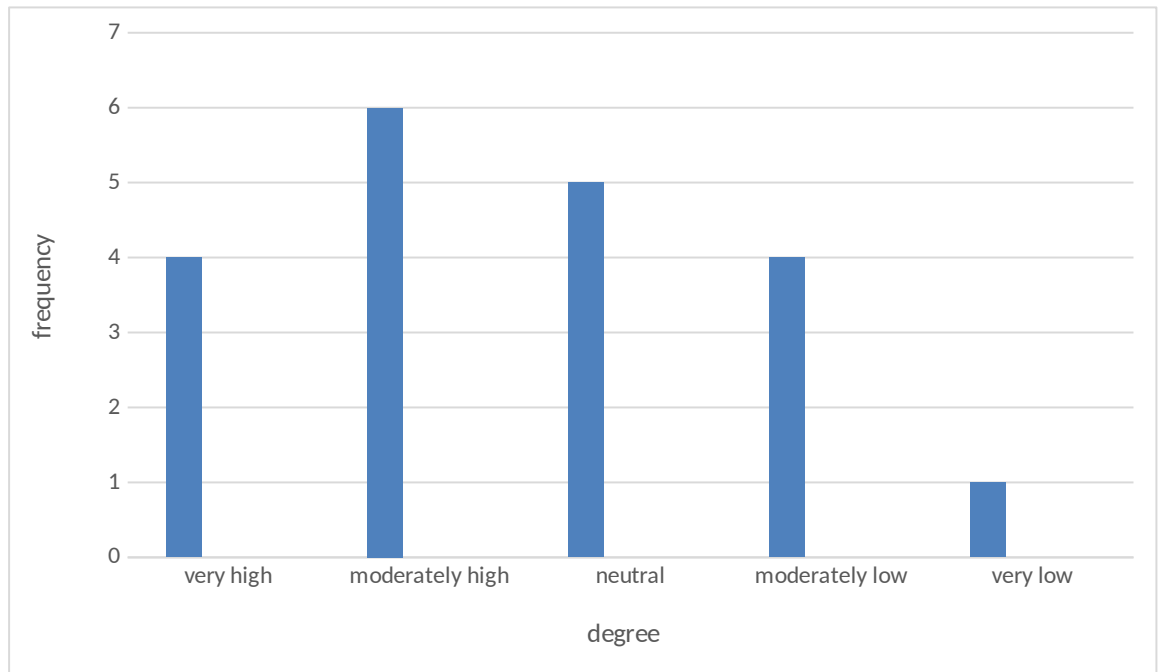


Figure 10 Level at which respondents were rewarded for work was (n=20)

4.10 The level at which socialization was encouraged among workers was

The respondents were asked about the level at which socialization was encouraged among workers, a question that could reveal how much the company encouraged its workers to actively communicate with one another, affecting areas such as teamwork. 10 of the respondents were on the higher side, 5 of the correspondents were neutral, and 5 of the respondents were on the lower side, indicating that these individuals belonged to countries where it was common for the companies through various means to try and ensure that their workers were able to aside their differences and work towards the company's goals. The breakdown of this finding is presented in Figure 13 and supported by the frequency table in the appendix. The graph below shows the distribution of the individuals to each of the various degrees possible in the question.

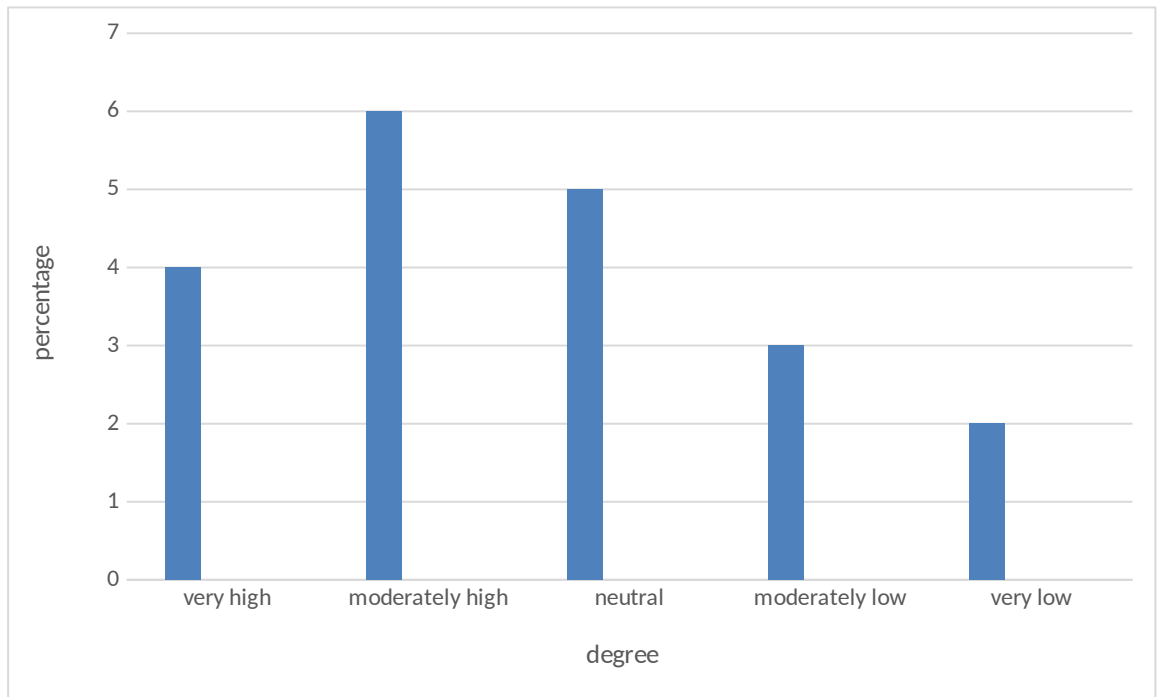


Figure 11 Level at which socialization was encouraged in each respondent's country of origin (n=20)

4.11 The level at which workers were geared towards focusing on long-term goals was

The respondents were asked about the level at which workers were geared towards focusing on long-term goals. This question could reveal how much the companies in these various locations prioritized looking toward the longer future and planning toward it as compared to planning and only being concerned about the immediate future. 9 of the respondents were on the higher side, 3 of the correspondents were neutral, and 8 of the respondents were on the lower side, indicating that these individuals belonged to cultures where the focus was more on the long-term goals and that the companies in these cultures implemented policies, systems and various other methods to ensure that the future or any possible events that could occur long term are prepared for. The breakdown of this finding is presented in Figure 14 and supported by the frequency table in the appendix. The graph below shows the distribution of the individuals to each of the various degrees possible in the question.

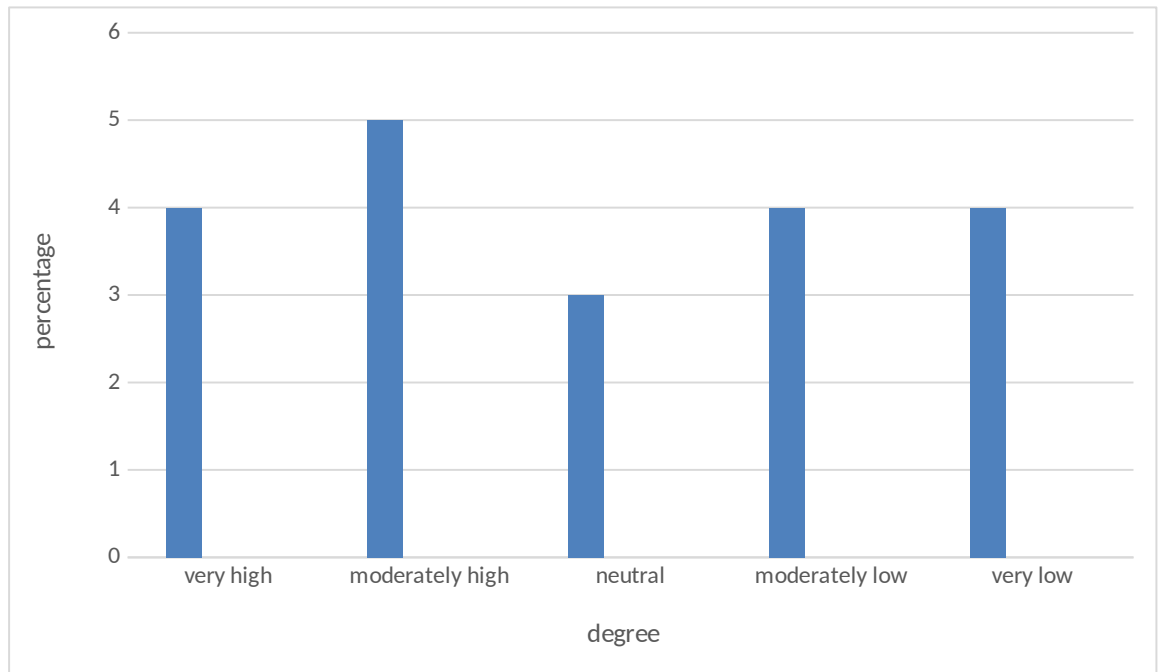


Figure 12 Level at which respondents were geared towards focusing on long-term goals in their countries of origin (n=20)

4.12 The level at which workers, regardless of level, were involved in decision-making was

The respondents were asked about the level at which workers, regardless of level, were involved in decision-making, a question that could reveal how much the companies in these various locations considered the input of the various workers and how much input workers, regardless of their level, participated to the direction of the company at large. It also reveals the leadership style the company employs. 8 of the respondents were on the higher side, none of the correspondents were neutral, and 12 of the respondents were on the lower side, indicating that these individuals belonged to cultures where only those at the top or superiors had any say in the affairs or the running of the company and that lower tiered individuals were expected to follow instruction assigned to them by their superiors simply. The breakdown of this finding is presented in Figure 15 and supported by the frequency table in the appendix. The graph below shows the distribution of the individuals to each of the various degrees possible in the question.

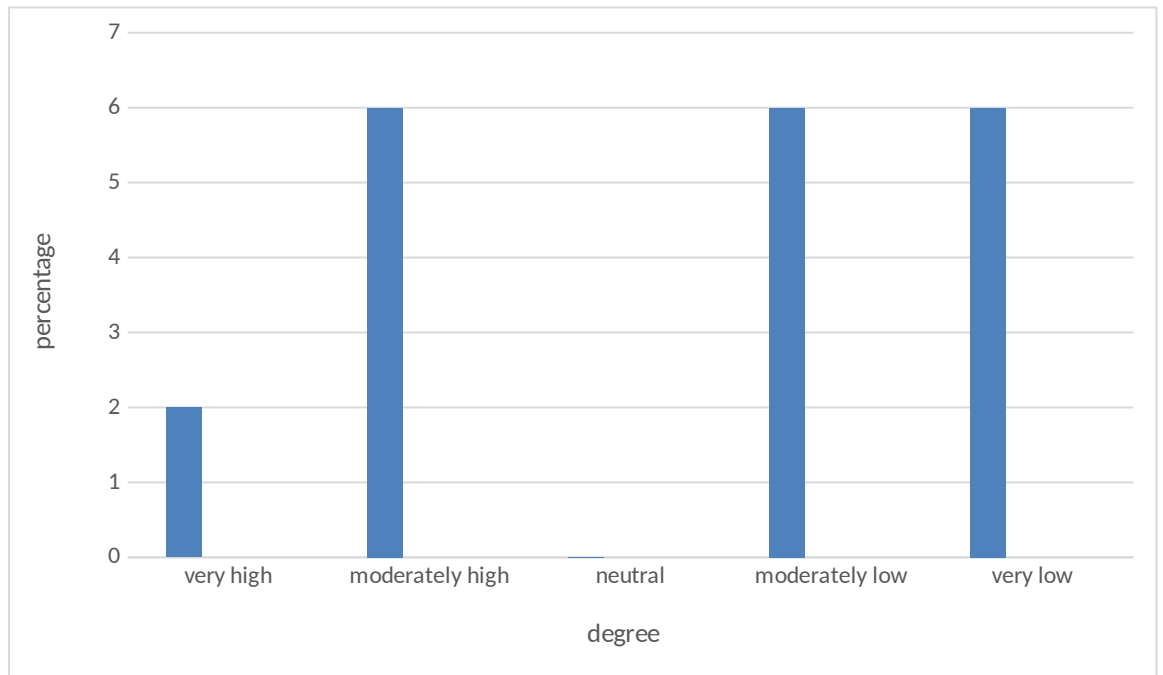


Figure 13 Level at which respondents, regardless of level, were involved in decision-making was (n=20)

5 Discussion of Results

The study, through various questions of the questionnaire, attempted to inquire how the individuals of various countries perceived employability in their home country in relation to their experience in Finland. The various questions tackled various employability skills such as leadership, teamwork, communication, problem-solving, adaptability, and various other skills and how when compared to Finland, these individuals with their various skills from various countries would fit into the Finnish system.

The disparity in the employability skills that both countries considered paramount in gaining employment and maintaining employment could be deciphered from the number of individuals that leaned towards each side of the scale, be it low or high for the various questions as shown in the various statistical tools in the results and the frequency table in the appendix.

Some of the questions attempted to decipher the style of leadership employed in these countries when compared to Finland, and a case where leadership is assertive and strong, and the subordinates are only consulted after decisions are embarked on is practiced is more prevalent in these other cultures. This also reflects other areas like communications, where various questions revealed that the level of communication is lower in these countries.

In the same manner, the subject of teamwork is also examined where from the results of the survey, a larger amount of these countries prefer to delegate tasks to teams ensuring that individual tasks are very few and that groups of people handle every task of the company. This same approach was employed towards handling rewards and various other incentives where these cultures rewarded individual effort and ability.

The survey also inquired on the value system of the cultures compared to Finland, where these cultures revealed a rather opposite value system to Finland where the appreciated attributes included competition, stern customer relations, decision making, communication, and even teamwork are areas that can be affected in these cultures where the value system in place was more masculine than feminine.

The level of autonomy of workers was also inquired about, and it was revealed that individuals in these cultures could be autonomous or not, depending on the situation. They could be allowed to certain levels, make decisions on how to handle the various tasks of the companies,

or they could be forced to follow the company's methods and ways, allowing for no room for deviation from the norm.

6 Conclusion

Employability, which is the capacity of any individual to obtain and secure employment in any field, can be affected by a wide range of factors. On an international level, some of the factors may include culture and cultural differences, where culture is the way of life of a particular person, and cultural differences are the differences between two different cultures.

Cultural differences play a huge role in an individual's employability as different cultures have different criteria by which they judge the employability of individuals.

In this study, the relationship between cultural differences and employability between Nigeria, Nepal, and the Philippines has been analyzed to decipher the effect, if any, of the differences between the work culture of Finland and the other work cultures on the employability skills required to obtain and secure employment in the Kajaani.

Numerous research has been carried out into how culture and various other factors can affect the employability of international students and how the differences in culture change how these employability skills are approached from country to country. Cultural constraints on employability occur when an individual from a different culture is not able to adjust to the new culture, which results in the inability to obtain or maintain employment (Hossain *et al.*, 2021).

Employability skills like communication, leadership, decision-making ability, etc. They can all vary in level from country to country and culture to culture. Communication with superiors and other team members, the type of leadership employed at the company, the involvement of individuals in the decision-making of the organization, adaptability, and various other areas are some of the ways in which cultural differences can interfere with the ability of these international business students from getting and maintaining employment (Shumilova, 2012).

Data were collected from 20 individuals, 8 of which were Nigerians, 6 of which were Nepalis, and the other 6 Philippines, through the use of a questionnaire, and the data was then analyzed using graphs to represent and interpret the data visually.

The commissioning body Kajaani University of Applied Sciences stands to benefit from this research as this research highlights the areas by which cultural differences can affect employability skills and the body; an educational body can seek to remedy these by including in

its curriculum ways to overcome this hurdle before the students graduate and enter the employment market. Some of the ways that could be employed include.

1. Work programs for students during the educational period allow them to work in a workplace of their intended career path, allowing them to acclimate themselves with the work culture of the region.
2. Supplementary classes seeking to develop the employability skills of the students in the local culture can be developed. For example, in the event that teamwork is a necessary employability skill, supplementary classes where students have to work with other students from various cultures can be arranged, allowing the students to sharpen their teamwork skills.
3. Creating a culture of inclusion and diversity for the students by organizing events, activities, and various programs where students from various cultures can come together to share their experiences and support one another.
4. Collaborating with employers in various industries to create a network where students from various cultures can find jobs suited to their skills, allowing them to secure and obtain employment in businesses of their choice.
5. Cultural sensitivity training is where students, staff, and members of the educational system are taught about other cultures and perspectives, erasing biases and cultural stereotypes, thereby promoting inclusiveness and cultural unification.
6. Organize multicultural seminars with businesses of various cultures where numerous businesses discuss various aspects of their organizational culture where students can compare and contrast these various cultures giving them a better understanding of cultural differences.
7. Promoting cultural centers of various cultures where students of a particular culture can come together to discuss and share experiences with other students.
8. Providing an avenue for alumni of various cultures to come and share their experiences with the students and how they were able to cope with the various cultural barriers.

Organizations can also benefit in the same manner from this research as it allows them an insight into the employability skills of various countries and how these skills can be measured, allowing them to take necessary steps to ensure that workers and talents from various cultures be employed for the benefit of the company.

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Appendix

The creation of the questions that would be employed in this thesis required using a scale that could measure or assess employability and cultural differences from an individual perspective. It was necessary to view these two factors on separate scales and find common ground between them that would allow the creation of a scale capable of measuring the relationship between them.

An analysis of various employability scales reveals that these scales measure, with questions, different attributes of individual employability from the aspect of the individuals themselves. Attributes like teamwork, sociability, self-development, willingness to work, feedback, and encouragement are analyzed by examining the individuals' potential for career growth, skill upgrade and how they felt they could be aided in the aspect, the potential or zeal for work to be done, the nature or extent of the relationship between the individuals and their superiors, whether positive/ negative or beneficial/detrimental to work, and employee attitude towards work. Questions were created to probe these various areas (Llinares-Insa ET AL., 2018; Misra & Mishra, 2011).

On cultural differences, Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions serves as a scale for measuring the differences between the national cultures of various countries. Its six dimensions, Power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, indulgence, and long-term orientation vs. short-term orientation, each measure certain areas of a society's culture. An explanation of these dimensions reveals how they affect various areas of an organization, such as teamwork, management, attitude to work, decision-making, training, skill development, company focus, and communication (Gerlach & Eriksson, 2021; Beugelsdijk & Welzel, 2018).

These two scales analyze terms such as teamwork, decision-making, skill development, communication, and various other attributes the questionnaire attempted to discover.

Questionnaire to be adopted for the study.

1. Country of origin
2. Prior working experience in country of origin

3. Have you worked anywhere in Finland?

4. Compared to Finland, in my country of origin

	Very high	Moderately high	Neutral	Moderately low	Very low
The level at which I could approach my superiors					
The level at which I could be approached as a superior					
The level at which we were compelled to work in teams					
The level at which attributes like solidarity, equality, and the ability to negotiate were encouraged					
The level at which training and development of new skills were encouraged					
The level at which worker was encouraged to attempt new methods					
The level at which each worker was encouraged to take risks					
The level at which workers are rewarded for work					
The level at which					

socialization was encouraged among workers					
The level at which workers were geared towards focusing on long-term goals					
The level at which workers, regardless of level, were involved in decision making					

APPENDIX 2: Frequency tables

Table 1 Correspondents and the countries of origin

Country	Frequency	Percentage %	Cumulative frequency	Relative cumulative frequency %
Nigeria	8	40	8	40
Philippine	6	30	14	70
Nepal	6	30	20	100
Total	20	100	-	-

Table 2 The level at which I could approach my superiors was

Response	frequency	Percentage %	Cumulative frequency	Relative cumulative frequency %
Very high	1	5	1	5
Moderately high	6	30	7	35
Neutral	1	5	8	40

Moderately low	6	30	14	70
Very low	6	30	20	100
Total	20	100	-	-

Table 3 The level at which I could be approached as a superior

Response	frequency	Percentage %	Cumulative frequency	Relative cumulative frequency %
Very high	5	25	5	25
Moderately high	3	15	8	40
Neutral	0	0	0	0
Moderately low	7	35	15	75
Very low	5	25	20	100
Total	20	100	-	-

Table 4 The level at which you were compelled to work in teams

Response	frequency	Percentage %	Cumulative frequency	Relative cumulative frequency %

Very high	4	20	4	20
Moderately high	9	45	13	65
Neutral	1	5	14	70
Moderately low	4	20	18	90
Very low	2	10	20	100
Total	20	100	-	-

Table 5 The level at which attributes like solidarity, equality, and the ability to negotiate were encouraged was

Response	frequency	Percentage %	Cumulative frequency	Relative cumulative frequency %
Very high	3	15	3	15
Moderately high	3	15	6	30
Neutral	4	20	10	50
Moderately low	6	30	16	80
Very low	4	20	20	100
Total	20	100	-	-

Table 6 The level at which training and development of new skills were encouraged was

Response	frequency	Percentage %	Cumulative frequency	Relative cumulative frequency %
Very high	3	15	3	15
Moderately high	6	30	9	45
Neutral	5	25	14	70
Moderately low	5	25	19	95
Very low	1	5	20	100
Total	20	100	-	-

Table 7 The level at which workers were encouraged to attempt new methods were

Response	frequency	Percentage %	Cumulative frequency	Relative cumulative frequency %
Very high	4	20	4	20
Moderately	0	0	0	0

high				
Neutral	7	35	11	55
Moderately low	6	30	17	85
Very low	3	15	20	100
Total	20	100	-	-

Table 8 The level at which each worker was encouraged to take risks was

Response	frequency	Percentage %	Cumulative frequency	Relative cumulative frequency %
Very high	2	10	2	10
Moderately high	7	35	9	45
Neutral	2	10	11	55
Moderately low	6	30	17	85
Very low	3	15	20	100
Total	20	100	-	-

Table 9 The level at which workers are rewarded for work was

Response	frequency	Percentage %	Cumulative frequency	Relative cumulative frequency %
Very high	4	20	4	20
Moderately high	6	30	10	50
Neutral	5	25	15	75
Moderately low	4	20	19	95
Very low	1	5	20	100
Total	20	100	-	-

Table 10 The level at which socialization was encouraged among workers was

Response	frequency	Percentage %	Cumulative frequency	Relative cumulative frequency %
Very high	4	20	4	20
Moderately high	6	30	10	50
Neutral	5	35	15	85

Moderately low	3	15	18	90
Very low	2	10	20	100
Total	20	100	-	-

Table 11 The level at which workers were geared towards focusing on long-term goals was

Response	frequency	Percentage %	Cumulative frequency	Relative cumulative frequency %
Very high	4	20	4	20
Moderately high	5	25	9	45
Neutral	3	15	12	60
Moderately low	4	20	16	80
Very low	4	20	20	100
Total	20	100	-	-

Table 12 The level at which workers, regardless of level, were involved in decision-making was

Response	frequency	Percentage %	Cumulative frequency	Relative cumulative frequency %
Very high	2	10	2	10
Moderately	6	30	8	40

high				
Neutral	0	0	0	0
Moderately low	6	30	14	70
Very low	6	30	20	100
Total	20	100	-	-