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HOW INTERNATIONAL GRADUATES INTEGRATED INTO FINNISH PROFESSIONAL LIFE


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Currently, with regards to Finnish Higher Educational Institutions, the number of International students is at least 20,000. Unfortunately, the international student retention rate falls below the average rate evidenced in OECD countries. After graduation, a majority of these students move back to their home countries mainly due to the poor integration into the Finnish professional life. Due to this, this study aims at making an analysis of the problem based on a solution-oriented perspective thereby offering recommendations on the issue for respective stakeholders.

To achieve its objectives, this thesis is founded on a number of surveys whose results were used as a basis for conducting interviews among International graduates residing and working in Finland. In order to effectively gather information linked to the study, a number of research questions were employed so as to garner specific results that would assist in the understanding of the problem. The primary methodology used is interviewing international graduates who integrated in Finland after graduation. During the interview, questions were posed to the interviewee. Some of the questions asked includes; how did you find a job in Finland? What were the challenges of finding a job in Finland? How well are you integrated in Finland professional life? Do you have international graduates who are your friends here in Finland? Did you have Visa problems? among others. These questions are expounded in the methodology chapter later in the project. Findings to the main questions involved; I got a job through applying and passing the interview (these are words from an interviewed international graduate who is from China) She suggested that challenges involved in obtained jobs in Finland are associated with networking whereby networking in Finland is relatively low compared to China. The findings to the interview questions will be expounded in methodology chapter of the thesis. The recommendation provided in the conclusion indicates that Finland is a convenient study destination that offers good opportunities for international students to continue their stay in the nation after graduating.

KEYWORDS:

Integration, professional life, international graduates

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS

Write a list of symbols or abbreviations here in alphabetical order. Use the Abbreviations or symbols text style when you write the list.

If you do not use a list of abbreviations or symbols, remove this page. Remove only the text on the page, not the section break below the text! You are able to see the section break by pressing the button  from *Home* tab.

Abbreviation	Explanation of abbreviation (Source)
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

1 INTRODUCTION

With the increasing needs of internationalization, there are more and more students who choose to study abroad. Finland as one of the worldwide high-quality education countries has become a common option for international students. According to Project Atlas, 30,827 international students have been enrolled in Finnish education system in 2015. They are mainly coming from Russia (11.3%), Germany (8.0%) and China (7.5%). Compare to 2013, Germany has raised from 3.3% to 8.0%, and China has dropped from 10.8% to 7.5% (project atlas, 2015). After graduating from universities, employment statement is a significant issue/challenge that most international graduates need to go through. More than 20,000 international graduates choose to stay in Finland and several of them are working in good position. Depending on their major, there are slight differences of employment rate. This thesis focuses on the factors that have helped international graduates to integrate to the Finnish working life. Are international graduates fully integrated into Finnish society? Do they fulfil their expectation while working in Finland? According to Malik (2016, P), the reason some of the international graduates moving out of Finland is the lack of integration in Finnish working environment. The students are not able to integrate into Finnish working life, so they choose to move out. Personally, the author is an international student that currently study in Finland. And the author has been working on a project called kilkas. This project aims to support the integration of international graduates to the Finnish working life after graduating either in Finland or in foreign country and migrate to Finland in search of jobs. Through this thesis, the author hopes to understand what factors contributed to a successful integration of International graduates in professional life in Finland.

Aside from that, OECD countries have, over the years, been facing the challenge of ageing population as well as skills shortage (Anderson and Hussey, 2017). Therefore, as an OECD nation, Finland ought to work on growth and development to accelerate the rate of transition and create employment for international graduates. In addition to that, international graduate's mobility goes a long way in enhancing scientific and cultural links between nations. When graduates from abroad integrate with graduates from Finland, there is sharing of skills and experiences in working sectors. This leads to better performances and maximizing profits in most firms leading to growth and development.

This can accelerate the transitional leads and creating employment for more workers through expansion of business sectors and investing in more branches.

Moreover, the employment statistics in Finland indicate that over 37,000 job seekers registered as unemployed have a foreign background (Pareliusson et al., 2016). The reason for these statistics is that, in most cases employers impose strict language requirements thereby erecting a barrier for a majority of the foreign workers in securing employment. Apart from language, culture also plays a significant role during the hiring process since an assumption can be made that most managers hire workers from the same cultural backgrounds as a means of avoiding risks. As a result of these attitudes, international graduates are marked by the difficulty of finding jobs, particularly in Finland. Through this thesis, the extent of integration of international graduates will be defined and based on their decision the influence of their life style will also be claimed. So, this thesis will be fully accessed through culture, environment, motivation and personal values. Therefore, to further develop the proposal of this thesis, the connection between international graduates and the local society in Finland will be discussed. However, there are still some issues left. Because it is not easy to gather information from every international graduate, so the data collected by previous research might be insufficient.

The purpose of this thesis is to understand the main factors that allowed international graduates to integrate to the Finnish society and working life. Beside this goal, this thesis also looks into the reasons that affected their decision to stay and work in Finland. The main challenges they faced during their integration are also discussed. This topic includes immigration, culture difference and integration in different societies in Finland. Thus, the main research questions are as followed:

- Would you say that you are well integrated to the Finnish society?
- How did international graduates integrate into Finnish society?
- What are the main challenges to find a job in a different society?
- What effects to the decision of international graduates for stay in Finland?

1.1 Problem definition

In Finland, the international graduates-retention rate falls below the 50% average rate as it relates to OECD nations (Pareliusson et al., 2016). This, however, can be assumed that it is attributable to the poor integration on professional life and job market of international graduates in Finland. Due to inadequate coordination between the employment agencies and stakeholders, foreign graduates suffer difficulties in starting a professional life. The seeming mismatch between graduate's socio-cultural demands and students' skills set indicates that getting quality education alone is not enough to guarantee graduates an employment after graduating. Rather, students must be equipped with relevant training and skills that stretch them to the limits of their potential. With this regard, there must be an exploration of different solutions that provide a framework through which foreign graduates in Finland become aspiring candidates and lead successful professional life.

The thesis is oriented towards studying how international graduates integrated into the Finnish professional life. Also, the thesis puts into consideration the graduates who have completed their degree programs and been integrated into the working life of Finland. Therefore, the thesis is aimed at exploring what helped these graduates to integrate Finnish social and working life.

1.2 Objective and Significance of the Study

Gaining a comprehension of how international graduates integrated into Finnish professional life. Employability of the international graduates in Finland is based on factors such as; competency in field of specialization, academics qualification, age, among others.

Identifying the obstacles facing the international graduates while staying in Finland after graduation. Some of these obstacles include; some companies in Finland are "scared of change. "This is where most organization's in Finland get afraid of changing the office language into English and where old members of these firms feel "scared" of the English-

speaking newcomers. This creates an obstacle as none of the companies in Finland had a strategy to employ international graduates.

Exploring possible solutions to the problem of poor integration of international graduates in the Finnish social and professional life.

1.3 Research Questions (RQ)

- What are employability factors which determine employment of international graduates in Finland?
- What are the obstacles faced by international graduates while staying in Finland after graduation?
- What are the possible solutions to the problems of poor integration of international graduates in Finnish social and professional life?

Unlike other previous studies on the subject matter, this study proves to be significant since it assumes a solution-oriented perspective. In other words, this study fills the gap marking this area by the provision of possible solutions as it relates to the effective integration of international graduates into the Finnish professional life. Gaining academic qualification is not the only rationale behind education, but rather preparing students to successfully integrate into the society. In other words, a quality education should empower students to live to their utmost potential either in social or job settings. With this regard, there is a necessity for students to be instilled with relevant training and skills to handle challenges of life either economically or socially. To this end, transitioning from academic life and searching or creating employment to start a professional life should be perceived as a framework which enables international graduates to lead successful life.

This study can be employed as a basis for deriving insight by the main decision makers and stakeholders in the Finnish education, employment and social sectors. By adopting measures aimed at elevating the international graduates' retention rate in Finland as well as establishing welcoming conditions, myriads of socio-cultural and economic benefits can be achieved. In the long run, important socio-cultural and economic links will be forged in Finland.

1.4 Research Approach and Structure of Thesis

This thesis report entails six chapters with the first chapter describing the introduction as well as the topic background. The second chapter discusses the immigration and integration of students in Finland. A theoretical framework as it relates to the Finnish social and economic factors is discussed in chapter 3. Chapter 4, on the other hand, entails an exploration of the research methodology including the quantitative techniques and qualitative interviews. Data is then presented in chapter 5 based on the questionnaires employed in data collection. Secondly, more qualitative data is gathered using further interviews. Lastly, the discussion and conclusion of research data is done in chapter 6 as well as the recommendations.

2 STUDENT IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

2.1 Student Immigration

Based on the European Migration Network, an immigrant is any individual that develops a usual residence in a Member State territory for at least a year (Zimmermann, 2005). Since World War II, the European nations having strong welfare systems have been marked by the influx of immigrant from diverse regions across the globe. Generally speaking, immigration has been a bone of contention in public discourse, particularly in Finland, due to the divisive nature of this issue based on the mixed reactions it arouses among the Finnish people. (Givens and Luedtke, 2005, p.20). On the other hand, the internationalization of employment resulting from globalization has created a window of opportunity for skilled workers and as a result, increased the guarantee for high living standards for graduates that intend to stay in host countries (Nilsson, P.A. and Ripmeester, 2016). Immigration has thus played a role in benefiting international graduates to settle in Finland and acquire jobs or start their own businesses.

The economic opportunities in any host country have been the major reason as to why international graduates opt to start a professional life after graduation (Malik, 2016). For instance, in Finland, the retirement rate far exceeds the labour market entrants and as a result, immigration and retention of international graduates are considered as the most viable solutions to the predicament (Cai and Kivistö, 2013, p.60). The Finnish migration policy, during the early 2000s, was enacted with special emphasis being placed on attracting work-based international graduates to start their professional life in Finland as a means of the socio-economic demands (Adebayo et al., 2017). However, the immigrants have been differentiated into two categories; that is, the group of skilled immigrants and the category of migrants and refugees in pursuit of humanitarian protection.

The poor integration of immigrants has brought about various concerns including burdening the welfare systems of host countries. Additionally, various costs are applicable as it relates to the immigrant's health care. Moreover, the recent refugees'

influx into European borders resulted in intense debate with regards to the issue of integration and migration. Hence, although immigration is often associated with individuals seeking better professional lives, the issue of immigration still stands out as being a worldwide phenomenon. The statistics of immigrants fleeing persecution and conflict in pursuit of security are also increasing. This has results to increase in the number of immigrants who are international graduates in Finland (project atlas, 2015).

According to recent reports, the general sentiment in Finland with regards to immigration is that as long as immigrants strive to integrate into the Finnish society through working towards making positive contributions to the society and learning the language they are welcome (Brylka, Mähönen and Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2015, p.675). The steady increase of international graduates seeking better professional life is proved by the increasing statistic of international graduates having applied for residence permit. Today, over 25% of all immigration is due to studies and thus, student immigrants take a substantial proportion with respect to the immigrant population (Yle, 2016). This, in turn, has brought about an evolution in the issuing of residence permits as well as the extension procedure of resident permits. Currently, Finland offers a year-long residence permit for international graduates to seek employment in their respective fields.

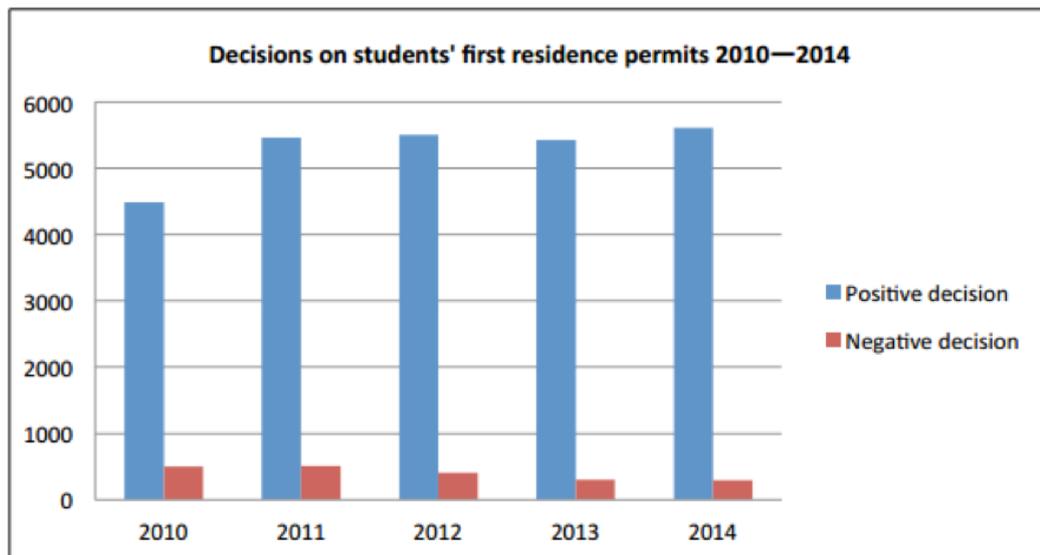


Figure 1. Decisions on students' final residence permits 2010–2014 (The Finnish Immigration Service)

2.2 The Concept of Integration

According to Favell (2016), integration refers to the mutual accommodation process between the host state's residents and immigrants. Therefore, integration is termed as being successful if the immigrants amply adapt to the host country's society by obtaining new skills, information and active participation in communal development (Favell, 2016). As such, the fundamentals in overall integration include economic and social integration. Integration, in this study, is perceived as the inclusion of international graduates in the Finnish social and working life. In addition to that, integration also entails the aspect of personal development and growth. Hence, integration, in simple words, is the progressive process of learning and adaptation to the social or work life after graduation (Favell, 2016).

Based on the International Students Barometer, Finland stands out as the ideal study destination leading in many aspects with regards to the international graduates' well-being (Nilsson and Ripmeester, 2016). The barometer survey was conducted in over 200 institutions in different European countries. Of the entire population of international graduates studying in Finland, 95% of them were of the assertion that Finland is a safe and sound destination for students not only for studying but also living (Giacomo, 2015). To add more to that, the vast majority of respondents asserted that they would recommend fellow students to seek their international studies in Finland. Furthermore, the Finnish society has, in recent past, been associated with a cutting-edge status due to its support of international graduates with the positive rating going a long way in attracting more international graduates to starting a profession life in the country (Nilsson and Ripmeester, 2016). International graduates across the globe are assumed to value international professional life. Due to this, the Finnish student society, being a multicultural entity, places more emphasis on the graduates' wellbeing as it relates to support via the free international graduate's health care, good sports facilities, student advisories and international offices. However, to date, a seamless integration is yet to be achieved. A new item with respect to the barometer survey explored the ecological factors marking campus life. The high scores achieved in this field serve as proof that Finland's initiative of coupling levels of society with environmental awareness has not been futile but, in turn, has received much appreciation and acceptance by international graduates who integrate in Finland for social and professional life (Arthur, N. and

Popadiuk, 2014). More importantly, the international graduates' explicit preference for the inclusion of ecological factors into the barometer survey is an indication of the fact that awareness is not a temporary phenomenon in this field. These preliminary findings underline that international graduates place value on the high living standards in Finland.

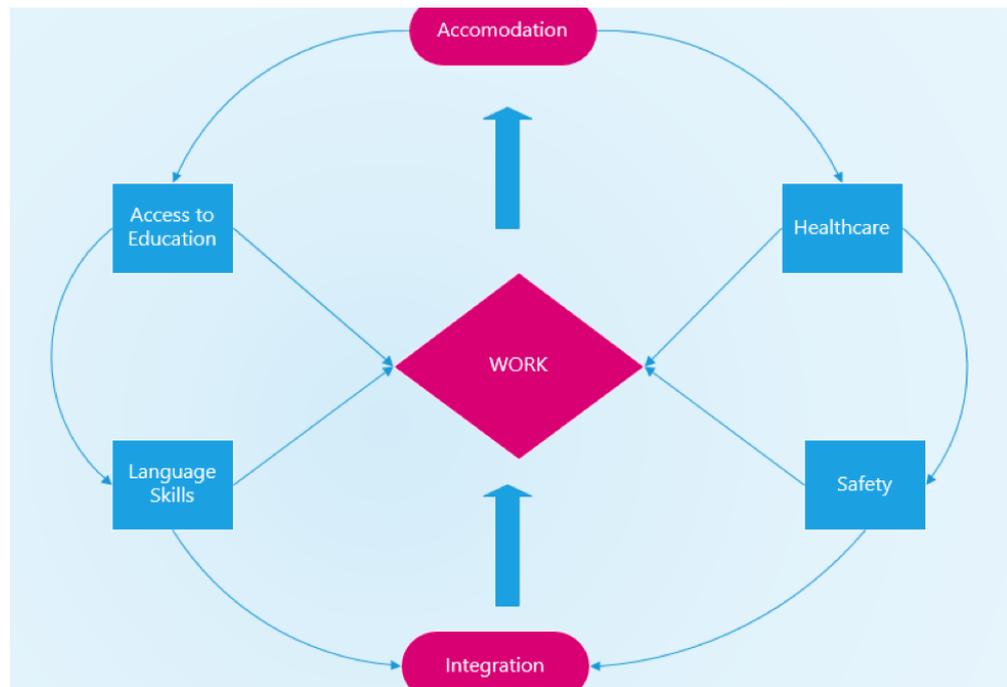


Fig 2: important facts of integration of immigrants: immigrant barometer (Malik, 2016)

2.3 Culture and Culture Shock

Over time, there has been a contention that seeking higher education overseas result in cultural transformations. However, scholars maintain the argument that studying abroad is only aimed at gaining experience away from home as opposed to the adoption of the host country's culture at the expense of abandoning one's cultural heritage (Ibrahim, 2017). As evidenced in Finland, language plays an elementary role in this process. But alongside the need to study amidst students speaking a foreign language, international graduates are, in most cases, challenged by the deeply ingrained religious and cultural

taboos concerning the Finnish social behaviours, lifestyles, sexual morals, social rules and gender relations (Noemi, Toom and Kallioniemi, 2016). In this situation, the probability for conflict and disruption is relatively high. The confrontation of a new culture may come with it an enlightening and positive experience, which, in turn, promotes self-awareness and cultural appreciation for international graduates. However, this confrontation also carries the potential of triggering 'culture shock.' That is to say, graduates may suffer challenges associated with their deeply held cultural understandings and beliefs, which, in turn, threatens their identity and well-being.

In most cases, culture shock comes as the initial step in the understandings and beliefs development process, which may strengthen the graduates' commitment to their respective long-held cultural heritage (Goldstein and Keller, 2015). Consequently, it may in still in respective graduates a perception that pushes them towards a harmonious cultural assimilation through crisis and adjustment stages. On the other hand, culture shock may result in a visceral response where international graduates develop the sense of self-protection from psychic and cultural harm and consequently, triggers responses that differ from those of accommodation or assimilation.

2.4 Social Impact of International graduates in Finland

Previous researches on student interactions have been oriented towards understanding the quantity and quality of the functionality of intercultural interactions, social support networks, friendship patterns and contact between international graduates and domestic peers (Bailey, 2014). Unfortunately, their native peers remain largely uninterested with the initiation of deep contact with these international graduates. As such, better intercultural activities can only be promoted through interventionist strategies (Goldstein, 2015).

Much attention has been paid by previous academic studies on the impact of international graduates on the education process of host countries. According to Bailey, international graduates are said to bring to the classroom discussions exceptional international perspectives that prompt teachers to embrace new teaching models that match their previous study experiences (Bailey, 2014). Despite there being extensive

literature reviewing the cross-cultural differences as it relates to the graduates' behaviours, educational practices and expectations, minimal investigations have ensued regarding the imposed impact on international classrooms. However, he contends that although an international perspective may be brought, a majority of the educators fail to incorporate changes to their educational content and processes (Bailey, 2014).

With regards to institutions, increased international graduates are said to bring about internalization of educational environments. However, Due to increase in demand of these services by international graduates leads to increase in the price charged to offer them. Although rhetorical and infrequent discussions surround this issue due to the under-researched empirical evidence available, most theorists contend that international graduates raise cultural awareness, particularly in tertiary institutions (Tomalin and Stempleski, 2013). Generally, in comparison to domestic graduates, international graduates are reported to experience more problems, which, in turn, cause them to use health services in most circumstances (Anderson, 2017). However, since it is mostly international graduates in higher education that are marked by the tendency of using support services more, this does not suggest they strain support services.

Finland being a small country on the edge of Europe does not involve much in global networking. There are approximately 20,000 international graduates who arrive in Finland with large professional networks in their home country. However, due to less networking in Finland, these graduates lack chances to integrate in employment sectors with other Finns graduates. This is because, employment agencies fail to hire international graduates and thus the foreign graduates end up being employed in hospitality and cleaning industries (Andrew, 2016)

3 FINNISH SOCIAL AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Social Environment

Finns are naturally quiet and speak in moments where they feel the need to communicate or express themselves. This, however, may trigger various reactions, particularly from international graduates who may feel that they are being avoided or unwanted since entering into conversations may prove a challenge. In most cases, international graduates who attempt to make new friendships and acquaintances in the unfamiliar Finland are disheartened by the introverted nature of Finns who may seem aloof. But beyond this first impression, with time, most international graduates have found Finns to be forthcoming and polite (Malik, 2016). In addition to that, Finns are helpful people and international graduates with basic knowledge of English have swiftly integrated into the Finnish professional life.

International graduates that were integrated into the Finnish professional life have become used to the Finnish cuisine which mainly entails bread and potatoes with accompaniments of meat and fish. In addition to that, alongside loop sausage, reindeer dishes, smoked or pickled Baltic herring or silakka and liver casserole, most international graduates claim that they have a strong taste for the Karelian pies, which is a typical Finnish dish. However, a portion of the international graduates in Finland claim that they find difficulties adjusting to the Finnish cuisine as their cravings largely desire their native dishes (Bailey, 2014). But most of them significantly remain open to the new experiences and opportunities.

Apart from the Finnish dishes, the weather in this region has also seen international graduates make adjustments. During winter, in Finland, the nights are prolonged while the days are shortened and, at times, it gets extremely cold, which, in turn, forces international graduates to engage in cross-country skiing, alpine skiing, snowboarding and other winter activities. Also, during this weather, wearing warm is inevitable. Aside from this, some of the integrated international graduates in the Finnish social context have also embraced new traditions, which are essential to the Finnish culture. By

engaging in these traditions, a majority of the international graduates have found much ease with regards to settling in the country as well as living in comfort. Moreover, foreigners find these traditions as being enjoyable as well as a means of relieving the stress associated with culture shock. In conclusion, the question of how the international graduates were amply integrated into the Finnish professional life is partly answered by the fact that these graduates stay connected in Finland and have made new friends as they settle there. For example, one of the interviewed graduates in while conducting questionnaires in this project is referred to as the Chinese respondent. She responded to have made many friends in Finland and her husband works in Finland making her connected to the nation through Finns friends. These connections, however, refer to the close contact these international graduates have maintained with their friends and family back in their home country. During these connections, most international graduates share their learned lessons and interesting experiences. As a result, the respective students have been able to overcome homesickness which, in turn, goes a long way in enhancing their concentration and psychological stability.

3.2 Working Environment

As aforementioned, the pursuit of better living standards has topped the list of the motives behind the decision to start a professional life in Finland among international graduates. Based on section 78 of the Finnish Aliens Act, permit (B) authorizes alien students to work full-time during holidays or part-time during studies as long as the employment is a Degree traineeship (Ibrahim, 2015). However, in principle, it is acknowledged by the authorities that studying is the sole purpose for the international graduate stay in Finland and this cannot be replaced by employment. With this regard, graduates wishing to start a professional life by seeking full-time employment are required to make an application for residence permit prior to their full-time employment.

Hence, after attaining relevant academic qualifications in Finland, international graduates are viewed as being a potential labour, which, in turn, allows them to stay in the state and start a professional life while indulging in full-time work. Based on the amendments made in the Finnish Aliens Act and that were effected in April 2005, international Degree holder students can now obtain a year-long residence permit after graduation. However, those with interests of a prolonged stay due to the desire of a professional life can apply for the same. Apart from entering the labour market and

seeking employment, this particular amendment has seen most international graduates settle and start homes in the country (Ibrahim, 2015).

Moreover, a residence permit can as well be filed with the department of local police with regards to employment residence permit for international graduates that have been offered employment by a resident employer. The process is a simplified one as there are decision requirements by the economic development office. In addition, some international graduates, in a bid to support their professional life in Finland, venture into entrepreneurship and, in this case, the residence permit is applied for self-employed person. However, despite their potential as labourers and academic competence, limited work opportunities and insufficient language skills act as barriers to the employment of international graduates, which, to some extent, affects the quality of their professional life concerning the standard of living. As such, much emphasis has been placed by the Future of Migration Strategy on the significance of language skills in the graduates' studies so as to not only facilitate their stay but also promote employment of alien graduates in Finland. Primarily, the strategy is aimed at enhancing traineeship participation for the sake of facilitating the international graduates' integration into the Finnish social and working life.

Furthermore, the government negotiations that ensued regarding the well-being of international graduates socially and economically brought the perspective of increasing employment beyond the 69% employment rate to reach the high graduate employment levels in countries such as Norway and Sweden (see figure below). In practice, this will be achieved through the increased investment in language skills development as a means of promoting more international graduate's retention.

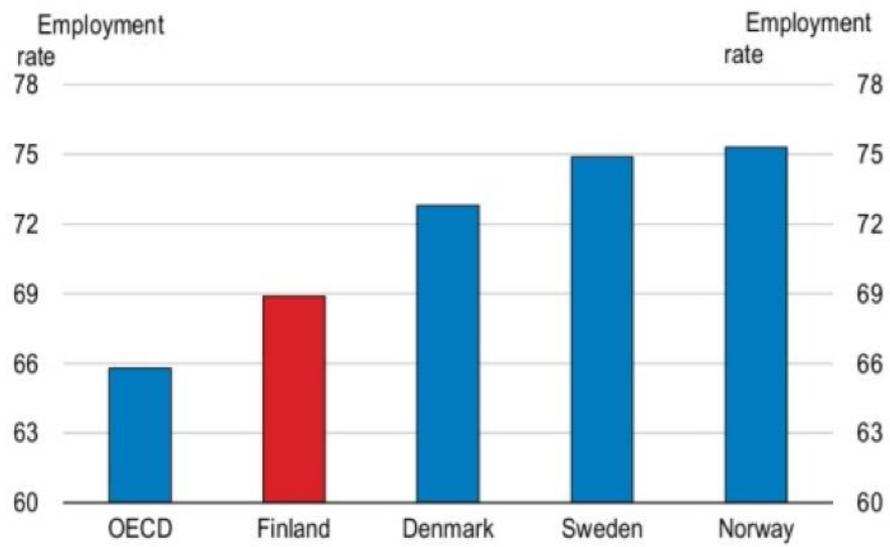


Fig 3: OECD Labour Force statistics database (made by Malik, 2016)

4 RESEARCH METHODS AND CONTEXT

Alongside the primary data, this chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research methods. In addition, the selected research path was based on this study's nature where a critical form was employed in the evaluation and discussion of the research methods.

4.1 Research Objectives

With regards to this research, the main objective includes gaining a comprehension of how international graduates integrated into Finnish professional life; secondly, identifying the obstacles facing the international graduates while staying in Finland after graduation; and thirdly, exploring possible solutions to the problem of poor integration of international graduates in the Finnish professional life. The research question is listed as follow:

- What are employability factors which determine employment of international graduates in Finland?
- What are the obstacles faced by international graduates while staying in Finland after graduation?
- What are the possible solutions to the problems of poor integration of international graduates in Finnish social and professional life?

4.2 Research Approach

In line with the research aim of exploring the manner in which international graduates were integrated into the Finnish professional life, this research assumes three basic approaches. These approaches include: inductive approach, deductive approach and a combined approach. However, of the three approaches, the thesis majorly capitalizes on the deductive approach, which, according to Kemparaj and Chavan (2013, p.70), employs the use of known common properties and known facts in the development of assertions, statements or arguments. The deductive reasoning makes use of the "top-down" notion, where theory is first prioritized before a hypothesis regarding certain matters is developed. The study follows a mixed method since both qualitative and

quantitative methods of data collection are used in the thesis report. Primary data was obtained through interviewing method.

4.3 Face-to-face interview

The choice of research method depends on the research content and form, the researcher's own quality and the research process. In the implementation of the research, there is no absolute best method. Interviewing will be the most suitable methods for this research (Saunders, et al., 2016).

Interviews are surveys in which investigators gather information by interviewing face-to-face with interviewees. Interviews can be individual interviews; you can also open a small forum. There are formal interviews and informal interviews. The informal interview refers to the conversation between the investigator and the interviewee in daily contact. And the formal interview refers to scheduled meeting with fully prepared plans. Interviews are not only the conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee, but also the emotional communication between each other (Anon., 2013).

The employment of face-to-face interviews allowed the respondents the opportunity to exchange ideas and views that would go a long way in promoting the integration of international graduates in Finland. How to interview? The most important thing is that the interviewer must make an interview outline and clarify the purpose of this interview. The specific operation should note the following two points: First one is called Self-preparation, it refers to the preparation of the interview content and the form of the interview. Before starting the interview, the interviewer should carefully design what he or she wants to know to avoid the problems that are raised during the interview and will not achieve the intended purpose. (Doody, O. and Noonan, M., 2013.) In interview form, to give the interviewee a good impression to ensure the success of the interview, the interviewer should be "three attention":

- Pay attention to the clothing. Make sure it is clean, generous, and decent;
- Attention to the language. In addition to be clear, polite, no grammar mistake, and also simple;

- Attention to the atmosphere. The environment of an interview must be dignified.

Followed by preparation of Interview conditions, it refers to contact with interviewers before having interviews. That is to implement the interview time and place with the interviewer, so that the interviewer also has a preparation. And to avoid being a "uninvited guest." (Palgrave study skills, 2007)

The author got the name and contact emails of interviewees from her supervisor, and they designed the interview question together. In order to get the expected data, the target group was only focused on international graduates who graduated from International Business degree programme in Turku University of Applied Science. The author has contact around ten of the international graduates but only five are willing to have the interview. Some of the international graduates have went back to their own country, while some of them did not reply the invitation email. Due to geography reason, some of the respondents were not in Turku. So, there were few interviews done via Skype.

There is a table of five international graduates who said yes to the interview and their responses to the interview questions listed in appendix. The author listened to them during the interview and took a record.

5 EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 General Details of Graduates

All the five respondents were graduated from International Business degree programme at the Turku University of Applied Science. The Chinese respondent has been lived in Finland for 13 years, and the Russian respondent has stayed in Finland for 18 years. And other respondents were under ten years. The Vietnamese respondent has started his own business in Finland. And the rest respondents are working in a company.

5.2 Motivation for Staying in Finland

The vast majority of respondents consider the government-based working sectors to apply for jobs or start their own business. This is because most of the job application made to the private sector from international graduates go unanswered or respond with a 'sorry no vacancy available' The Chinese respondent is one of the respondents who said that she got discouraged from applying for many jobs in Finland and her application went unanswered. She said that getting a job in Finland is a challenge to international graduates who are after integrating into the host country for professional and social life. The title question as it relates to this case was what affected to your decision to stay in Finland after graduation.

The Chinese respondent has mentioned that the support via the free international student's health care, good sports facilities, student advisories and international offices as the motivating factor behind her stay in Finland. The Kazakhstan respondent pointed out that she views harmonious cultural integration as a motivation. Again, job opportunities for graduates stood out as a motivation for most of the respondents. The Vietnamese respondent attributed experiencing new cultures and the adventure of a new country as his motivation. Social life in Finland

5.3 Social life in Finland

As a response to the question: What affected your decision to stay in Finland? The Vietnamese respondent said that he owns a business organization related to design. He said that it was hard for him to integrate into job market in Finland and he had no other choice than starting his business to earn a living. And he gets much support from other start-up companies. There is a right environment that encourages graduate to start their business. The Germany respondent mentioned that he like the international environment in Finland so that he decide to stay here. And the Chinese respondent said that she stay in Finland because of love. It is worth mentioning that, three out of five respondents have a relationship with local people. The Russian respondent claim that a relationship with locals can be a cornerstone of integration in the host country. The local companion will bring the amount of network and motivation which can be a significant support for integrating into Finnish society.

The next question related to the professional integration challenges facing international graduates; Would you say that you are well-integrated to the Finnish society? Most of the respondents indicated personal challenges associated with the social norms, daily living, cross-cultural gender relationships, unfamiliar social activities, and stress, frustration, and anxiety, feelings of worthlessness, depression, and homesickness as barriers. For example, one of the interviewees who are from Russia said that she got stressed up and was anxious to get a job in Finland after graduation, but there was a challenge for an international graduate being offered a job compared to a Finn graduates. This was due to less networking and Finnish company owners being 'scared' of integrating with foreigners which mean they would have to adjust job language, and most employers fail to hire international graduates. The Germany respondent said that he did not have any barriers to integrate into Finnish society. He said that the German culture is similar to Finnish culture and it is easy for him to integrate.

5.4 Work Life in Finland

All of the respondents are currently working. The Chinese and Russian respondent is working in a family-owned company. And the Kazakhstan and Germany respondent is working in an international company. While the Vietnamese respondent starts his own business. When the respondents answer the main challenge finding their job, the Kazakhstan respondent has mentioned that the academic credential is one of the main issues. She said that she moved to Helsinki because she could not find a job in Turku area while she does not speak Finnish. Both Kazakhstan and Vietnamese respondent have mentioned an organization called Boost Turku. They highly recommend this organization as a starting point for finding a job in Finland.

As a response to Did you have work experience before coming to Finland? If yes, what? Do you think it helped you to find a job in Finland? Most of the respondents have working experience before coming to Finland, but the Chinese and Russian respondent who are among those interviewed said their work experience helped them to be employed in Finland.

As a response to What is your main working language? Three out of five said their main working language is in English, and the rest are in Finnish. One of the respondent that from Russia said that the company needs to be highly internationalized to use English as their main working language.

6 CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a discussion of the research findings as well as highlights the significance of integrating international graduates in the Finnish professional life. In addition to that, this section provides the insight derived from the interviews conducted. Lastly, recommendations are given including those for further research as it relates to the integration of international graduates in the Finnish professional life.

6.1 Main Findings

Based on this report, the main finding as it relates to the integration of international graduates in the Finnish professional life is that the economic opportunities in Finland have been the primary motivation for starting a professional life after graduation. However, after starting a professional life, a majority of these students prefer to work than indulging in entrepreneurship. But, as revealed in the report, integration in the professional life, is a reciprocating process. On the one end, international graduates must compete with academic credentials and better language skills, while, on the other end, there need to be attitude changes and opening up by the Finnish society towards not only international graduates but also other immigrants of foreign backgrounds.

To add more to that, integration is not a simple issue as it may seemingly appear since it entails connections with the socio-economic performance of host countries, particularly Finland. The complexity therein is presented by the economy challenges Finland is facing at the moment that is attributable to the high labour costs, labour shortage and loss of competitiveness (Pareliussen, 2016). Simultaneously, the Finnish government has over the years extended tuition fee to all the international graduates. However, up to date, despite these efforts, international graduate retention levels in Finland are still significantly low. With this regard, the critical area of concentration for policymakers in Finland should be retaining more international graduates as well as devising policies of amply integrating them into the Finnish professional life.

6.2 Recommendations

Promoting cultural awareness, sensitivity and adaptability is the critical consideration in addition to the promotion of entrepreneurship to enhance the foreigners' professional life. Entrepreneurship can be promoted through off-campus activities by the increased partnership with stakeholders. To be precise, the idea being recommended, in this case, is increasing job opportunities by promoting start-up and innovation culture, especially among international graduates. This is so since where entrepreneurship and employment are promoted, social living and graduate retention is simultaneously encouraged.

Moreover, there needs to be a strengthened cooperation between universities and the business sector such that international graduates are offered a conducive environment through innovation labs and start-up campuses. These kinds of situation are said to elevate scalable solutions and business ideas. More importantly, openness and acceptance need to be practically embraced by the society towards international graduates, which is achievable through the provision of cultural competence training. Alongside business managers and employers, the artistic practice also needs to be extended to the teaching staff and native population. Presently, the integration of international graduates is an issue that has been marked by various misnomers including the belief that international graduates are a burden based on the fact that it is taxpayers that fund their education. However, the prevalence of such misconceptions can be stopped through educating the general public on the significance of international graduates in the economic sector and the social context through public discussion. Additionally, training employers on the significance of workplace diversity as well as internalizing graduates of different cultures. This is so since it is unfortunate that Finnish employers are hesitant in recruiting international graduates and promoting workplace diversity and thus, these are attitudes that must be changed.

6.3 Suggestions for Future Research

The recommendation for future research as it relates to the study of integration of international graduates into the Finnish professional life should take into account the

social support structures and the manner in which Finland can improve such structures. To achieve this, higher educational institutions, social organizations and departments and the business sector must be put into consideration by the policy makers. In addition, the enacted policies as it relates to the international graduate's integration must be reviewed accordingly in light of the recent challenges facing these students.

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Interview questions

Interview questions

Self-introduction

- name (results will stay anonymous)
- age
- nationality
- which University did you study?
- what was your major?
- when did you graduate?

Choice of living in Finland

- why did you come Finland in the 1st place?
- how long have you been living in Finland? Did you live in Finland before you started your studies in Finland? If yes for how long?
- what affected to your decision to stay in Finland?

Social Life

- Would you say that you are well integrated to the Finnish society?
 - If yes, what did you do?
 - If no, what do you think prevented you to integrate?
- What kind of social networks do you have (international and Finnish friends, hobbies...)?
 - How did you get to know your Finnish friends (University, work, kinder garden...)?
- How did you learn Finnish? How well is your Finnish?

Career in Finland

- How did you find a job in Finland?
 - Main challenges when you finding your job?
- How is it to work in Finland and with Finns?
- What your position in your company?
- What are your main working languages?
- Did you have work experience before coming to Finland? If yes, what? Do you think it helped you to find a job in Finland?
- Did you do practical training(s) in Finland during your studies? If yes do you think it helped you to find a job here?

- do you have any VISA problem? (elective)
 - if yes, how did you manage to solve this problem?

Do you have an international friend or relative who graduated from a University in Finland and who is working in Finland I could interview?

Table of five international graduate's interview

Age	46	29	35	33	27
Nationality	Chinese	Germany	Russian	Kazakhstan	Vietnamese
Which University did you study?	Turku University of Applied Science	Turku University of Applied Science	Turku University of Applied Science	Turku University of Applied Science	Turku University Applied Science
What was your major?	BBA and MBA Bachelor of international Business	Bachelor of international Business	Bachelor of international Business	Bachelor of international Business	Bachelor international Business
When did your graduate?	Masters (2015)	2014	2009	2012	2015
Why did you come to Finland in the 1st place?	Because of love	Study	Study	Study	Study
How long have you been living in Finland?	13	7	18	8	6
Did you live in Finland before you started your studies in Finland?	yes	no	yes	no	no
If yes for how long?	4	n/a	2	n/a	n/a

What affected to your decision to stay in Finland?	My husband works here in Finland and I love him so I decided to stay here	work	work	I got a job here in Finland after enrolling my masters	I started business after graduating here in Finland which made me think staying in Finland
Would you say that you are well integrated to the Finnish society?	I integrated very well because I had language skills especially Finnish which helped me to move along very well. I have a character of getting along with people very well.	The company is highly international thus integrating was not hard on my part. I could easily socialize and attend movies with friends.	I integrated very well because I had language skills especially English which helped me to move along very well.	Maybe, it is hard for international graduates to integrate if you do not speak Finnish. But you can also find many international graduates have similar situation like yourself.	The working environment in English thus integrating was not hard on my part. Attended student parties and innovation seminar.
If yes, what did you do?	I create friends very well I met friends in job and in the university.	Most of my friend we meet at university, and we will hang out a lot.	I create friends very well I met friends in job and in the university. We do what friends will do.	Get along with international graduate might also be a good way to integrate.	Starting an related business and attracted many friends in the firm which purchase many products
If no, what do you think prevented you to integrate?	n/a	n/a	n/a	Language barrier	n/a
What kind of social networks do you have	have friends here in Finland and internationally. I like	Through friends whom I attended movie with	We do what friends will do.	I have made friends here in Finland	Parties.

(international and Finnish friends, hobbies...)?	travelling				
How did you get to know your Finnish friends (University, work, kinder garden...)?	Through my husband and I relocated to Finland where I have made many friends	Through friends of friends	Through friends	Through job and school.	Through friends
How did you learn Finnish?	I learned Finnish through a government sponsored college for immigrants to learn Finnish before I learnt English.	Though taking a course in learning Finnish here in Finland	I learned Finnish through self-studying and some coerces from night school.	I enrolled for teaching lessons here in Finland	Though taking a course learning Finnish here in Finland
How did you find a job in Finland?	I applied for the job and I had friends in the company and after being interviewed and I passed and I ended up getting employed.	I wrote thesis for the company, and the company likes my way of working. So, they kept me.	I applied and got a job through a friend reference	I applied and passed the job interview	I started my business
Main challenges when you finding your job?	Networking is low as compared with China which makes it harder to get a job. At times, I applied for jobs but	Low networking key	At times, I applied for jobs but I could not get a reply at all or you are told we are sorry we can't hire you.	Lack of good networking	Low networking key

	I could not get a reply at all or you are told we are sorry we can't hire you.				
How is it to work in Finland and with Finns?	To work with Finns, you have to be direct and honest within the organization	I interact with Finnish at my job and they just like dealing with honest entrepreneurs who deliver services as agreed	It's fun	It's encouraging	Finns are usually clear but sometimes slow. It is quite hard to get their replies via email.
What are your main working languages?	Finnish	English	Finnish	English	English
Did you have work experience before coming to Finland? If yes, what? Do you think it helped you to find a job in Finland?	Yes, I worked in China for two years after my graduation as a teacher and I also worked in a Finnish conventional company where I met my husband.	Yes, but it is not relevant job to what I am doing now.	no	yes	NO
Did you do practical training(s) in Finland during your studies?	Yes, I did practical training and indeed the training played a role in me obtaining a job in Finland as I increased my	no	no	Yes, but in Kazakhstan.	Yes, but Budapest.

<p>If yes do you think it helped you to find a job here?</p>	<p>competency and capabilities The training played a role in me obtained a job in Finland as I increased my competency and capabilities</p>				
<p>Do you have any VISA problem? (elective)</p>	<p>Yes, I have. I had to use a tourist visa when I came to Finland and the main problem was because my husband was 25 years older than me so I had issue with issuing of visa because those who issued me with visa though I paid him to come here.</p>	NO	no	no	NO
<p>If yes, how did you manage to solve this problem?</p>	<p>Since I was not married before I came in Finland, that was when Visa was problematic to obtain but after I married my husband who invited me here I was able to solve my visa issues with</p>	N/A	n/a	n/a	N/A

	the police and I finally I got a visa.				
Do you have an international friend or relative who graduated from a University in Finland and who is working in Finland I could interview?	Yes, I have international friend whom I studied MBA with and she works here. I could give her contact to reach her	YES	Yes	no	YES