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Employment Expectations and Obstacles of International Students after Graduation from Laurea University of Applied Sciences' Business Management Degree Programme in Finland

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Laurea University of Applied Sciences
Leppävaara
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**Employment Expectations and Obstacles of
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The objective of this research is to assist the Career and Recruitment Services of Laurea University of Applied Sciences in examining the expectations of international students after graduating or soon graduate in Spring 2018 from Laurea UAS in Business Management degree programme about their employment as well as the obstacles they confront when entering the Finnish job market.

The theoretical background part described some issues and concepts related to the purpose of this research, including the Finnish economy and job market situation, Bachelor of Business Administration degree, the Career and Recruitment Services and some information on expectations and obstacles elements. The background studies of international students in Finland were also brought up.

This research applied both quantitative and qualitative method. Quantitative data was collected through online survey with 31 responses and was analyzed using Excel Analysis Toolpak. Qualitative data was obtained with 4 semi-structured interviews.

In brief, the results showed that international students graduated from Laurea UAS in Business Management degree programme mostly expect to have more work opportunities, find jobs and get better positions in their field of study or in multinational company. However, they do understand that it can be very difficult to find job in Finland. Secondly, the biggest barrier of international students in the Finnish job market is the lack of Finnish skills. Other main obstacles are high competition, lack of recommendations and lack of trust towards foreigners. Lastly, it is recommended that Laurea UAS in general and the Career and Recruitment Services in particular should stress to the student about the importance of Finnish skills and provide more Finnish courses in a more intensive level and offer more international projects for international students. Additionally, they want to receive counselling guidance about Finnish work environment and culture as well as workshops that focusing on helping students to expand their network, gain more practical skills and how to get through CV rounds effectively. Finally, they hope that Laurea UAS could extend its network with more international companies, make extra effort in assisting international students in finding internship in Finland as well as integrate local companies with international students.

The author suggests further researches on international students in other degree programmes in Laurea UAS or on Finnish students in Business Management degree programme to observe their employment expectations and obstacles.

Keywords: employment, international students, business management, expectations, obstacles, Laurea University of Applied Sciences

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1 Introduction

Laurea University of Applied Sciences (UAS) was the third most popular university in Finland in spring 2016 which attracts approximately 650 international degree students every year. Its students' employment rate was 94.58% in 2014 (Laurea.fi a). However, currently there is no detailed information regarding the employment rate of international graduate students from each degree programme. Thus, Laurea UAS recently opened a new service department called Career and Recruitment which officially started in August 2018. The purpose of this thesis is to help the department find out ways to better support international students in terms of their future employment and career.

The author feels that through this research, not only can Laurea UAS learn about its international students' employment expectations and obstacles after graduated from Business Management degree programme, but the Career and Recruitment service can also gain valuable recommendations from its international students on how it could support them overcome the difficulties when they enter the labor market in Finland.

1.1 Research problem and questions

According to Facts Express published by CIMO in 2017, there were over 21 thousands international students studying in higher education institutions in Finland in 2016, which was the year before tuition fees were introduced. International students conducting a Bachelor's degree at a UAS accounted for 44% of all international students while only a few studied in degree programmes that lead to a Master's degree at a UAS or to a Bachelor's degree at a university. In addition, most international degree students were from Russia, Vietnam, China and Nepal.

Thus, in other Facts Express, which was released in 2016, that there was a slight decrease in the percentage of international students who stayed and worked in Finland one year after graduation in 2012 (45.5%) compare to 2009 (51%). In which, five percent continued their studies while another five percent stayed in Finland for other reasons and almost a third of graduates are assumed to have moved away from Finland due to the lack of their record in Finland. The Facts Express also shows that international students graduating from a UAS have better chance of finding employment in Finland than those graduating from a university. Also, international students who studied social welfare and health care are offered the best employment prospects.

Although there are a number of previous studies about international students' general situations after graduation in Finland, there is very limited number of research on the employment situation of the international students in Business Management degree programme after graduated from a UAS and in this case, from Laurea UAS in particular.

Therefore, the main purpose of this thesis is to find out expectations as well as obstacles of Laurea UAS's international students in Business Management degree programme after graduation when entering the job market. There are three questions that this thesis aims to answer:

- What are the employment expectations of international students graduated or soon graduate from Laurea UAS in Business Management programme in Finland?
- What obstacles these students must face when entering the job market in Finland?
- What international students think Laurea UAS can do to help its future business management students better prepare themselves to overcome these obstacles?

The scope of the thesis is narrowed down to international students who soon graduate or have graduated from Laurea UAS in Business Management degree programme and wish to find work in Finland.

1.2 Thesis structure

This subsection presents the structure briefly in order to provide reader a clear picture about the whole thesis process (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Thesis structure

The **introduction** defines the background of the research, problems and objectives as well as the scope of the study.

The **theoretical background** discusses the key concepts of the thesis, creating the whole foundation for the research to base on.

Regarding the **research methodology**, this part demonstrates which methods were used to conduct the research, how data was collected and analyzed. Additionally, reliability as well as validation of the findings and the ethical issues were clarified.

The **research findings** shows the results of both quantitative data and qualitative one. The recommendations were also mentioned in this part.

The whole thesis will then be sealed with a summary of the whole research findings, limitations and suggestion for further research in the **conclusion** part.

2 Finnish economy and job market

Finland has the GDP of EUR 224 billion in 2017, showing a growth of 2.6% compared to previous year. With the GDP per capita of EUR 40.6 thousand in 2017, Finland ranked number ninth in Euro Member States, just before United Kingdom and France (Country Economy, 2018).

After the Second World War, Finland transformed itself from agricultural society into post-industrial society and shifted its focus to education and research. Currently, the country is considered one of the most competitive economies of the world. It is well-known for its problem solving, unique solutions and social innovation, which are well represented through a number of world-renowned companies such as Valio, Rovio Entertainment and Kone (Malik, 2016).

However, a recent report conducted by the OECD (2016) indicated that there's a need for Finland to, among other things, create more jobs in order to stimulate economic growth.

2.1 Economic performance and the importance of boosting employment in Finland

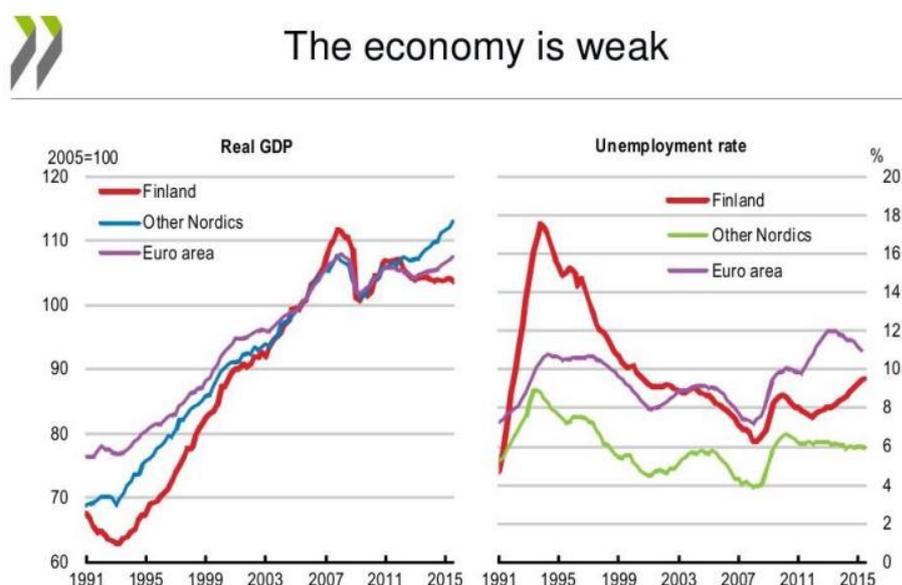


Figure 2: OECD Economic Outlook database (OECD, 2016)

According to the survey result, during the five-year period from 2011 - 2015, GDP growth rate has decreased below average of both other Nordics and Euro area while the unemployment rate has increased (Figure 2). Furthermore, the survey reveals the significance of boosting employment as illustrated in the figure below.



Boosting employment is essential

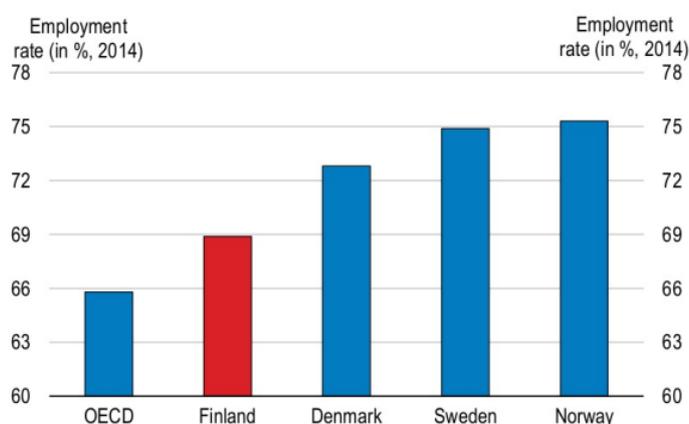


Figure 3: OECD Labour Force statistics database (OCED, 2016)

The government targets to reach the employment rate of 72% and lower the unemployment rate to 5% by 2019, but with the employment rate at 68% (Figure 3) and the unemployment rate about 9% in 2014, these targets seem impossible. In order to increase employment in the country, it's required that some policies must be reformed aiming to provide quicker labour market entry for young people, prolonging employment period of older workers, encouraging immigrants to engaging in the labour market, boosting work incentives for the unemployed and expanding the participation of women within childbearing age (OECD, 2016).

The start-up situation in Finland is considered as an important factor in economic growth here. Even though the creation and development of young companies is rather slow in Finland, they have potential for success. In fact, Finland is ranked second in the world for innovation according to World Economic Forum. The success of companies such as Supercell and Rovio Entertainment shows the influence of new technology in start-up creation. With start-ups' needs for hiring new talent and fresh graduates from various fields, more jobs are being created in the market. Although cooperation between universities and the industry is very limited, there's definitely a need to strengthen cooperation between universities and start-ups (Malik, 2016).

2.2 Current labour market and changes in it

In 2018, the Finnish labour market shows signs of improvements in almost every aspect, especially in unemployment situation. Statistics Finland's Labour Force Survey 2018 demonstrated that the number of unemployed persons by July 2018 was 183,000, which were 24,000 less than in July 2017. The unemployment rate stood at 6.5, which was one percentage point less than the previous year (Figure 4).

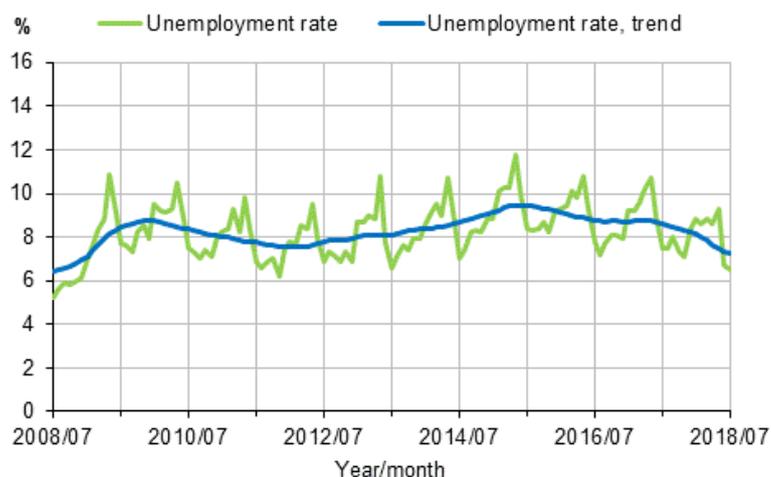


Figure 4: Unemployment rate and trend 2008/07 - 2018/07, persons aged 15 - 74 (Statistics Finland, 2018)

The Employment Service Statistics of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment reports 284,000 unemployed persons registered as job seekers in July 2018, which was 45,000 people less than in July 2017. They accounted for more than 10% of the labour force, which was 1.7 percentage points lower than the previous year. The Ministry also announces that there were about 37,000 foreign citizens among unemployed jobseekers, approximately 4,500 down from July 2017.

Furthermore, there have been some changes in the job market in the past few years. The ways recruiters searching for candidates have also changed accordingly. To deal with a large number of candidates, employers are forced to require more from the candidates. Recently, whether the candidate is currently working or not has been considered as one of the most important criteria when hiring new employee. Moreover, practical experience directly in the field is the key factor determining the success of the candidates. In many cases, employers already paint a picture of a dream employee in mind which make it difficult for the candidates to persuade that they have what it takes and that they should be hired (Bolles, 2015).

In addition, the duration of employment has been shortened significantly. This can be seen in a rise in the number of part-time, freelance and fixed-term positions which are often more economical for recruiting company. Nowadays, the job market appears to occur mostly on the Internet, particularly on social media. Therefore, computer skills and knowledge of different tools become more and more critical in job hunting (Bolles, 2015).

3 Bachelor of Business Administration degree

Students who study business in Laurea UAS as well as 20 other polytechnics across Finland will receive Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree when graduate. Typically, a BBA student possesses a wide-range of professional skills such as practical and basic knowledge and skills that prepare him or her to act in an expert position in a professional working environment, good communication skills as well as language skills. The vast majority of BBA students belong to a Finnish trade union that provides services in problems related to working life and employment relationships called Tradenomiliitto (TRAL).

Every year, TRAL conducts a research concerning BBA and international business graduates placement on the labor market and their salary amounts. According to the most recent research (2017), the vast majority of international graduates (88%) work in the private sector, with 13.4% in technology industry, which includes electronics and electrical sectors, machinery and metal sectors, metal processing as well as information technology service sectors. Other major industries are financial sector (8.3%), trade (10.6%) and ICT sector (6.9%) (Figure 5).

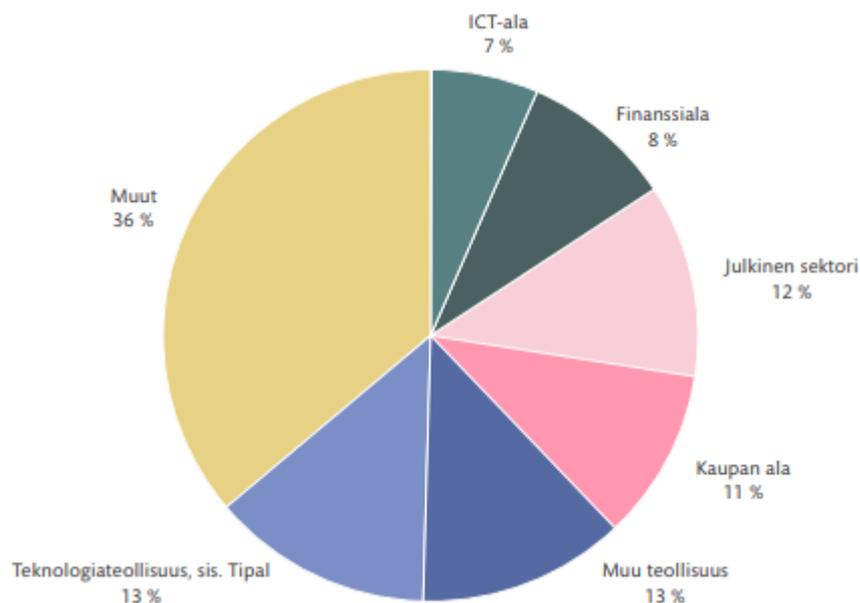


Figure 5: Major working industries (Tradenomiliitto, 2017)

Regarding the position level when entering working life in Finland, majority of BBA students (45.6%) work in expert level tasks, less than half (31.1%) work in employee level tasks and the rest (23.4%) work in management level tasks (Figure 6).

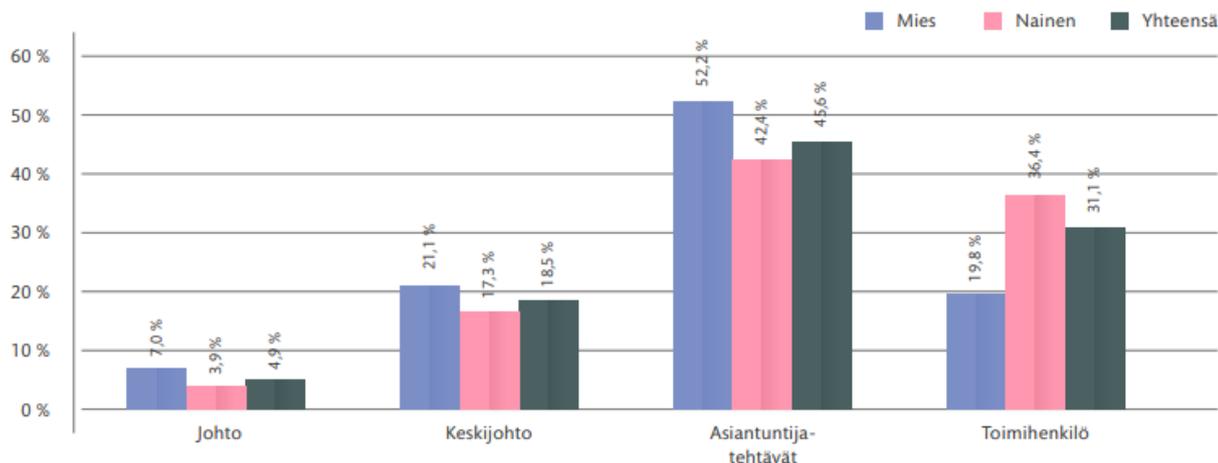


Figure 6: Position levels (Tradenomiliito, 2017)

The average monthly salary of BBA graduates in 2017 was 3,661 euros. The difference between the highest quarter (4,200 euros per month) and the lowest quarter (2,667 euros per month) was about 1,500 euros (Figure 7).

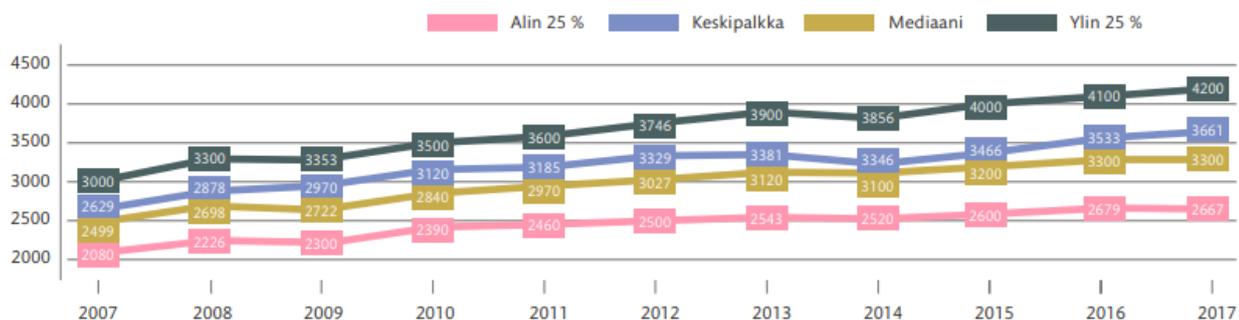


Figure 7: Salary amount 2007 - 2017 (gross, EUR/month) (Tradenomiliito, 2017)

BBA graduates' unemployment rate from 2000 to 2009 had been 5-7%. If counting also those graduates who end up working in other fields than business, the figure will add up to 20-40% according to multiple studies including Statistics Finland, Finnish Institute for Educational Research, Akava as well as Tradenomiliito. However, in recent years, the number of unemployed university-level students has been rising. This is reflected in the unemployment figure of BBA graduates in 2014, which were almost 1,000 people more than the previous year (Tradenomiliito, Unknown).

What was discussed above is relevant to the research questions because this thesis recognizes international BBA students and graduates as the subject and presents data regarding their obstacles when entering the job market.

4 International students in Finland

In the late 2006, the Ministry of Education of Finland promulgated a policy, which aims to encourage international students around the world to conduct education in Finland and assures to provide them with opportunity to find work after graduation in the country (Abdurasak, 2016). After seeing that having international students in the country produced many benefits, in 2009, the Ministry issued the “Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education in Finland 2009 - 2015” targeting to attract 20,000 international students to Finland by the end of 2015 (Ministry of Education, 2009). Unexpectedly, by the end of 2014, the number of international students in the Finnish higher education institutions already reached 20,255 (Garam & Korkala, 2013).

According to CIMO (2014), students from the emerging economies (BRIC), which comprise Russia, India and China is the biggest group of students in Finnish higher education. The second group includes students from Vietnam, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan and African countries such as Nigeria and Ethiopia. Regarding field of study, the biggest share of international students study social science, business administration (35%) and technology, communication and transport (34%) (Figure 8).

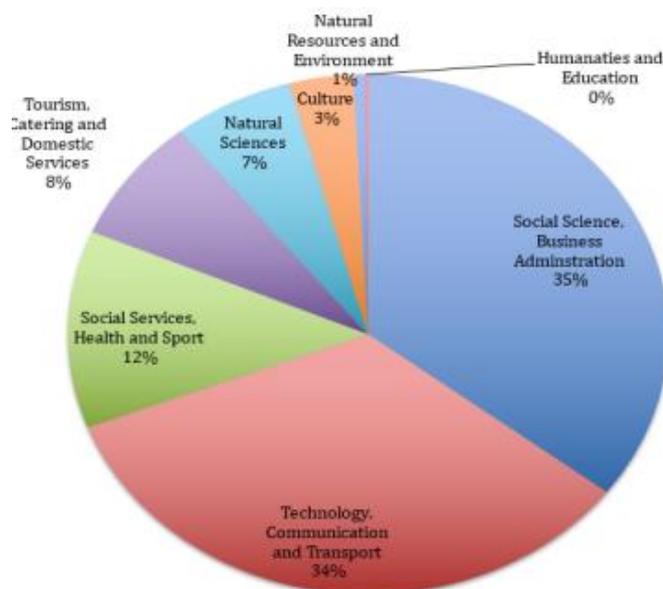


Figure 8: International degree students in Finnish higher education by field of study, 2014, % (Statistics Finland, 2014)

4.1 International graduates' employment situation in Finland

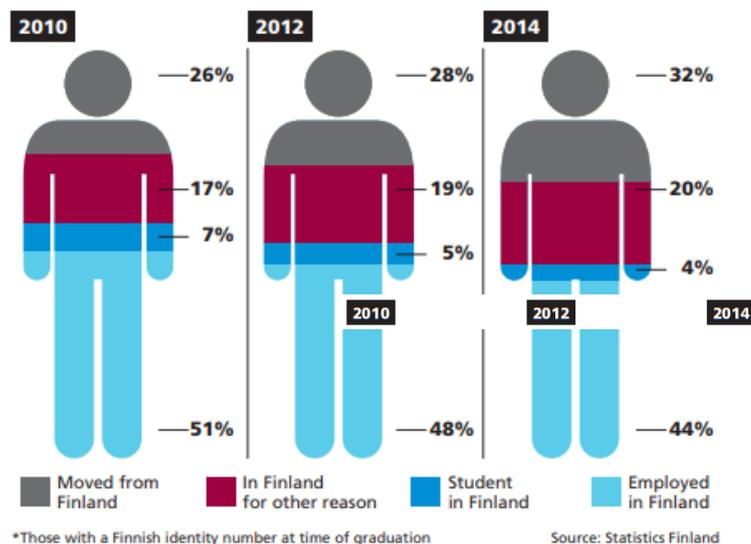


Figure 9: The situation of international university graduates from 2009 in Finland 1 year, 3 years and 5 years after graduation (N=1,704) (CIMO, 2016)

According to a study surveying international students who graduated from Finnish higher education institutions in 2009 conducted at CIMO, the majority of international graduates continue to stay in Finland five years following their graduation. Nearly half are employed, a small number carried on their studies, 32% have returned to their countries and 20% stay in Finland for other reasons (Figure 9).

The study also indicates that while employment rate of international students who studied in technology, social and health care sectors is marginally better than average, those who studied business and administration have slightly poorer than average employment rate. On the other hand, international students who graduated from a Bachelor degree programme from a UAS appeared to find work the most easily. 54% were employed within one and three years after graduation and 49% still had a job after five years (CIMO, 2016).

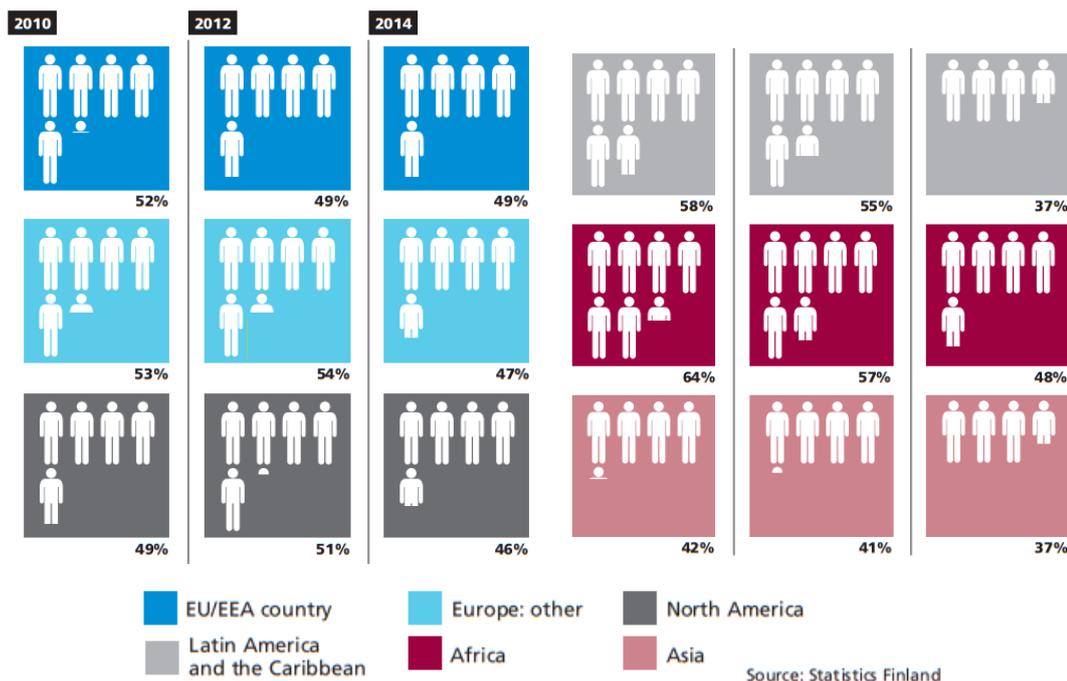


Figure 10: International university graduates from 2009 employed in Finland, by continent (%) (CIMO, 2016)

Thus, amongst all the continents, students from Africa seem to find employment the most quickly, with 64% employed in Finland after just one year from graduation. Though after five years, the differences even out and there is barely any difference among Europeans, North Americans and Africans. Employment situation in Finland of graduates from these continents is also slightly better than of those from Asia and Latin America (Figure 10).

There has been a belief that the reason why international students decided to choose Finland as their education destination is because it was free and then they would leave back to their countries immediately after their graduation. However, the Statistics Finland's data showed the contrary that international students actually want to integrate into the Finnish society and to be an asset to the Finnish economy. Even though many of the international students succeed in finding job in Finland, the statistics do not clarify whether the content of their employment is relevant to their degree (CIMO, 2016).

To put the matter into perspective, the study views employment situation in Finland against the Netherlands'. A study in 2015 conducted in the Netherlands shows that 70% of international students who graduated between 2008 and 2009 decided to stay in the country after graduation, in which 27% were employed after one year from graduation. After five years, only 38% remained in the country. It is clear that there is fewer international graduates stay in the Netherlands to find employment than in Finland (CIMO, 2016).

Similar to Finland, employment rate of international students who studied health care or technology is better than average in the Netherlands. The difference is that European students in the Netherlands are employed more than those from other countries after five years of graduation.

4.2 International students' employment expectations

This thesis uses the Likert scale to investigate international students' employment expectations after graduation from Laurea University of Applied Sciences. A Likert scale is a rating scale that measures respondents' opinions or attitudes towards different statements on 5 levels of agreements: 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree (Stephanie, 2015).

The Likert scale consists of seven statements, which were based on researches of Dyck (2011) and La & Nobel (2014) about wage and employment expectations of students. Some statements were added or modified to fit the Finnish circumstance and its job market. The statements are:

- Find work easily
- Get higher salary
- Work in my own field
- Have more opportunities
- Get better position
- Have less competition
- Work in multinational company

It is very likely that the expectations of international students of their future employment are varied from domestic ones. In his research, Dyck (2011) stated that international students generally have low expectation when it comes to finding a job successfully. Having said that, there are a number of factors that might affect their expectations in either positive or negative direction.

The first factor is gender. In his research, Dyck (2011) stated that females tend to have lower expectations than males. However, international male students seem to have lower long-term employment expectations than not only domestic male students but also female international students. Additionally, current job market situation as well as field of study also impact on international students' expectation of their employment. Lastly, regarding salary aspect, international students have lower expectation than the domestic students.

La & Nobel (2014) also conducted a research studying expectations of international students in tourism and hospitality degree programme about their employment after graduation from various UAS in Finland using the same Likert scale with similar statements. The result shows that the majority of respondents expect to have higher salaries, better job and opportunities in their own field or in multinational environment after graduation. Only a small percentage of students think that they would have 'less competition' when entering the labour market in Finland. Respondents responded quite neutrally towards the two statements 'find work easily' and 'get better position'.

4.3 International students' employment obstacles

There are a number of obstacles that international students confront when searching for employment in Finland.

First and foremost, the lack of sufficient local language skills is a grand obstacle for employment against the natives. Additionally, insufficient language skills might make it difficult for international students to search for information about vacant position. Even though there are websites that offer English version but it is often less detailed than the native language version (La & Nobel, 2014).

The second barrier for international students is the lack of work experience. For an international student who wants to apply for job in Finland, having previous work experience can be a crucial factor determine whether he/she can get a job against competition in the job market. Although employer's willingness to hire can be affected by the country or position where the experience was acquired due to the idea that work experience in other country might be less valuable than the experience gained in the employing country (La & Nobel, 2014).

Along with experiences, good recommendations and connections in the employing country are as well expected from job seeker. Nevertheless, this is might be also an obstacle that international students have to overcome as the lack of language skills and family ties as well as community network potentially hinder them from getting recommendations or connections to support the job seeking process (La & Nobel, 2014).

Finally, different stereotypes are factor that holds up international graduates from getting hired as well. Stereotypes here are negative attitudes towards, for example, foreigners which lead to the lack of trust when hiring an international student (La & Nobel, 2014).

To investigate international students' obstacles when entering the labor market in Finland, another Likert scale is used with 14 statements based on the research of La & Nobel (2014). Some statements were modified in order to fit the situation in Finland. The statements are:

- Lack of Finnish skills

- Lack of other language skills
- Lack of experience and skills
- Lack of education
- Lack of recommendations
- Lack of trust towards foreigners
- Lack of support from government
- Low salary
- High competition
- Too challenging tasks
- Too much responsibility
- Bad work conditions
- Difficulties in working documents
- Discrimination

According to the result of La & Nobel's research (2014), while the most significant barrier to employment of international students is the 'lack of Finish skills', the 'lack of other language skills' turns out to be not as critical problem to a few respondents, particularly Russian students (Figure 11).

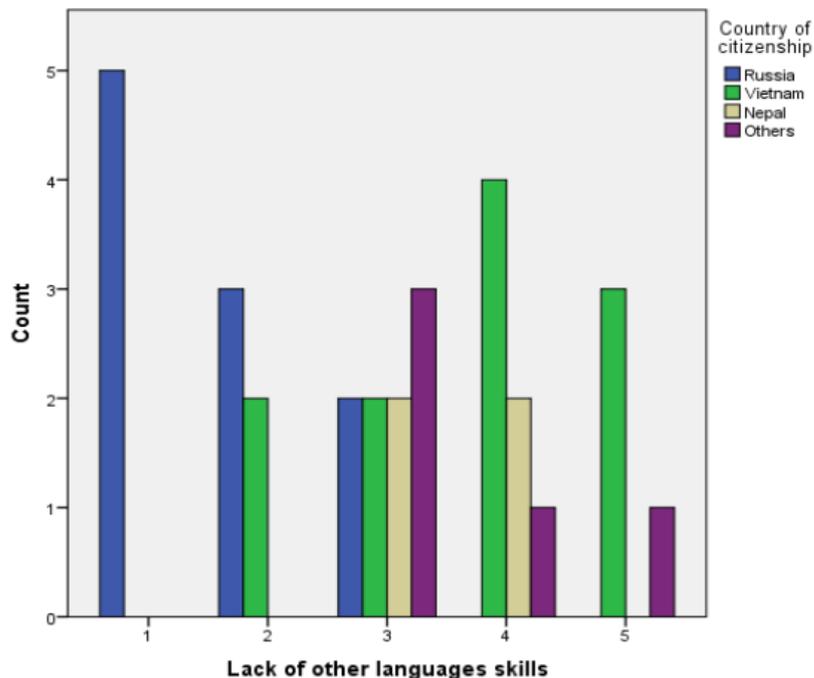


Figure 11: Evaluation toward statement 'lack of other languages skills' by nationalities (La & Nobel, 2014)

The second most significant challenge to international students when finding job in Finland is 'high competition'. The rest of the statements received lower than average scores, which shows that most of the respondents do not look at these obstacles as big challenges in getting a job in Finnish labor market after graduation. The statements with the lowest scores are 'bad working condition', 'low salary' and 'lack of education' (La & Nobel, 2014).

5 Career and Recruitment Services

Established on 12 March 2018, the Career and Recruitment services started working in autumn the same year. The services are offered in five main categories: career planning studies, career counselling, job and placements, workshops and recruitment event (Figure 12).



Figure 12: Career and Recruitment Services

The **career planning studies** is a part of the Expert in Development and Workplace Innovation core competence and consists of three study units: tools for professional development, career planning and working life competences. The overall aim of the career planning studies is to support students in their career building process and professional identity. It teaches students how to develop individual learning skills as well as necessary skills when working as a team member (Optima).

The **career counselling service's** goal is to assist students in recognizing their own strengths and weaknesses as well as their career paths. Students are also guided in finding their goals

and getting qualification requirements for their working life at a global and local level. The service offers students private or small group (max 5 people) sessions with career coach in Leppävaara and Tikkurila campuses. These sessions are organized on Tuesday afternoon in Leppävaara campus and on Thursday afternoon in Tikkurila campus every week. It is also possible to arrange a session via Skype (Link.laurea.fi).

The Career and Recruitment Services is also in charge of gathering and uploading **jobs and placements** to the students' intra website where students can find open positions in their field of studies and try to apply for them. Furthermore, students can learn more about career planning, job-seeking, accepting a job offer and different trade unions through the *Career Paths from Laurea* website. This website can be accessed even after students have graduated.

The fourth service offers students **workshops** related to career planning and skills developing for free. The last workshops were hosted by an expert in recruitment services from Adecco - one of the biggest staffing companies in the world, where she provided students with insider's perspective about opportunities in various fields as well as current recruitment needs in Finland. The Career and Recruitment Services plans to have more workshops not only about jobs or internships, but also about practical skills development in order to help students gain their best chances (Laurea.fi b).

Network to Get Work is one of the most popular events amongst Laurea UAS' students provided by the Career and Recruitment Services. This recruitment event gives students chance to engage with companies and discuss about their employment opportunities. It's organized annually and intended for students in all fields of studies (Laurea.fi c).

Through this research, the Career and Recruitment Services looks forward to find out what international students want from Laurea UAS in terms of employment aspects so that they can come up with concrete ideas about what to do next as well as how and where to start improve the services.

6 Research methodology

This chapter presents two big parts of the methodology: research design and research tactics. The research design contains the overall plan of the research which consists of research types, strategies, methods, credibility and ethics. The research tactics provide information about sampling, data collecting and analysing process.

6.1 Research design

As mentioned earlier, this part clarifies the overall plan of the thesis to give readers an overview of the research methodology.

6.1.1 Research types

As stated earlier, the main objective of this thesis is to determine the expectations as well as difficulties faced by international students after graduation from Laurea UAS' Business Management programme when entering the job market in Finland. Based on this objective, the research can be regarded as both descriptive and exploratory study.

Exploratory study is primarily used to understand a certain problem better (Saunders et al., 2009). As this thesis aim to "investigate" the expectations of international students as well as the barriers they have to overcome when entering the job market in Finland, "exploratory" is the most appropriate method for this research. On the other hand, in order to give a more coherent view on this problem, "descriptive" method will be added to the research. The reason is that descriptive study is particularly helpful as a precursor to a piece of exploratory research (Saunders et al., 2009).

6.1.2 Research strategies and methods

Regarding research strategies, this thesis will employed survey and interview as the mean to gather data.

Survey is an effective strategy that provides answers to who, what, how much and how many questions and is popularly used in business and management research. Additionally, this data collecting tool is highly advisable for quantitative analysis with descriptive statistic as it enables researchers to gather a considerable amount of data from a large population in a cost-effective manner (Saunders et al., 2009). For those reasons, survey will fit perfectly in this research and help the author to reach the conclusion that represent international business students in Laurea UAS.

Moreover, interview is an ideal strategy to attain a deep understanding of the research's context and the enacted processes. In brief, it's a research strategy that uses multi method of evidence to investigate a specific contemporary phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2009). In other words, interview is a useful method to generate answers for why and how questions and is perfectly suitable for the purpose of establishing a deeper understanding of the findings in addition to the descriptive statistics.

Accordingly, the methods that this research adopts will be both quantitative and qualitative methods. While quantitative method focuses on using technique such as questionnaire and analysis tools such as charts to generate and analyze numerical data; qualitative method uses technique such as interview and analysis procedure such as data categorization to generate and use non-numerical data (Saunders et al., 2009). First, questionnaire will be used to collect descriptive data on matter regarding international business management students' expectations and

obstacles. Then, semi-structured interviews will be conducted to study deeper the case of international students studying business management in Laurea UAS and how they think Laurea UAS could help them overcome those obstacles.

6.1.3 Reliability and validity of research findings

When discussing the credibility of any scientific research, there are two main concepts that need to be examined: reliability and validity. This chapter illustrates the strategies that the author used in each concept in order to enhance the overall credibility of the research.

First, reliability presents the degree to which a study's findings are liberated of accidental incidents of their production. In other words, it questions whether or not future researches could produce the same results, claims and interpretations (Silverman, 2014). As mentioned in the previous section, this research adopts both qualitative and quantitative methods using interview and survey respectively as data collecting tools. However, it is particularly problematic to measure the reliability of qualitative research because a great deal of the interpretations of the findings are influenced by the author's perceptions.

In order to increase the reliability of this research, the author made sure descriptions of research strategies, data analysis methods are presented in a sufficient manner in the report so that the whole research process is transparent. Thus, the research background was gathered using ethical procedure so that it complies with scientific convention. Although the qualitative research only gained 4 responses, the results can still be considered as reliable because all interviews are transcribed as soon as they are finished when the author still has fresh notes and memory of interviewees' expressions which helps reduce the risk of missing valuable data remarkably.

Second, according to Silverman (2014), validity refers to the extent the findings of a research represent accurately the social phenomena it studies. To enhance the validity of the quantitative research, the author ensures that all questions inside the questionnaire were studied carefully and refined using advice from the author's friends. By doing so, the author can make sure these questions are easy to understand and that respondents will have no difficulty answering them (Saunders et al., 2009).

The author also decided to use method triangulation as way to validate the findings of the research. Data triangulation means the use of several kinds of data to establish a more accurate and objective illustration of the object of the research. In this thesis case, the author combines quantitative data (survey) with qualitative data (interview). As a result, the findings obtained from both data draw similar conclusions, which mean the findings of this research can be considered validated.

6.1.4 Ethical questions

Regarding ethical issues, the author will make sure to be mindful about ethics during the whole process of this study, which means the research design will not subject its subjects or respondents to any kind of harm or embarrassment as well as any material disadvantages (Saunders et al., 2009). All survey respondents will be informed about the author's background, contents of the research as well as its purposes. Interviewees will also be briefed about the details of the interviews and asked for permission to audio-record. Lastly, all respondents and interviewees are completely anonymous in order to ensure confidentiality and objectivity of the answers.

6.2 Research plans

This part demonstrates a more detailed plan of how the data is sampled, collected and analyzed.

6.2.1 Sample size

Selecting samples helps researcher saving time and money by studying only a decent-sized population. The target population of this research is international students who had graduated or soon graduate from Laurea UAS in Business Management degree programme who wish to stay in Finland and work in their own field of studies. With the help of Laurea UAS's student office, the author obtained a list of 268 students that have the required characteristics:

- Students from outside of Finland;
- Having studied or currently studying in Business Management degree programme;
- Graduated in the period from 2007 to spring 2018 or soon graduate at the end of 2018 (students with more than 170 credits).

Due to limited time, money and channels, the author decided to have the sample size of 31 students for the questionnaire and 4 students for the interview. With a population of 268 people, 31 students give a 95% confidence level and a 16.6% margin of error.

6.2.2 Data collecting process

As mentioned in the section above, primary data will be collected by both quantitative and qualitative method to provide answers to the research questions. Quantitative data will be gathered through online survey and qualitative data will be gained through semi-structured interviews.

First, questionnaire (quantitative method) will be designed in Word form. An online survey form will then be created using Google docs. The survey is consisted of two parts. The first part is dedicated for respondent's personal information such as gender, age, nationality and study

background. The second part focuses on asking the main research questions. Questions regarding respondent's expectations and obstacles will be based on Likert scale, which means variables are measured using a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

The samples will be chosen using snowball and self-selection technique. The snowball technique is commonly used in situation where it is challenging to identify members of the chosen population (Saunders et al., 2009). In this case, it is challenging for the author to know if the respondents possess all the required characteristics for this particular research: being international students, soon going to graduate or having already graduated from Laurea UAS in Business Management degree programme and wishing to work in Finland. Because of these requirements, the author needs to:

- Contact friends who are cases of the desired population or who know other similar cases
- Ask them to recommend the farther cases
- Ask the new members to recommend the newer ones (and so on).

Once the number of cases gets to the appropriate amount (around 31 cases) the collecting process will stop. The author will then contact these cases to ask them to answer the survey and participate in the interviews. Regarding the self-selection sampling technique, the author lets each case choose whether they want to take part in the research (Saunders et al., 2009) individually by publishing an online survey (Google docs) on her social media channel (Facebook), through emails and help from friends and let the cases fill the survey voluntarily.

Qualitative data will be gathered through semi-structured interviews. The purpose of these interviews is to acquire deeper understanding of each case and possibly to develop a theory. In order to make sure that the study is objective and diverse, the author will try to select interviewees from various countries, graduating with BBA degree from different university of applied sciences in all parts of Finland.

The interviews will be conducted either face-to-face or through Skype or phone. Naturally, all interviewees will be asked for permission to record audio. Similar to the questionnaire structure, the interview also includes two parts: personal background and research questions. In addition to expectations and obstacles aspects, the interviewees 'personal experiences and stories will be discussed as well. Finally, the author will ask the interviewees to recommend solutions for other international students to overcome the obstacles and for Laurea UAS to support its international students better.

As for secondary data, it will be collected from both internal and external sources to the author. Example of internal sources are Laurea UAS's main website, intranet sites for student such as LINK and Optima, information and feedback from client which in case is the Career and Recruitment Services. External sources are books from library as well as researches, theses and

articles from the internet. These data will give the author the basic knowledge of the problem; idea for generating more focused research questions; and assists the author in developing more proper research design.

6.2.3 Data analyzing process

The raw quantitative data collected through survey will be processed using the Excel Analysis Toolpak. The author decided to apply descriptive statistics to describe the most common expectations and obstacles of international business students when enter the labor market in Finland as well as utilize statistical hypothesis test (t-test) and analysis of variance test (ANOVA) to find the correlation between two and more factors in the questionnaire in order to have a deeper view into the matter.

However, there's a long-standing controversy regarding whether or not descriptive statistics using means and standard deviations, are suitable for Likert scale responses. The reason is that in a 5-point ordinal Likert scale, although the distant between each number assigned to the response is equal, it can't be assumed that the difference between the responses is the same (Sullivan & Artino, 2013).

For this reason, the author decided to apply descriptive statistics using median and interquartile range (IQR) to determine what is the believe of most respondents and how much respondents agree with one another. By definition, the median measures central tendency by identifying the number standing in the middle of the dataset in a statistical distribution. The IQR, on the other hand, measures the spread of the responses. In other words, it reveals whether the responses scatter or cluster across the whole range of possible responses (Kostoulas, 2014). By using these two methods, the findings are more reliable and validated as the methods do not take into account the distance between each response of the Likert scale.

On the other hand, qualitative data which is collected through audio-recorded interviews will be replicated in written form. After studying the transcript carefully, the author will 'organize' the data by taking out irrelevant information to the objective of the research so that the data will become easier to manage.

Next, the author will 'categorize' the data into predetermined theme subject based on the literature review. Eventually, categorized data will be 'coded' by reducing relevant pieces of data such as sentences, phrases and words into several units (by the same code) within the categories. Finally, data will be 'interpreted' and presented to readers through written report.

7 Research findings

This section reveals both quantitative and qualitative results of the research.

7.1 Quantitative result

As indicated in section 5.4 *Data analyzing process*, quantitative result was produced using Microsoft Excel software.

7.1.1 Background of respondents

The first section of the questionnaire characterizes the respondents with 14 questions, which were segmented into two parts: *basic background* and *work and education background*.

The basic background information contains questions about gender, age, nationality and time of living in Finland. The data obtained from this part is presented through multiple graphs using Microsoft Excel software.

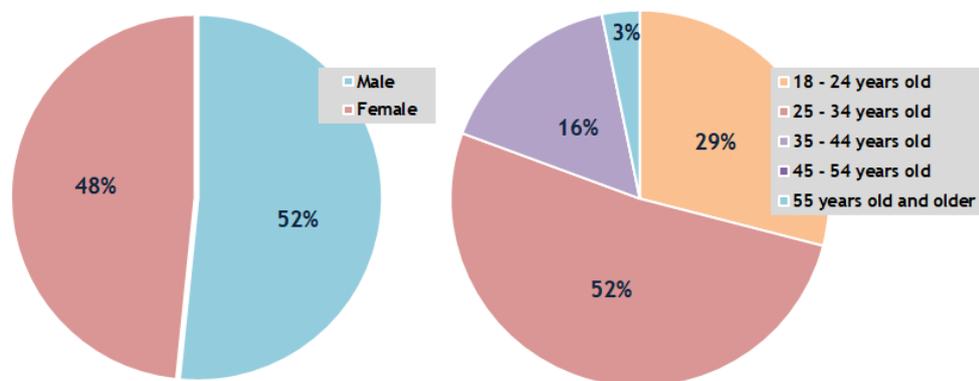


Chart 1: Gender and age of respondents

There were in total 31 respondents taking part in the survey, 16 (52%) out of which were males and 15 (48%) were females. More than half of them (52%) were between 25 to 34 years old, almost a third (29%) of respondents were between 18 to 24 years old and the rest were 35 years old and older (Chart 1).

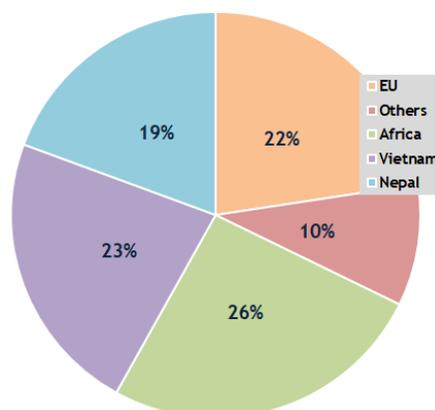


Chart 2: Nationality of respondents

Regarding nationality, the most recurrent countries were Vietnam with 7 respondents (23%) and Nepal with 6 respondents (19%). EU respondents accounted for 26% with 7 students from several countries in Europe. African respondents had the biggest share (26%) with 8 students, 5 of which were from Nigeria. The rest of the respondents were from Papua New Guinea, Russia and USA, standing at 10% (Chart 2).

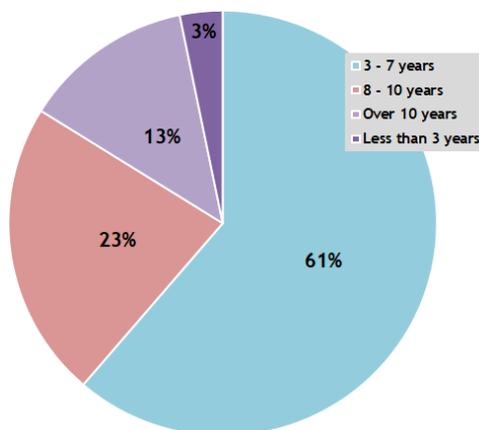


Chart 3: Time of living in Finland

Since the target respondents of the research were international students who soon to graduate or had already graduated from Laurea University of Applied Sciences, it is as expected that the majority of respondents (61%) have stayed in Finland for 3 to 7 years. 7 respondents (23%) claimed they have lived in Finland for 8 to 10 years while 4 respondents (13%) have been in the country for over 10 years and only 1 answer was 2 years (3%) (Chart 3).

Table 1: Year of graduation of respondents

Year of graduation		Responses	
		N	Percent
Graduated		20	65%
	2005	1	3%
	2010	1	3%
	2012	2	6%
	2013	2	6%
	2014	4	13%
	2015	3	10%
	2016	2	6%
	2017	5	16%
Soon graduate		11	35%
	2018	6	19%
	2019	4	13%
	2020	1	3%
Total		31	100%

As mentioned earlier, the second part of the background section in the questionnaire was about work experiences and education of the respondents. Among 20 graduated students (65%) and

11 soon graduate students (35%) of Business Management degree programme (Table 1), more than half (52%) of the respondents were specializing in Marketing during their studies. The second most answered major was Management and Administration with 5 respondents (16%). ‘Others’ category (13%) included 4 majors that were only chosen once by 4 respondents: B2B, Human Resource and Communication, Business Analysis and International negotiations. The rest of the majors were spread equally among 6 students (Chart 4).

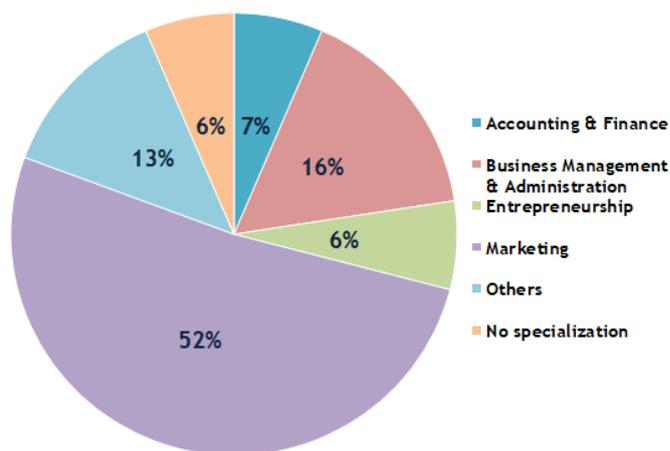


Chart 4: Major of respondents

To get a deeper understanding about respondents’ skills, experiences, current employments and whether those positions met the respondents’ expectations after graduation, the author had to process data collected through a series of steps including arrangement, categorization and coding in order to establish descriptive statistics and graphs using MS Excel software.

Language skills were one of the concerns of the author about the respondents. TNS Opinion and Socials indicates in its report “*Europeans and their languages*” (2012) that in addition to Finnish and Swedish which are the two official languages of Finland, the most spoken foreign languages were English (70%) and German (18%). For this reason, this research only takes into consideration these mentioned ones.

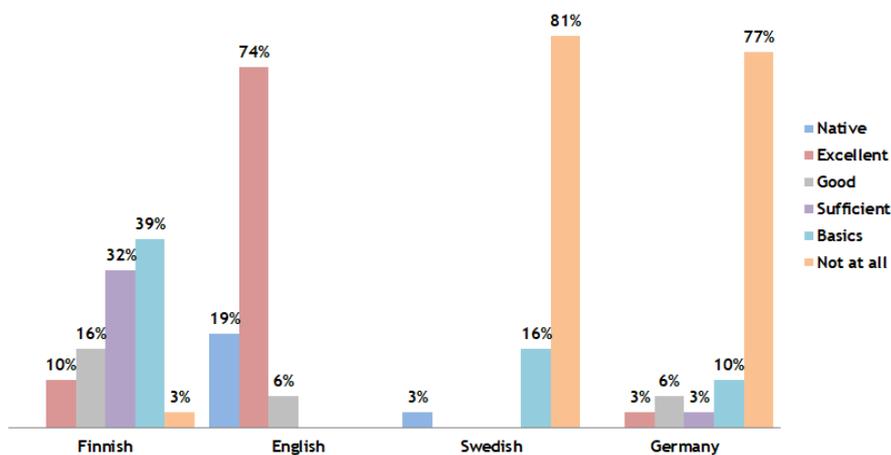


Chart 5: Languages skills of the respondents

It was apparent that all respondents were capable of speaking English as the Business Management degree programme was taught in English. The majority of the respondents (23 students, 74%) claimed their English skills were 'excellent' while 6 students (19%) believed their skills were at 'native' level and only 2 students (6%) thought they were 'good'. Regarding Finnish skills, although it was spoken by almost all respondents with only one exception (3%), the most chosen levels were 'basic' (12 students, 39%) and 'sufficient' (10 students, 32%), followed by 'good' with 5 students (16%) and only 3 students believed they can speak the language excellently (10%). As for Swedish and German languages, since almost 80% of respondents were from outside of Europe, it is understandable that 81% of respondents (25 students) and 77% (24 students) chose 'not at all' as skills level of Swedish and German respectively.

Regarding previous work experiences, the authors wanted to find out previous experiences of respondents in both their home countries and in Finland. Thus, the answers of the respondents were categorized into three groups: none previous experience, business management related experiences, other fields related experiences based on the characteristics of the work positions they provided.

Table 2: Previous work experiences in home countries of respondents

Work experiences	Responses	
	N	Percent
None	10	32%
Business Management related	14	45%
Other fields related	7	23%
Total	31	100%

It was shown from Table 2 that most students worked in positions that were Business Management related (14 students, 45%) while only 7 students worked in other fields than business (23%) and 10 had no previous experience at all (23%).

Table 3: Previous work experiences in Finland

Work experiences	Responses	
	N	Percent
None	4	13%
Business Management related	13	42%
Other fields related	14	45%
Total	31	100%

Contrarily, there were only 4 respondents out of 31 (13%) who didn't have any work experience in Finland. Among these 4 students, 2 graduated in 2013 and 2014 with one currently continues studying and one is working as a trainee; 2 graduated last year (2017) with one is currently living in Germany and one is working as a cleaner. The number of students working in positions

that are 'Business Management related' stood at 13 (42%). Some examples of the positions were: event assistant, marketing assistant, customer service and entrepreneurship. The number of students worked in other fields than business was quite close to those 'Business Management related' (14 students, 45%). Among these 14 cases, 8 students (57%) worked in restaurant industry (Table 3).

Table 4: Current employments of respondents

Job Position	Responses	
	N	Percent
Unemployed	2	6%
Studying or continue to higher education	3	10%
Entrepreneur	5	16%
Business Management related	7	23%
Other fields related	10	32%
Move to other country	4	13%
Total	31	100%

When asking about current employment situations, only 2 respondents (6%) answered that they were unemployed, of which 1 person will graduate in 2019 and the other one had already graduated in 2015. There were 4 respondents (13%) moved to other countries after graduation and 3 (10%) are still studying or continue to higher education. Of those who are currently employed, 5 (16%) are working as entrepreneurs, mainly in restaurant industry; 7 people (23%) are working in positions that are business management related; and 10 people (32%) are working in other fields than business (Table 4).

Out of 22 respondents who are currently employed, only 6 people (27%) considered their current positions were what they expected after graduation while 10 people (45%) didn't expect these types of jobs at all.

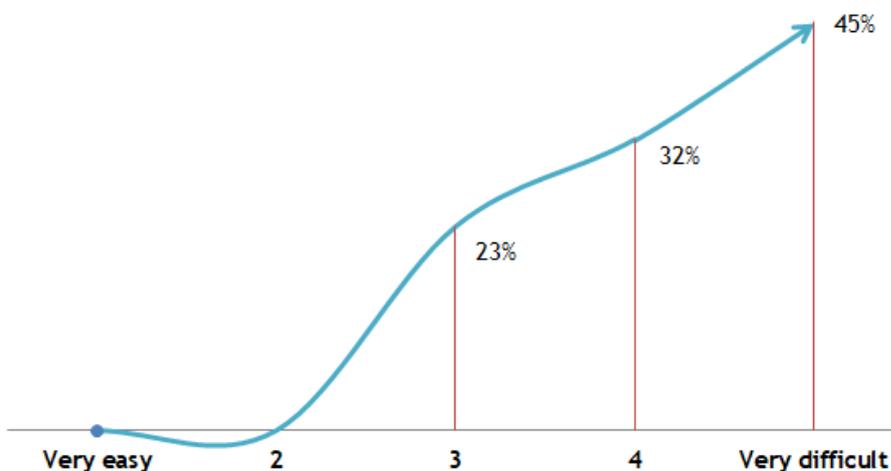


Chart 6: How is finding work in Finland?

Additionally, the respondents were also asked to rank the difficulty of finding jobs in Finland on a scale from 1 (very easy) to 5 (very difficult). None of the students thought that getting jobs in Finland was easy or very easy. Almost half of the students (45%) thought that it was very difficult to get a job in Finland, 10 respondents (32%) said it was difficult and only 7 students (23%) had a neutral opinion about the matter (Chart 6).

7.1.2 Expectations and obstacles of respondents

Two Likert scales were utilized in this section of the questionnaire to understand the expectations and obstacles of international students, who had already graduated or soon graduate from Laurea UAS in Business Management programme, when entering the Finnish labour market.

Statistics of expectations

Concerning expectations holding by international students about their employments after graduation, the authors observed that wages and job opportunities as well as suitability of jobs were the most common issues what were acknowledged in most of the materials found. These issues were generally distinct from domestic students'. To investigate the expectations of Laurea UAS' international students in Business Management degree programme when finding employments in Finland after graduation, a Likert scale based on Dyck (2011) and La & Nobel (2014)'s studies was used. Thus, the author added and modified some of the statements to conform with the Finnish labour market and its situation.

The Likert scales consisted of 7 statements constituting the descriptive expectations about employment of international students. The respondents evaluated each of these statements on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being 'strongly agree' and 5 being 'strongly disagree' based on their individual experiences and opinions. It is noted that by 'more opportunities', 'higher salary', 'better position' and 'less competition', the author meant in comparison to the situations in the respondents' home countries.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of International Students' Expectations

	Median	IQR	N
Find work easily	3	2	31
Get higher salary	3	2	31
Work in my own field	2	2	31
Have more opportunities	2	2	31
Get better position	2	1	31
Have less competition	3	1	31
Work in multinational company	2	2	31

The table above represents the evaluation of international students about their expectation regarding employment after graduation from Laurea UAS' Business Management programme. As mentioned in section 6.3 *Data analysing* process, the median and the IQR were used to analyse this Likert ordinal data. Note that a medium of 3 indicates that most respondents have neutral responses towards the statements. A medium smaller than 3 means most of them agree with the statements and a medium bigger than 3 shows the opposite. As for IQR statistics, a relatively small IQR (less than 3) represents consensus. Contrarily, a larger IQR suggests that opinion is divided. Since all IQR values in table 5 propose consensus, the author will focus on describing the median (Kostoulas, 2014).

As can be seen from the table, the statements 'have more opportunities', 'work in my own field', 'work in multinational company' and 'get better position' had the median of less than 3. It indicates that the majority of the students took part in the survey expected to have more opportunities, to work in their own field and in multinational company as well as to get better position when entering the labour market in Finland.

With the median of 3, the rest of the statements received mainly neutral responses from the respondents, which demonstrates that most them neither strongly agree nor disagree that 'find work easily', 'have less competition' or 'get higher salary' are amongst their expectations when finding jobs after graduation in Finland. Unexpectedly, 'get higher salary' was not amongst those statements that the students expected the most even though previous literatures showed that wage is one of the most concerned factors of international students besides job opportunities and job suitability (Dyck, 2011 and La & Nobel, 2014).

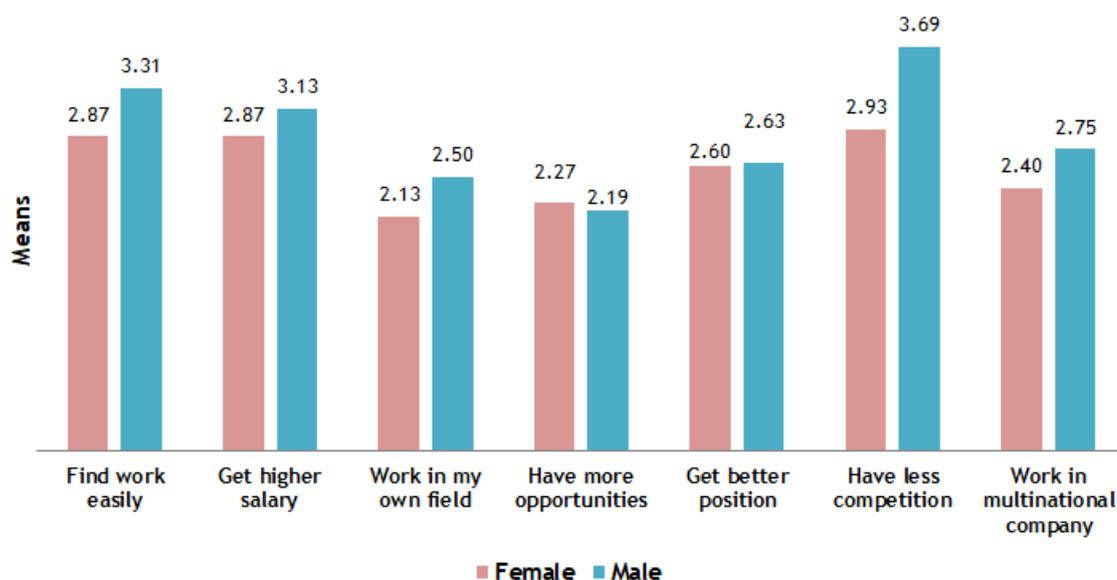


Chart 7: Employment expectation of international students by gender

The chart above represents the expectations of international students by gender. It can be seen that female respondents generally agreed to the statements more than male respondents, which indicates that they hold higher expectations towards the statements than male students. This contradicts what was mentioned section 4.2 *International students' employment expectations* about females tend to have lower expectations than males when it comes to employment prospect.

Table 6: t-Test result of statement "Have less competition"

Have less competition	F	M
Mean	2,93333	3,69
Variance	1,06667	1,03
Observations	15	16
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	29	
t Stat	-2,04929	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0,02479	
t Critical one-tail	1,69913	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0,04958	
t Critical two-tail	2,04523	

However, after applying the t-Test to check whether the null hypothesis that the means of two populations (male and female in this case) are equal is true, the author discovered that the only statement that rejected the null hypothesis was 'have less competition' (t Stat -2.049 < - t Critical two-tail -2.045) (Table 6). This means that the gap between male and female is convincing enough to say the level of expectation about having less competition between male and female respondents differ greatly.

Table 7: Effect of international students' current employment situations on expectation level

SUMMARY

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Business Management r	7	16	2,285714	0,095238
Continue studying	7	27,66667	3,952381	0,793651
Entrepreneurship	7	22,6	3,228571	0,139048
Moved to other countri	7	19,75	2,821429	0,431548
Other fields related	7	17,5	2,5	0,34
Unemployed	7	16	2,285714	0,238095

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	14,83019	5	2,966038	8,734006	1,7E-05	2,477169
Within Groups	12,22548	36	0,339597			
Total	27,05567	41				

Furthermore, the author used Single Factor ANOVA test on Excel to check whether current employment situation of respondents affects their expectation level. Current employment situation is segmented in the following groups: Business Management related, Other fields related,

Entrepreneurship, Continue studying, Moved to other countries and Unemployed. As can be seen from table above, the Between Groups P-value is smaller than the alpha of 0.05 which demonstrates that student's current position does affect their employment expectation (Table 7). However, ANOVA test cannot identify which group affect expectation differently from other groups. The test itself can only tell that at least one group is different from some other groups but cannot tell which ones. This is considered one of the limitations of this research and will be looked more into in future research.

Statistics of obstacles

The second question this research aims to answer is "What obstacles these students must face when entering the job market in Finland". As mentioned in section 4.3 *International students' employment obstacles*, another Likert scale is used with 14 statements based on the research of La & Nobel (2014) to investigate international students' obstacles when entering the labor market in Finland. Thus, some statements were modified to fit the situation in Finland.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics of International Students' Obstacles

	Median	IQR	N
Lack of Finnish skills	1	1,0	31
Lack of other language skills	3	2,0	31
Lack of experiences and skills	3	2,0	31
Lack of education	4	2,0	31
Lack of recommendations	2	3,0	31
Lack of trust towards foreigner	2	1,5	31
Lack of support from government	3	2,5	31
Low salary	3	2,0	31
High competition	2	1,0	31
Too challenging tasks	4	3,0	31
Too much responsibilities	3	2,0	31
Bad work condition	3	1,5	31
Difficulties in working documents	4	1,5	31
Discrimination	3	2,0	31

Standing out from the table 8 is the statement 'lack of Finnish skills' which has the lowest median of all (1). This illustrates that the majority of the international students seem to believe that the lack of Finnish skills is the most critical obstacle when finding employment in Finland. Next in line are 'high competition', 'lack of recommendations' and 'lack of trust towards foreigners' with the median of 2. These results were expected by the author as they fit what was

mentioned in previous literature, which was summarised in section 4.3 *International students' employment obstacles*.

Contrarily, the statements 'lack of education', 'difficulties in working documents' and 'too challenging tasks' with the median of 4 seem to be not huge problems to the respondents. It's understandable that 'lack of education' is amongst the highest median as Finland is known for its superior education system. In fact, standing at the first position in the Universitas 21 development-adjusted ranking for 2018, Finland's universities are proven to be the best performing in the world (Bothwell, 2018).

Additionally, Finland is among those countries that have high quality of life. The country ranked highest in happiness in 2016 with a score of 8.2 out of 10 (Eurofound, 2017). Thus, Finnish working life has lots of good qualities to offer its labour force. For example, equality as well as equal opportunities is assured for both men and women. This means that all kinds of discrimination are forbidden at workplaces. Also, at Finnish workplace, employers very often listen to employees' opinions and take them into account in job planning (Infopankki.fi, 2018). For these reasons, it's clear why 'bad work condition' is not considered as obstacles for most respondents.

The rest of the statements received neutral responses from the respondents, which means they neither strong agree nor disagree that those statements are big barriers to them in the Finnish job market.

Other obstacles

Besides the Likert scale, the author also asked the respondents to add any other obstacle that they have face but wasn't included in the scale. Resultantly, only 4 students provided answer to this question. The first response was from a Vietnamese male who claimed '**appearance**' was another obstacle he has to deal with when searching for job after graduation. Since it's unclear whether by 'appearance' he meant his ethnicity, sexual orientation or purely his outlook, the author cannot discuss further whether appearance is a real issue for foreigners in Finnish job market.

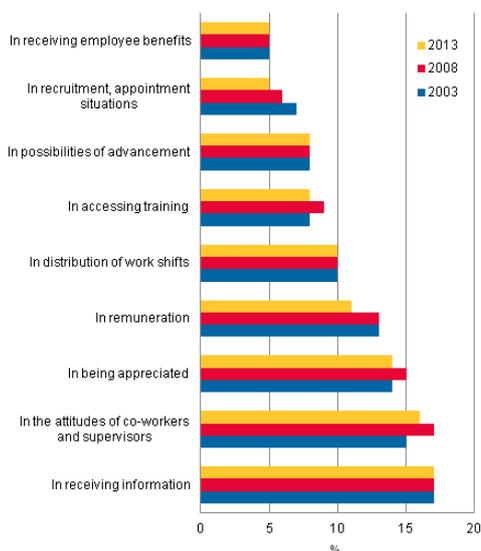
The second respondent is a Vietnamese female, who said "***with only a BSc degree from Laurea, I found it challenging to find a starting job (after graduation) in my study field. A higher degree (e.g. MSc) somewhat makes it easier for me to find a job***". There was, in fact, a debate on the relationship between employability and higher education. According to a research by Puhakka, Rautopuro and Tuominen (2010), universities graduates used to be considered elites of the society, who could pursue knowledge freely and get highly appreciated job quite easily upon graduation; however, when universities expanded resulting in a rising number of graduates competed in the labor market, the screening process became more difficult for employers. A

university degree might create the possibility for employment but it does not necessarily guarantee it (Puhakka, Rautopuro & Tuominen, 2010). This explains how obtaining an even higher education such as master degree might help one find employment easier.

Having said that, what employers really look for in a candidate nowadays is a combination of both education and work experiences. In a research on employability of a business graduate, Niemelä (2016) discovered that no matter how perfect a candidate's educational background is for the placement, they only get hired if they have some work experiences or/and have taken part in some activities such as student organizations.

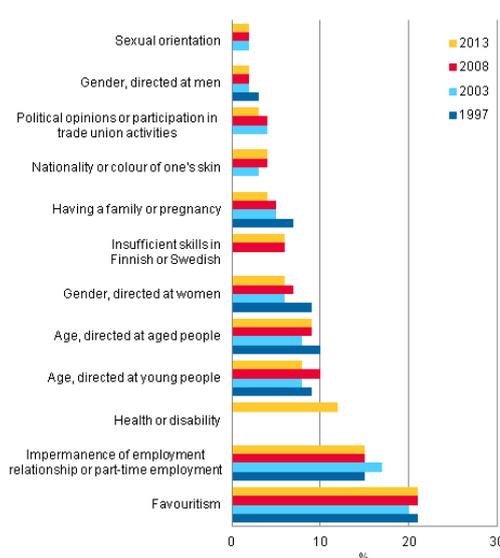
The third response to this question was from a Swedish man whose age is between 35 and 44 years old. He said that there were serious problems in **age discrimination** in Finland. The fact that the statement 'discrimination' in the Likert scale received fairly neutral evaluation from the respondents does not mean this problem can be excluded from the list of obstacles international students have to face when entering the job market, it only indicates that it's not as big of a problem to most respondents.

Age discrimination in the labor market is one of the most discussed grounds and has been studied in numerous researches. Generally, there are two period of time that discrimination often takes place: discrimination in recruitment and discrimination at workplace. Since this research focuses on international student's obstacles when searching for job after graduation, the author only discussed discrimination in recruitment situation.



Source: Quality of Work Life Surveys 2003, 2008 and 2013, Statistics Finland

Figure 13: Discrimination in the past five years at the workplace, % (Statistics Finland, 2013)



Source: Quality of Work Life Surveys 1997, 2003, 2008 and 2013, Statistics Finland

Figure 14: Observed discrimination at workplace by employee, % (Statistics Finland, 2013)

The Quality of Work Life Survey (2013), which is conducted every 5-6 years by Statistic Finland, showed that discrimination in recruitment has been gradually declined since 2003 (Figure 13). Thus, the same survey report demonstrated that there have been slight decreases in most of the areas of discrimination compared to year 2008, 2003 and 1997, which was sign of positive change (Figure 14).

Moreover, a publication of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy in 2012 indicated that indirect or direct age discrimination can be seen in the recruitment process even though announcing age preference in job description is prohibited. Many times a requirement of certain IT skills or a 'youthful' look put older candidate in an unfavorable situation. Additionally, Finnish saw age as the third most common factors (after outlook and disability) that put a person at a disadvantage in recruitment when choosing between two candidates with equal qualifications and skills (Larja et al., 2012).

The last answer was provided by the only American respondent whose age is within the range of 55 years old or older. He believed that some **Finns are still close-minded and resistant to change**. It was unclear to whom this comment was directed to, therefore the author presumed it was aiming at Finnish recruiter or employer so that the discussion stayed within the research's subject.

One of the challenges faced by foreigners who want to find a suitable job in a foreign country is employer attitude (Abdulkarim, 2013). In fact, it's inevitable for a person to face prejudice when moving to a new country (Allport, 1954). Prejudice, as defined by McLeod (2008), is a negative attitude towards an individual not based on actual experience but solely on the fact that they're members of a certain social group. Sometimes foreigners are viewed as threat as their appearance, culture and values are not familiar to one's existence (Vartianen-Ora, 2005 cited in Abdulkarim, 2013, p.25).

As a matter of fact, Abdulkarim (2013) disclosed in his research that despite of having lived in Finland since very young age, being fluent in Finnish language and having graduated from Finnish higher education institute, he was struggling finding job in the country and even told by an employer that the reason why they wouldn't hire him was that they feared customers would react badly when seeing a foreigner behind the desk.

According to Haavisto (2010), the attitude of Finnish people towards foreigners has been more optimistic than before though generally, negative attitude is still dominant. Nevertheless, Jaakola (2005) revealed that the Finns think more positively towards highly educated foreigners who come to Finland for working purpose and who are ready to contribute to the society (cited in Abdulkarim, 2013, p.25).

7.2 Qualitative result

The first purpose of using qualitative research in this study is to establishing a deeper understanding of the real life characteristics of Laurea UAS' international students and their personal experiences regarding employment expectations and obstacles after graduation. The second purpose is to answer the third research question "What international students think Laurea UAS can do to help its future business management students better prepare themselves to overcome these obstacles?"

In total, the author conducted 4 semi-structured interviews during September and October 2018 in Espoo, Finland.

7.2.1 Background of interviewees

The first part of the interview focused on asking questions about personal and educational backgrounds of interviewees in order to understand briefly the profiles of international students of Laurea UAS and their characteristics.

There were in total 4 interviews, of which one was face-to-face and three were conducted through Skype. Concerning gender of the interviewees, only one was male and the rest were females. The youngest interviewee was 23 years old and the oldest was 48 years old, other two were both 27 years old. Regarding nationality, two were Vietnamese, one was Danish and the other one was English. Finally, time of living in Finland of the interviewees ranged from 3 to 13 years.

Education wise, three out of four interviewees were specializing in marketing and the other one in finance and project management. The time of living in Finland ranged from 3 to 13 years and their year of graduation varied between 2015 and 2019 (with half graduated in 2018).

When asked about previous work experiences, only one student who is also the oldest interviewee said she had no work experience in Finland in general or during her study in particular. Both Vietnamese students worked part-time as personal assistant and warehouse staff, which were not related to their fields of studies while studying in Laurea UAS. The only one who had relevant work experiences to his major (accounting and financial assistant) was the Danish interviewee.

The next question was about their current employments and whether they were the jobs they expected. Half of the interviewees are currently unemployed. Amongst the other half, only one said that her current position as an UX designer was what she expected, not because it's in the field she studied (marketing and communication) but because it's what she has always been interested in.

When asked how she landed the job without any connection to her education background, she answered that she saw the advertisement online looking for somebody with experiences in design and a background in engineering. Even though she had no knowledge of engineer, she was really into communication and design that she decided to take a chance by creating a visual plan on how she could help the company and sent it to them, to which the company found interesting and decided to offer her a job. This is a good example on why ‘lack of education’ was not among the most outstanding problem for international students when searching for jobs.

As for the other student who is also currently employed, she stated that her current position as a technician “is just a temporarily solution for a future for me here because it is not really related to my studies but it helps me sustain my life here in Finland and it’s a base for me to learn more [...] and have more chance to advance my career later”.

About language skills, as Business Management degree programme is offered in English, all interviewees evaluated their English skills as either native or fluent. Finnish skills of most students were basic to intermediate level and only one claimed she had level 3 (intermediate level) National certificate of language proficiency (YKI) as she has been living in Finland for 13 years. Naturally, these students could also speak their native languages including Vietnamese and Danish besides the previously mentioned ones. The student from Denmark even stated that he could understand 80% of Swedish and Norwegian due to similarity of these languages to Danish.

7.2.2 General perspective of Finland of interviewees

For this part, the students were asked to describe briefly Finland as a work place. Although not 100% of responses were positive but most of them agreed that Finland offers great living condition and education. In general, Finland was described by the interviewees as following:

- *“a conservative country”*
- *“a chill place to work” because “people don’t push you to work too hard” and “you can work as much as you like”. However, without work experiences and relevant language skills, “it’s difficult to strive here”.*
- *Similar to Denmark, “you can complain” and your boss wouldn’t “fire you or hold that against you. People are quite open-minded generally” but according to “some people who [...] have been working in Finland for a long time with both Finnish people and foreigners, [...] Finnish people are quite often can become too independent at work and kind of forget about the group and that can become an issue sometimes” because they might be working [...] the wrong way for a long time.”*

- *“It’s quite hard to have an opinion when I don’t really have that work experience” but “from listening to other people [...] I find it (Finland) quite work orientated [...] like their whole lives are evolving around their works.”*

These international students were also asked for their reasons for staying in Finland after graduation from Laurea UAS. Although the Statistics Finland’s data showed that international students generally want to stay in Finland because they want to integrate into the Finnish society and to be an asset to the Finnish economy (section 4.1 International graduates’ employment situation in Finland), the most common reason recorded through this thesis interview was that their partners or spouses are living in Finland. One interviewee said:

“My girlfriend is Finnish. [...] we might want to look at switching location if find a good job but if we plan to settle down with a family [...] then Finland has the best public schools and the rest of Europe hasn’t [...].”

One Vietnamese student mentioned that she was thinking about moving abroad after graduation from Laurea UAS. However, she decided to stay and conduct a master degree at Aalto University because she “couldn’t find many good universities” abroad and she was “so familiar with **Fin**nish education”. After that, she got a **boyfriend** and now thinking about staying in Finland for good.

The other Vietnamese student said because “the **salary** and **living condition** in Finland are good that is why (she) really wish to stay here”. She was the only one who mentioned salary as a reason for staying in Finland which further shows that salary was not amongst the top expectations of international students about their employment in Finland despite what was shown in previous literatures (Dyck, 2011 and La & Nobel, 2014).

The last response was from the English student who has been living in Finland in 13 years. Her reason for staying in Finland was solely that she’s **married** and has a **family** here.

7.2.3 Expectations and obstacles of interviewees

This part contains answers of international students regarding their expectations and obstacles about their employments in Business Management field after graduated from Laurea UAS. The author believed that it was unnecessary to ask interviewees once again about the statements in the Likert scales in the survey as these interviewees were chosen among the 31 survey respondents. Instead, only open questions were offered in order to motivate interviewees to express their thoughts.

Expectations

The overall expectations of the interviewees about their employment in business management field after graduation from Laurea UAS were quite low. As stated in section 6.2.1 *Background of interviewees*, half of the students who have graduated got jobs at the time of the interview but only one said that the job as UX designer met her expectation though it was more related to her major in Aalto University and her hobby than the major of marketing in Laurea UAS. The other student was working in a scientific company as a technician and she said that this job was only a temporary solution for maintaining a life here in Finland.

All of the interviewees were aware of the **difficulty of finding jobs** in Finland. One of the interviewee said:

“I expected to get a position, permanent one, in marketing but I couldn’t find many only with English skills.”

The rest of the interviewees share the same opinion that without local **language skills** as well as relevant **work experiences**, their expectations would remain low. One student shared that here employment expectation was not as good as what she would hope because she was looking for job without any work experience and she also had **age** factor against her. Another student added:

“When I began my study, they (expectations) were quite high because there is a lot of accounting and finance positions which was what I’ve focused on but during my study I realized that a lot of them require Finnish, for example. The ones that don’t require Finnish often time to time require master degree which is a bit of a struggle.”

For these reasons, one of the students thought that she would have to study more by herself or even consider switching programme. Another student also shared his employment vision after graduation as following:

“[...] I will most likely be unemployed or work within a field that is completely unrelated to my studies and probably doesn’t require any education at least for a while after my studies and then hopefully with time I can find some opening somewhere that will allow me to get some experience which is basically a lot of people need is work experience.”

It is understandable why employment expectations of these interviewees so low. As indicated in section 3 *Bachelor of Business Administration degree*, the number of unemployed students has been increasing since 2014 (Tradenomiliitto, unknown). However, CIMO (2016) revealed that international graduates from a Bachelor degree programme from a UAS find work the most easily and that 54% of them were employed within one to three years after graduation (section 4.1 *International graduates’ employment situation in Finland*). As most of these interviewees

were freshly graduates, they might still be able to find themselves amongst the 54% and find jobs in the next couple years.

Obstacles

After discussing expectations, the interviewees moved on to answer question regarding employment obstacles that they faced when entering the job market in Finland.

All of them agreed that one of the most critical barriers to the job market for them was their **lack of Finnish language skills**.

“I find the language barrier is the biggest obstacles even in my situation with my level of Finnish (this interviewee passed a level 3 out of 6 in the Finnish National Certificates of Language Proficiency test)” - one student shared.

Another student added: *“I was getting closer in the recruitment rounds. I know my previous experiences were relevant and I know my study was relevant, I know I have good grades, I know I have extra studies online, which mean that the people got chosen (hired) were the ones that maybe speak Finnish even though it wasn’t a required skill which I think many times it isn’t written in the description”*

Some students believed that the reason why Finnish language skills were so important had something to do with the Finnish working environment still reliant on communicating in Finnish but not so much in work itself. He found that in many job descriptions, even though it was written that English is the working language, it is still a requirement for candidates to have excellent understanding, speaking and writing Finnish skills.

“ [...] if you don’t learn the language you will feel left out and you feel like you are like the outsider. When you are there, they have to speak English and then when you go to the toilet, for example, they will switch to Finnish, which make you feel like you are interrupting them.” - a student explained.

The next obstacle that was mentioned is the **lack of experiences and skills**. According to one student, the lack of some certain experiences or skills that are often required in several accounting positions such as SAS was the reason why he has not been successful in finding a job. He said that it was not difficult to get an online certificate for some skills but it was difficult to prove to the employer that you are actually good at it.

“ [...] it’s quite hard if you don’t have experience. I feel that they’re looking specifically for experiences in the field of the job that you’re applying for. I don’t feel that they’re like ‘oh you work there and that’s good’.” - another student added.

To deal with this situation where certain experiences and skills were missed, most interviewees agreed that **recommendation** had a very important role in boosting chance of getting a job. A student shared:

“I think a lot of employees prefer to have reference from previous job to say that he had used these skills in a working life situation”

“[...] it’s much easier to get a job by being referred by someone” - confirmed by another student.

Age factor was mentioned by one student as a barrier to the job market. She stated that her age had been brought up a few times during interviews even though they should not have done that since age discrimination is prohibited in Finland (Dittmar & Indrenius, 2018).

She then added: *“I don’t think age is in every situation because I don’t put my age in my CV so it depends, during interview maybe”*.

The author then asked whether the interviewees had known or heard about these obstacles prior to entering the job market in order to find out if they were caught by surprised when bumped into those barriers. Three out of four of the interviewees said that their surprises came at huge amount of Finnish speaking jobs that require English but **only a few English speaking jobs**.

“I was pretty optimistic when I was studying because I thought that knowing English here is enough but after I went out and searched for job, I realized that I need more than that” - a student said.

Another student added that she expected more jobs offer in English at “Network to get work” event organized by Laurea UAS. She shared her experience at this event has not been positive as recruiters always asked for excellent Finnish language skills which made her feel like there was a lack of support from Laurea UAS for international students.

The next thing the author sought to find out was how these students overcome their obstacles. One student answered that **obtaining a master degree and changing major** had helped her in securing her current position as a UX designer. During her studies in Laurea UAS, she was majoring in marketing but according to her, it was very difficult for her to get a job in this industry with just English language skills. Additionally, she believed that Aalto School of Business had better network with employers, which encouraged them to be more receptive and more willing to accept Aalto’s students.

“[...] it’s still difficult because in UX you still have to speak Finnish but it’s more advantageous than marketing because I know design and I also know about service thinking and I got my

major and degree in communication from Aalto which provides quite good network” - she shared.

Additionally, an interviewee believed that **improving Finnish skills** was the way to go. He explained that English speaking positions generally had a lot of competitions not only from the Finnish students but also from foreigners. This means that as a new student who only speaks English and who don't have a master degree. Especially, in a country where one can study and get master degree for free, it is going to be tremendously difficult to find work without at least a certain level of Finnish language skills.

One other idea was to **show to employers the desire to improve**. Since different positions require several different skills, there's a possibility that one hasn't obtained all the necessary skills that are asked from the employer at the point of applying. About this, one interviewee shared that besides learning new skills online, he had been looking for voluntary work as well to add something not technical and maybe not relevant to his work experience but it could show willingness to improve, which employer might appreciate.

Lastly, **persistence** was also believed to be a good practice in order to overcoming barriers to the Finnish job market.

“Just keep applying because to get work experience obviously you have to get a job so [...] don't be discourage when you always get knocked down.” - stated by one of the student.

7.2.4 Role of Laurea University of Applied Sciences

In this section, the author discusses how Laurea UAS supports its international students in overcoming their obstacles and how its education benefits the students' future career, based on the responses of the interviewees.

For the first question, the overall answer received was that the students didn't get much assistance from the school regarding their difficulties in finding job. Half of the respondents mentioned the **Network to Get Work** event as an example of the support from Laurea UAS. However, according to them, this event was meant for Finnish students more than for international ones because the recruiters mainly required fluent level of Finnish.

“If Laurea offers studies to international students then there should be recruitment and seminar for jobs in English and I find that there aren't.” - one student added.

A student mentioned she got a lot of support from her **tutor teacher** but it only related to her study and out of that area they didn't really help. The other interviewee thought Laurea UAS was helpful in terms of providing **Finnish courses** for international students during their studies. Having said that, they found that those courses weren't intensive enough and wished the

school could have done better in making international students become more aware of how important it is to speak Finnish in the job market.

“I think they (Laurea UAS) should just stress the point to the English speaking students that if you plan to stay, the way the current market looks is that the chance of finding employment without speaking at least a certain level of Finnish and reading and writing a certain level of Finnish, you’ll not gonna be able to or at least it’s gonna limited you severely in finding work.”
- a student shared.

As for the second question of whether education at Laurea UAS is useful for its students’ career or not, most of the responses indicated that it was useful to a certain extend. Two students agreed that there were several **interesting and valuable courses**, particularly, in marketing field. Nevertheless, there’s a limit on how much a university can offer to its student.

“The most important thing when it comes to finding a job is that the student has to really study on their own and [...] advance their skills on their own.” - a student told.

For other interviewee, **getting a degree** in Business Administration from Laurea UAS would be beneficial for his future career. Despite that fact, he thought that there was a limit to how much a degree and study can actually help a student finding employment, when the student does not speak Finnish in Finland nor has relevant experiences.

7.3 Recommendations

In the last part of both the questionnaire and interview, the students were asked for suggestions to Laurea UAS about how it could improve to better support its international students in Business Management degree programme who want to work in Finland after graduation.

As mentioned in section 5 *Career and Recruitment Services*, there are five main services that the department is in charge of: career planning studies, career counselling, jobs and placements, workshops and recruitment even Network to Get Work. The author decided to match all recommendation from both respondents and interviewees into these categories.

7.3.1 Career planning studies

The first comment stood out from the responses was that the students wished to have better guidance from the beginning of study about the importance of Finnish skills when entering the job market. About this matter, a student said: “Especially the first semester, there were many guests saying ‘oh, you don’t need to speak Finnish, I found a job’ and some of the teachers would also maybe not specifically stress the point but it would be implied many times.”

Other student added: *“[...] notify the importance of Finnish, not just bring alumni to talk about how Finnish language is not necessary”*. Additionally, many students felt that they could

have **more Finnish courses** and in a **more intensive level** than what the university is currently offering them.

Lastly, in one interviewee, a student mentioned a workspace called Projectori which was visible on Optima account of all students. According to the student, this workspace offered various projects every semester for students to get real experience. However, since all contents were written in Finnish, it limited international students severely in joining in these projects. He spoke about this matter to the teachers in charge and received response that they did not generally accept non-Finnish speakers because everything was working in Finnish. He found this very unfortunate because course like Projectori was a significantly good source for students to get experience and to extend their network but the fact was that only Finnish students were used as instruments. He wished that Laurea UAS could open up a Projectori that either only for international students or a mix of both Finnish and international students or it could try to get in contact with more international companies for **more international projects**.

“I understand that they (Laurea) might have limited resources in helping English speaking students finding internships but projects are events that the school is in charge of, some of it is courses but maybe they should try and find more sources for like international or English projects. Doesn't have to be big but if students could work in these for couple of hours they would do it even without ETCs points, they would do it just for the experience.” - he expressed.

7.3.2 Career counselling

Career counselling was highly expected service as it got mentioned and implied multiple times by both questionnaire respondents and interviewees. As indicated in section 5 *Career and Recruitment Services*, the career counselling service aim to help students in discovering their own strengths, weaknesses and their career paths. Students are also able to recognize their goals and obtain qualification requirements for their working life at a global and local level through using this service.

The first thing that international students looked for in career counsellor was education and guidance about **work environment in Finland**. One student issued an opinion that besides knowledge of students' own fields of studies, what was also crucial for students who want to work and live in Finland was the knowledge of the work environment because companies here operate with very different values, organization, strategies, management and expectations.

“Be more realistic to the students about working life, encourage them to be more hard-working and try to go get what they want to do instead of just complaining and feeling depressed or not worthwhile.” - other student shared.

In section 7.2.2 *General perspective of Finland of interviewees*, all interviewees had something to describe Finland as a workplace but most of them shared opinions that were based on their

friends or acquaintances' experiences because they did not have enough work experiences in Finland. By providing the students with information on Finnish work environment, especially those who wished to get hired after internship, they might adapt to the workplace quicker and have better chance of getting the employment.

The next thing that the students wanted the counsellor to guide them about was the **Finnish culture**. As said by one of the respondents, there were several dimensions to culture such as power distance, individualism and collectivism. These elements are all tremendously important and beneficial for students to land work in Finland. According to Majakulma (2011), in order for international students to increase their level of employability it is necessary for them to integrate in the Finnish society. This means that they will need instruction regarding Finnish culture and how to behave in Finnish society in general and at work place in particular. Thus, it was suggested that international students should be advised to get work during of studies not for money but to learn how to integrate into the Finnish society as well as work culture.

Overall, career consultant service is not a novel idea as it has been implemented in many universities of applied sciences all over the world. Both respondents and interviewees of this research believed that this service is the solution for their lack of knowledge regarding Finnish work environment, culture and social which in turn help increase the possibility of them successfully get a job in the country.

7.3.3 Recruitment Event & Jobs and placements

The author decided to put recruitment event Network to Get Work together with jobs and placements in the same section as both of these services serve the same goal which is to provide platform for students to find and apply for open positions in the job market.

Stood out amongst all the comments was the requirement for Laurea UAS to extend its **network with international companies** so that there would be more open positions offered in English. As mentioned in section 7.2.4 *Role of Laurea University of Applied Sciences*, 2 out of 4 interviewees believed the Network to Get Work event was more beneficial for Finnish students than for international ones because the recruiters mainly required fluent level of Finnish.

“There’s this recruitment event at Helsinki University [...] that seems to be focused on international students so why Laurea UAS can’t has more of this.” - an interviewee expressed.

The respondents thought that by having better connections with international companies, not only they would trust the qualification of graduated international students from Laurea UAS more but the school could also invite them to job fair events like Network to Get Work for students to build relationship with employers and increase their employment opportunity.

A student suggested that Laurea UAS should make it **mandatory for international students to have their internship in Finland**. According to this student, foreigners going back to their own country to do internship make themselves unemployable in Finland because Finnish employer cares about Finnish references, not foreign ones.

“Unfortunately Finnish is a complicated language. If a student is below 25 and foreigner, Laurea should have contacts with multinationals to cover trainee positions” - added by one student.

For other respondent, it did not have to be international companies but Laurea UAS could try to find a way to **integrate local companies with international students** so that the students could offer their competences to those companies. This way these companies can gain more experiences of working with international students, see what they are capable of and possibly giving them more chances to work that their companies in the future.

7.3.4 Workshops

Laurea UAS offers career planning workshops for students with the goal of providing them with assistance in finding employments and internships.

Most comments mentioned that Laurea UAS should have **more networking workshops** for students. A couple of examples given by the respondents were:

- Workshop that *“connect you with some students working in companies that are hiring”*.
- Workshop that provide *“contact with Finnish companies”* to *“help foreigners to understand more the Finnish environment and culture”*
- *“Seminars or workshops for students on job avenues available”*

Regarding this topic, an interviewee gave an opinion that Laurea should provide more practical courses and help students improve their network through, for example, alumni event where graduates from the same field gather and network with new students. This kind of workshop would help students to extend their network with more people, create more opportunities for international students to find work or at least show them that people in this school can get a job in Finland even though they don't know Finnish.

The respondents also requested for **more practical skills workshops**. One student suggested that Laurea UAS should help students prepare better for skills used in marketing and accounting fields as well as presentation skills.

Other interviewee proposed **workshop on how to get through CV rounds effectively** since it seems to be the most difficult phase in job application process.

“There’s only one job there’s obviously going to be a lot of people applying and so it’s discouraging in that part. I’ve applied for so many jobs, it sort of says straight away that ‘no’.” - she said.

Even though she had got her CV to a format that she was happy with but she felt like there should be more. She then suggested having a workshop where companies’ recruiters come over to say what they look for instead of just teacher saying.

“I’d be good to have a comment outside perspective from somebody who’s working in HR saying what they actually look for” - she added.

8 Conclusion

8.1 Summary of the findings

Firstly, it is noticed that qualitative results are mostly consistent with quantitative ones. Thus, not only were the figures demonstrated reliable, the findings can be generalized to the whole studied population as well. Overall, the key findings from the research are:

Firstly, the majority of international students in Business Management degree programme in Laurea UAS are from African and Asian countries and belong to the age range between 18 and 34 years old. These students have excellent English skills and basic knowledge of Finnish language. Some of them gain working skills and experiences in business management field, some in other fields such as restaurant industry.

Secondly, international students’ perspectives of Finland are generally positive. They evaluate that the country offers a great life standard, good education, and high salary. Finnish people are thought to be mostly open-minded and chill.

Thirdly, a big part of international students who have graduated from Laurea UAS in Business Management degree programme expect to have more work opportunities, find jobs and get better positions in their field of study or in a multinational company. Also, the result shows that when it comes to competition in the job market, there’s a big gap in expectation level between male and female students. Specifically in this case, female students have lower expectations than male ones. The author also finds that current employment situation influences students’ employment expectations.

Fourthly, the biggest barrier of international students in the Finnish job market is the lack of Finnish skills. Other main obstacles are high competition, lack of recommendations and lack of trust towards foreigners. Some additional obstacles that were mentioned by students in the free writing section are appearance, lack of a master degree, age discrimination and employer attitude. These students overcome their obstacles by either changing major, obtaining a master degree, improving their Finnish skills or trying different activities to show employer a can-do

attitude. Laurea UAS also provides support through recruitment event Network to Get Work and Finnish courses but the students still feel like they don't receive enough assistance regarding job finding.

Finally, recommendations provided by the students to Laurea UAS are divided into 4 groups based on 4 areas of the Career and Recruitment Services: career planning studies, career counselling, recruitment event Network to Get Work/ jobs and placements site, and workshops.

For the career planning studies, the students hoped to be notified more about the importance of Finnish skills and that Laurea should provide more Finnish courses in a more intensive level and more international projects for international students.

For the career counselling service, the students suggested counsellors to provide guidance about Finnish work environment and culture.

Some suggestions to improve recruitment event Network to get work as well as jobs and placements site are that Laurea should extend its network with more international companies, make it compulsory for international students to have internship in Finland as well as integrate local companies with international students.

Lastly, the students wished for more workshops that focusing on helping students to expand their network, gain more practical skills and how to get through CV rounds effectively.

8.2 Limitations

There is a number of limitations that might influence the validity and reliability of this research. Firstly, in the beginning phase of the thesis, the author obtained information about graduated or soon graduate students through Laurea UAS's student office. However, this information was not up-to-date which made it difficult to contact these targeted students and consider if they were the right people for this thesis.

Additionally, the author was struggled with getting students from diverse backgrounds to participate in the interview. Therefore, most of the interviewees were her friends from the Business Management degree programme. Nevertheless, the majority of them are from the same class and belong to the soon graduate group. This means that the findings of the qualitative research might be affected by these characteristics holding by these students.

The other limitation is that most of the respondents participated in the questionnaire came from countries outside of Europe such as Vietnam and Nepal. This might cause the research to be driven mainly by the perspective of the non-Europeans instead of international students as a whole.

Finally, the findings of this thesis are assumed to be valid only within the time frame of the research which is why it is recommended that readers continue updating information of the current situation.

8.3 Recommendation for further research

As the scope of the thesis is limited to Laurea UAS' soon graduate or graduated international students in Business Management degree programme who desire to find work in Finland, it is suggested that future researches should focus on international students from other degree programmes in Laurea UAS or on Finnish students from Business Management degree programme to observe their employment expectations and obstacles.

Thus, since this research only focused on international students' point of view as job seekers entering the job market, the author believed that it would be an interesting topic to understand employer' perspectives of international students from Laurea UAS as well. Researches about expectations of employers on international students and their obstacles when hiring international students would give readers a bigger picture of the Finnish labour market in business management field toward international students graduated from Laurea UAS.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Questionnaire - Google Form

Employment Expectations and Obstacles of International Students after Graduation from Laurea University of Applied Sciences' Business Management Degree Programme in Finland

This questionnaire is carried out in order to collect material for the thesis of Dang Linh from Laurea University of Applied Sciences. Please fill your answers carefully. Your answer is very important for my research.

1. What is your gender? Male Female Other

2. What is your age?

- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55 years old or older

3. In which country you were born? _____

4. How long have you been living in Finland? _____ years

WORK AND EDUCATION BACKGROUND

5. Evaluate your language skills in the table below:

	Native	Excellent	Good	Sufficient	Basics	Not at all
Finnish						
English						
Swedish						
German						

6. If you can speak other language than those mentioned above, please specify below.

7. What is your degree program name?

- Business Management
- Business Information Technology
- Social Services
- Restaurant Entrepreneurship
- Safety, Security and Risk Management
- Other

8. What are you specializing in?

9. What is your year of graduation/estimated graduation year? _____

10. What are your previous work experiences in your home country?

First workshop (Cv, cover letter, LinkedIn) in Autumn

(Please mention maximum four most relevant ones)

11. What are your previous work experiences in Finland?

(Please mention maximum four most relevant ones)

12. Where do you work at the moment and what is your title?

13. Is that the type of work you were expecting /expect after graduation?

To a Great Extent 1 2 3 4 Not at all

14. If not at all, what type of work you were expecting /expect after graduation?

EMPLOYMENT EXPECTATIONS AND OBSTACLES

15. When searching for work after graduation, I expect to ...

Evaluate how much you agree with the following statements. (1 = strongly agree; 5 = strong disagree)

	1	2	3	4	5
Find work easily					
Get higher salary					
Work in my own field					
Have more opportunities					
Get better position					
Have less competition					
Work in multinational company					

16. If you expect other, please specify below.

17. How is finding work in Finland in general?

Very easy 1 2 3 4 5 Very difficult

18. Evaluate how big the following obstacles were for you when searching for work. (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree)

	1	2	3	4	5

Lack of Finnish skills					
Lack of other language skills					
Lack of experience and skills					
Lack of education					
Lack of recommendations					
Lack of trust towards foreigners					
Lack of support from government					
Low salary					
High competition					
Too challenging tasks					
Too much responsibility					
Bad work conditions					
Difficulties in working documents					
Discrimination					

19. If you face other obstacles than those mentioned above, please specify below.

20. What do you think Laurea could do to help you prepare better for these obstacles when searching for work in Finland?

Thank you very much for your answers!

Appendix 2: Interview questions

Employment Expectations and Obstacles of International Students after Graduation from Laurea University of Applied Sciences' Business Management Degree Programme in Finland

Date: __/__/2018

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Gender Male Female
2. Age _____
3. In which country were you born?
4. How long have you been living in Finland?
5. When did/will you graduate?
6. What are your previous work experiences in your home country and in Finland?
7. Have you worked during studying?
8. What languages can you speak and in what level?

PERSPECTIVES

9. How would you describe shortly Finland as a work place?
10. Why do you want to stay in Finland?

EXPECTATIONS

11. What are you expectations about job after graduation?
12. Where do you work at the moment and what is your title?
13. Does the job meet your expectation? (Discuss)

OBSTACLES

14. What are the main obstacles you have to face? (when finding job/ when interviewing/ when working ...)
15. How have you overcome these barriers?
16. Does your study in Laurea University of Applied Sciences support you on overcoming these obstacles? How?

RECOMMENDATIONS

17. What do you think about opportunities for international students graduated from Laurea University of Applied Sciences working in Business Management field in Finland?
18. Do you think your study in Laurea University of Applied Sciences useful for your career?
19. What do you think Laurea University of Applied Sciences can improve in order to support their international students from Business Management programme who want to work in Finland more?