

Exporting Finnish Vocational Education and Training to the United Arab Emirates: Opportunities and Challenges

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>Internationalization is a modern approach impacting the orientation, utilization and growth of all educational sectors across the globe. The latest vocational education and training (VET) changes have been followed by a cycle of internationalization, in line with neoliberal economics, globalization, shifting international workers and consumer economies, and information economy requirements. Even if internationalization is evident in different aspects of the vocational education system, both in developing and developed countries, it is a trend that is often ignored current literature.</p> <p>The primary aim of the study was to recognize the obstacles that Finnish VET providers face in transmitting technical and vocational training to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), along with potential approaches to address those challenges. Therefore, the qualitative approach was chosen for the study, and the data was collected by conducting five semi-structured interviews. Based on the literature review, seven core methods were considered for developing the Finnish VET system in the UAE. These included institutionalized VET research and consultancy, distance education, local branch campuses, twining partnership, staff and student mobility, and specific in-company training.</p> <p>According to the findings, the interviewed experts were very optimistic about the student and staff mobility. Moreover, the most important challenges identified for VET Finnish providers were the lack of an international strategy among VET providers in the UAE, the low social value of VET in the UAE, gaining government support both financially and legally, and a lack of interest in private sector jobs among the Emiratis due to low wages compared to the public sector. Moreover, the challenges also included the alignment of Finland's education program with the UAE's training program and the labor market, and finally, unavailability of bilingual, motivated and qualified trainers.</p> <p>Some of the most effective solutions to tackle the problems were collaborating with UAE strategic-level organizations and developing international cooperation expertise in VET, creating a positive image of Finnish VET models in UAE, choosing a suitable and experienced logistic partner for international cooperation, reforming career guidance systems in the UAE as well as hiring local experienced teachers and instructors who are familiar with both the Arabic and English languages. The solution also included finding external sources of enterprises and industries, building a forum for offering advice and distributing best practices regarding academic teachers' career development, and implementing a structured programme of teacher training.</p>		
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1 Introduction

The export of education is a growing trend throughout the globe, particularly in Europe. It is known as an industry that essentially blends various sectors and has tremendous income. It has played a key role in Australia's economic boom, doubling its value every five years from 1990 to 2010. It has surpassed the sector of the tourism as the Australia's largest export services in 2007-2008(Maslen 2012).

Finland is one of the major countries in education exports and has a competitive system of education with a strong international credibility (Balbutskaya 2015). The government's goal is to make Finland one of the world's leading educational economies and to spread its reputation for high quality education. Implementing the export education strategy includes improving the network, production, efficiency, marketing growth, establishing an export cluster and activating institutions of higher education as exporters (Ministry of Education and Culture 2010). Efficient export of Finnish technology education will influence the higher education system in the country and its continued growth (ibid 2010).

1.1 Background and research problem

The export of an educational system is a mechanism of choosing and integrating specific elements that are consistent with the potential importer country's targets and requirements. There is a huge demand from developing countries on the vocational education of developed countries, and on the Finnish vocational education in turn. Scholars referred that importing the vocational education to developing countries can significantly reduce the unemployment rate.

As for the vocational education system, a country is looking to reform its current system, reviewing the experiences of different countries, and choosing the features that achieve their best goals, structure and adapt to their culture. Therefore, the social, cultural and economic conditions of each country determine the methods and strategies used in the export of technical and vocational training (Euler 2013.)

The national system of vocational education is really a mechanism for reaching specific goals and is distinguished from country to country. The success of these systems is to achieve these goals. (ibid 2013)

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) goals from vocational education is to achieve a sustainable and knowledge-based economy. Therefore, the country has focused on creating a high-quality national system in vocational training and education. The government's priorities include developing skills related to emerging technologies, materials and systems, as well as providing equal access to adequate and quality vocational education for all sexes, and finally increasing the number of students and grown-ups with appropriate qualifications which include technical and vocational qualifications for job opportunities and enterprise. (Government.ae 2018). In this context, UAE imported many vocational education systems from many countries, especially United States of America, Great Britain and several other industrialized countries. However, the Finnish vocational educational system is not shown in this large market.

On another hand, Finnish vocational educational system has been successfully collaborated with many countries such as Russia, South-Korea and India. This is a first step to achieve the Finnish goal in this regard.

Hence, this research was conducted to check whether there is any possibility of exporting vocational education and training from Finland to the UAE, and if so, how it could be done as smoothly and quickly as possible.

1.2 The Finnish education system

Promoting education levels and ensuring equal educational opportunities for all people regardless of their place of residence, status, maternity or gender is the primary purpose of the Finnish education policy (Balbutskaya 2015). This goal has been greatly achieved because the network of schools and institutions across the country covers and responds to educational demand, and it has enough space for beginners. The focus of the educational policy has changed from infrastructure to quality improvement. This step involves promoting the work of the educational system, increasing its capacity to meet the demands, increasing the number of available options for innovators, and changing the decision-making power on curricula and

implementing them themselves. Schools are encouraged to collaborate with each other and with the community around them. The aim is to create a simple, transparent and consistent educational structure with international standards and to create an educational environment that meets the requirements of the students as well as the demands of the community.

In general, The structure of education in Finland is founded on the following (Ministry of Education and Culture 2019a):

- 1) Basic education (Basic education is provided in comprehensive schools, with a duration of 9 years, from the age of 7 to 16 years, and at the end of which a student's graduation certificate is awarded. Before going to school, six-year-olds in Finland can benefit from one year of pre-primary education, which of course is not compulsory).
- 2) Upper secondary education (Comprises general schooling and vocational training. After the end of the basic education, the secondary school begins, and students aged from 16 to 19 are enrolled at this level and students will be given a general exam pass at the end of the program. If the student wants to enter technical and vocational courses immediately after the basic training, this course is available to him or her. This period also lasts three years, and at the end, the certificate of vocational upper secondary qualification, further vocational qualification or specialist vocational qualification, will be given).
- 3) Higher education, provided by universities and universities of applied science (also known as polytechnics)

Figure 1 illustrates the Finnish education system with all levels of education, along with details of the age and requirements for moving to the next level (Ministry of Education and Culture 2019a). The Finnish Parliament passed the laws on education and decides on the adoption of the general principles of educational policy.

It is the responsibility of the Government as well as the Ministry of Education and Culture to implement these principles at the central department level. The Ministry of Education and Culture constantly guides and controls almost all the educational equipment.

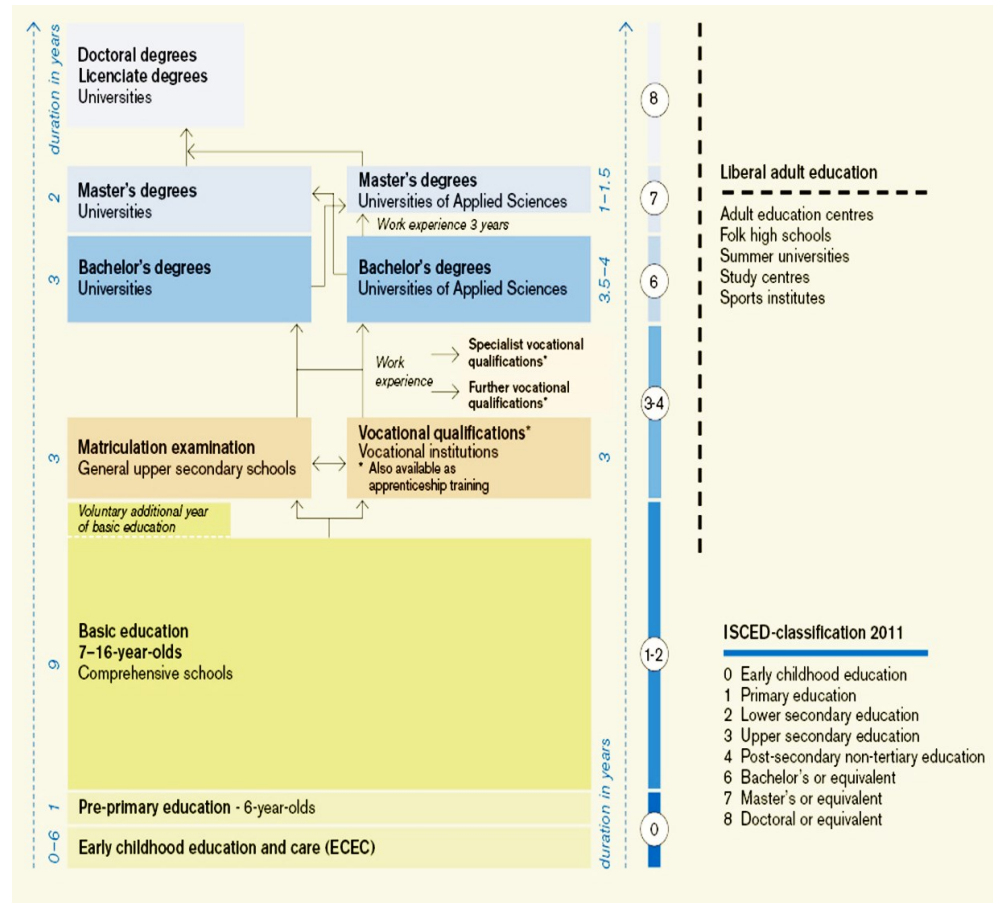


Figure 1. Education system in Finland (Ministry of Education & Culture 2019a)

1.2.1 Vocational education and training in Finland

VET capabilities in Finland can be terminated in three main ways:

- I. In the context of educational and training programmes,
- II. Type of apprenticeship,
- III. Skills-based credentials. (In this way, students and adults show their professional skills regardless of how and where they were acquired.)

Among these methods, the most popular VET system is the school-based system. The school-based system offers vocational training for all disciplines in professional technical institutes. Passing the initial vocational course lasts from two to three years, and it is taught in multi-disciplinary or specialized technical institutes. Connection to all aspects of higher education is possible upon completion of the three-year course. In further vocational education, there is the possibility of studying in advanced

vocational and professional courses. Providing advanced and specialized vocational courses is only validated in feasibility studies and they are generally considered for working adults (Ministry of Education and Culture 2019b).

Vocational education and training (VET) are provided at three levels of enthusiasts. At present, students are allowed to attend technical and vocational training centers after completing basic education or after passing the final secondary school exam. Graduates from comprehensive schools will receive a certificate of ISCED 3 (International Standard Classification of Education), ISCED 5 or ISCED 6, after completing the 2-year course, the 2-5-year course or the 4-5-year course, respectively. In the existing structure, there are up to 160 vocational qualifications: 43 vocational upper secondary qualifications, 65 further vocational qualifications and 56 specialist vocational qualifications. (ibid 2019b).

The network of VET providers consists of vocational institutions that offer upper secondary and further technical education and training. The license to provide VET is given by the Ministry. The providers are responsible for carrying out training in their territories, addressing local labor market demands as well as developing training programs focused on nationally recognized requirements. They likewise choose freely on the dimension and kind of staffing and the sort and number of foundations or units they run. In the beginning of the year 2019, 160 VET providers were active in Finland (Ministry of Education and Culture 2019c).

VET is funded by the financing program of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The central and local governments give portions of the subsidies to vocational upper secondary qualifications while further and specialist vocational qualifications are supported by the central government. (ibid 2019c)

1.2.2 Students situation in Finland

By the end of 2017, Finland had a total student population was 1.29 million (Statistics Finland 2018a). 126,900 new students were enrolled to earn a VET degree, and 52% of them were women. 46,200 of them had been trained to receive a degree in initial vocational education, 41,800 in preparatory initial vocational, and 38,900 in further and specialist vocational education (Statistics Finland 2018b). There were also 103,800

upper secondary general school students (Statistics Finland 2018c), 129,000 polytechnic students (Statistics Finland 2018d), and 31,000 university students in Finland (Statistics Finland 2018e).

In 2017, 20,362 foreign students studied at higher education institutions in Finland. They grew rapidly between 2006 and 2011, whereas the proportion of students remained relatively constant during 2011-2016. It dropped marginally in 2017, down from the previous year by 700 students and 3 percent. In 2017, 10,761 foreign students have attended in universities and 9,601 in polytechnics. (Facts Express 9B/2018, 2018.)

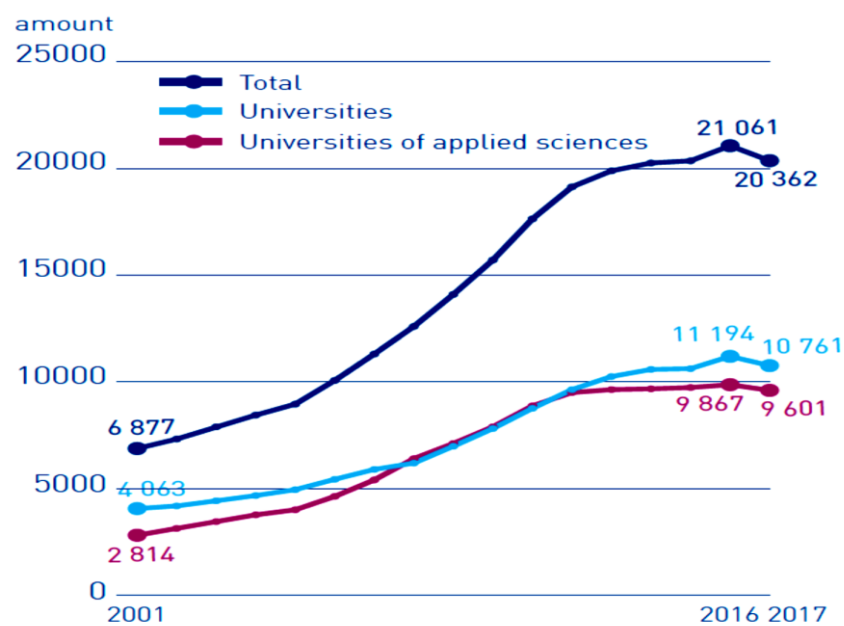


Figure 2. The number of foreign degree students in Finland (Facts Express 9B/2018, 2018)

In 2017, more than 75 percent of foreign graduates were non-EU / EEA candidates. The largest number of the students emerged in Asia (45 percent). Africans accounted for 10 percent. In the long term, the proportion of Asian students has grown and, correspondingly, the share of European and African students has decreased. The most common nationalities held by foreign students were Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese or Nepalese. Russian, Vietnamese and Nepalese students mainly studied at universities of applied sciences, while Chinese students' study at universities. (Facts Express 9B/2018, 2018.)

At universities, the largest number of foreign national study in the fields of engineering and information and communication technologies. At universities of applied sciences,

the majority of foreign nationals studied in the fields of business, administration and law. In both sectors, the proportion of foreign nationals was the largest among students of information and communication technologies. (ibid 2018.)

Table 1. Finnish foreign graduates by area of education in 2017 (Facts Express 9B/2018, 2018.)

	Field of study	Number of students	%	Field of study	Number of students	%
universities	Engineering	2210	20.5	Social sciences	898	8.3
	Information and ICT	1775	16.5	Health and welfare	593	5.5
	Arts and humanities	1688	15.7	Education	573	5.3
	Business, administration and law	1389	12.9	Agriculture and forestry	273	2.5
	Natural sciences	1270	11.8	Services	96	0.9
polytechnics	Business, administration and law	3647	38	Arts and humanities	217	2.4
	Engineering	1798	18.7	Education	33	0.3
	Information and ICT	1767	18.4	Natural sciences	17	0.2
	Health and welfare	1290	13.4	Agriculture and forestry	11	0.1
	Services	817	8.5	Social sciences	1	0.0

1.3 Research motivation

Finnish education has grown rapidly becoming one of the world's top education systems. The higher education institutions internationalization strategy (2009), drafted by the Ministry of Education and Culture, has contributed to a remarkable rise in international students in Finland. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) emphasizes high-quality education and targets in the near future to become one of the strongest in the fields of education and economy (Gulfnews.com).

The Finnish Government supports education export as part of the global service economy, which includes numerous sectors such as education technology, learning services and consultancy to achieve the potential goal of being the world's leading educational exporter. As a result of competitive education, Finland aims to expand

extremely in education export (Culture 2010). The ambassador for education export, Ms. Marianne Huusko in the Ministry for Foreign Trade and Development, points out that the goal for education export is to understand the needs of potential customers and engage in interaction. Moreover, the educational companies target to sell products and services directly to the international market. (Houni, 2016) There is a worldwide interest towards the Finnish education due to excellent result in PISA (Program for International Student Assessment). Several articles have been published in different countries and many international delegations have visited in Finland to learn more about its education. Finnish education has been recognized globally and has an international reputation, which is why there is a strong demand for exports of Finnish education onto the global educational market (Culture 2010). In general, the strengths and weaknesses of Finnish education technology exports can summarize in Figure 3.

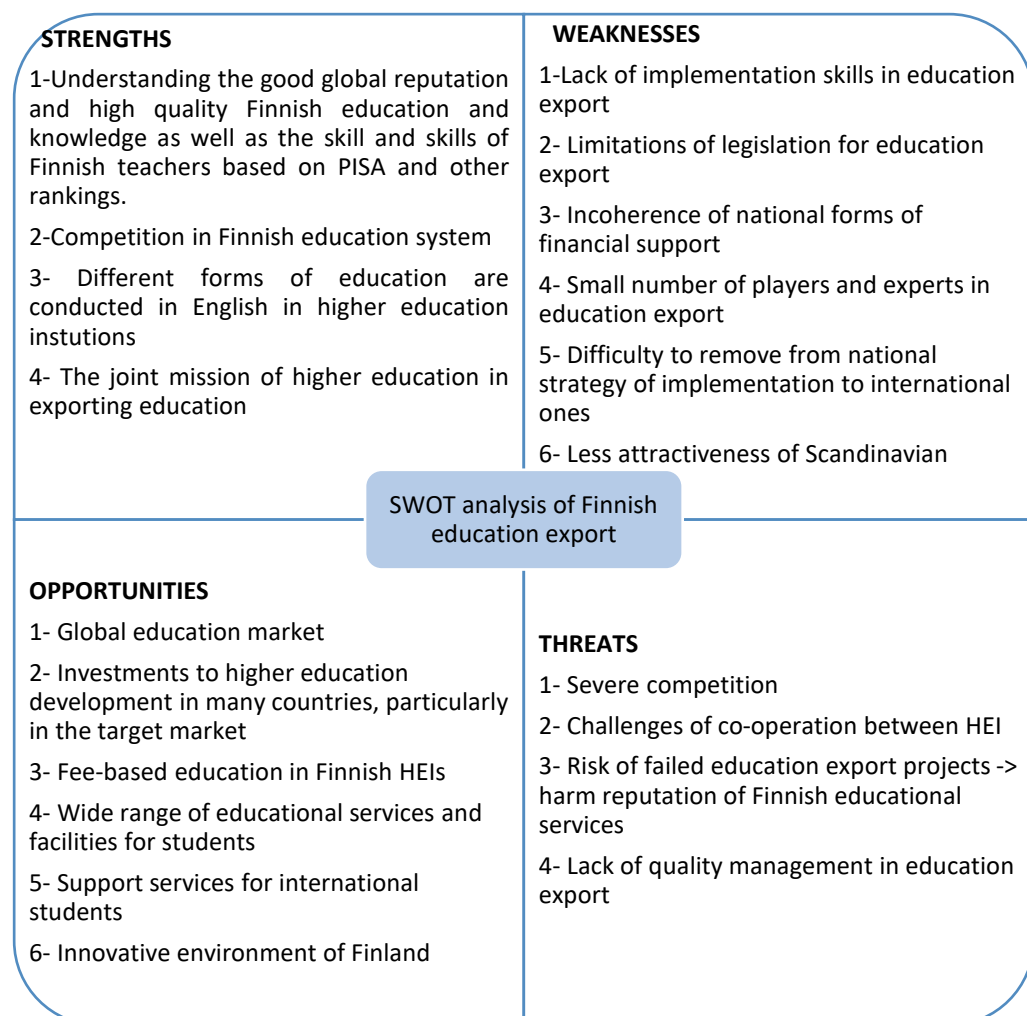


Figure 3. SWOT analysis of Education export (Suomen koulutuvientistrategia 2010)

Regarding the vision of the Ministry of Education in the UAE, innovative education programs will be enhanced by the best quality of plans designed, pedagogy of teachers, curriculum and the international the knowledge standards for all age groups of students to meet the future demand of the labor market. One of the main targets to be among the top 15 countries in 2021, which is a strong aspiration for the 2020 strategy. (Education, 2016). In 2016, the UAE Cabinet approved a federal budget of education for 2017-2016 with the maximum part of the Federal budget 20.5 %, which is AED 10.2 billion (WAM, UAE Cabinet approved dh248b federal budget for 2017-2021, 2016).

To achieve a sustainable development target as well as a knowledge-based and diversified economy, the UAE needs to provide Emiratis students with professional skills to meet challenges and participate effectively in economic and social development by giving them the information, skills, and expertise to meet the requirements of the market. To achieve that goal, the UAE is keen to build a national system to promote the existence of a qualitative system in technical education and vocational training (TVET). (Government.ae, 2018) . The interest of the UAE is to increase the number of Vocational schools and to combine in the curriculum of high schools which increase the opportunities of Finnish institution to expand in UAE. The decision makers in the UAE focusing on Finnish education. The Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, visited the Finnish pavilion in the Global Education Supplies and Solutions Exhibition, GESS on the 27th February, 2018. (WAM, Mohammed bin Rashed vist GESS, 2018).

Many Finnish education providers have international projects worldwide by providing different services to countries around the world. The aim of this research was to find the information, interest, opportunities, challenges and, expanding strategies related to the UAE education market.

1.4 Research Questions and Methodology

In a microscopic study, many points of views exist to cover and note. The goal of the researcher was to identify the opportunities, challenges and strategies available for exporting technical and vocational training from Finland to the United Arab Emirates,

and in particular provide new insight into factors and obstacles to exporting education to the United Arab Emirates.

The UAE's political leaders believe that investing in human resources is the best long-term national investment, and that proper education is a means to advance society and provide a backing for its renewal. In this regard, in the recent years, the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Education has conducted an analysis and assessment of the current education status in the UAE, its effectiveness and development needs. The thesis may provide them with fresh ideas for the advancement of education at the UAE. Moreover, student organizations can learn about the goals and methods of training exporter in Finland, in particular the concepts and methods of vocational education. Accordingly, the purpose of this thesis was to clarify how the education sector in the UAE could be developed and how to start the education in vocational school, focusing on the key research questions below (RQ):

RQ: How can Finnish vocational education be expanded to the UAE?

The following sub-questions needed to be answered in order to answer to main question:

RQ1a: What challenges and opportunities are there for education providers in the UAE?

RQ1b: How can education providers overcome the challenges and capture the opportunities?

In answering these questions, first, the concept of education export and education market are investigated. Then, the changes of internationalization of education in Finland are described. Moreover, an overview of UAE educational systems, its barriers and opportunities to develop are presented. By investigating the existing opportunities of the UAE's Educational systems, the researcher looked for appropriate strategies for expanding the Finnish vocational education to the UAE.

With regard to the early stages of research on education export and its importance in practice, the exploratory qualitative selected in this research project. The qualitative method of study evaluates the value of an exploratory architecture with a focus on over-exploration. Moreover, interviews with experts in educational fields as well as those involved in educational exports were used to explore the barriers and opportunities. The interviews also helped to describe the shape or nature of the

current situation, to examine the causes of or the relation between different phenomena, to evaluate the effectiveness of the current system and to help the educational authorities to develop theories, strategies or actions.

1.5 Thesis outline

This thesis is divided into five chapters, which begins with introductory chapter (Chapter 1). It discusses the research objectives by posing two sub-questions and the main research question. It also underlines the incentive for the research. The chapter also gives a survey of the Finnish education system. Chapter 2 refers to analysis of the literature throughout this thesis. It first, examines the roots of the internationalization of education, especially vocational education and training, and its market-oriented models. It then explores the opportunities and challenges found so far in previous research and addresses the suggested solutions. In addition, a theoretical framework for conducting this study was developed based on these studies. Chapter 3 (research methodology), presents the research approach, research method as well as research context. It also explains how to collect information and design interviews in this research. Chapter 4 (results), analyzes the data, presents the key findings, discusses about recommendations and solutions. Finally, Chapter 5 (discussion) provides empirical findings and recommendations for potential contingencies for future studies on the topic.

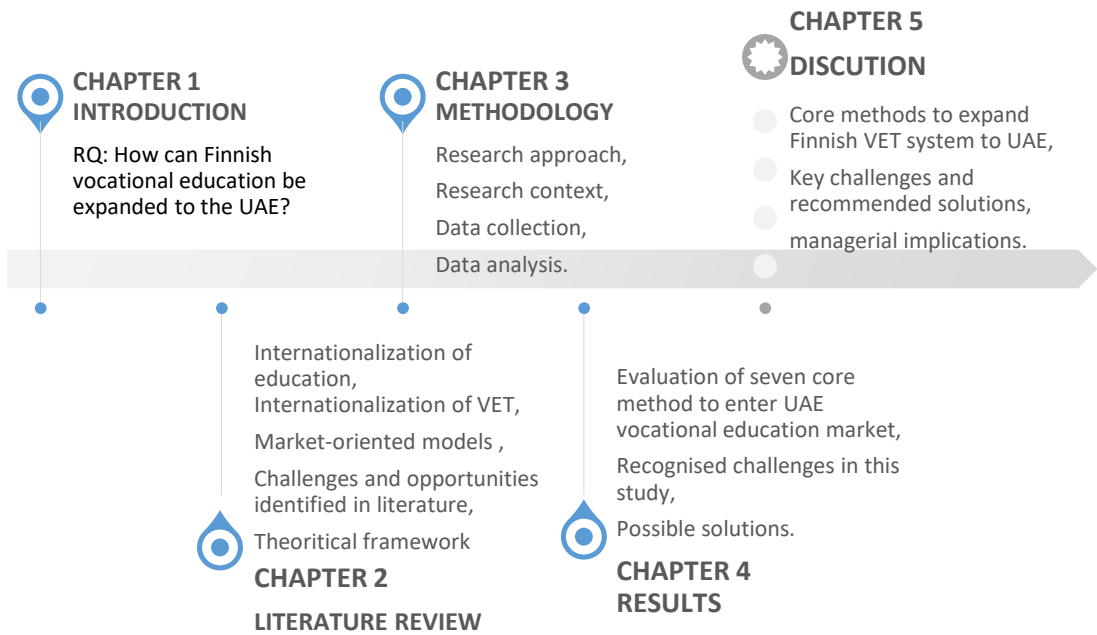


Figure 4. Thesis Structure

2 Literature Review

2.1 Key Concepts

2.1.1 Educational services

According to Maringe and Gibbs (2009), education is a means of transferring past and present knowledge through teacher-designed instruction to future generations. In the past, teachers taught students all the knowledge possible for post-school life, but today students participate in a learning process (Maringe & Gibbs 2009). Schooling as a result is difficult as it incorporates student learning and growth experiences with educational preparation for a wider society (ibid 2009).

Products are divided into pure (tangible) goods and to pure service (intangible). However, the majority of goods are a mixture of tangible and intangible elements. Tangible elements of education services are teaching material, space, equipment and to other physical elements, and its intangible elements are processes, experiences and other non-physical elements. (Huovinen 2011.)

Learning the student's experience is the core education service and other programs such as campus facilities, counselling, career preparation, student housing are complementary services (Ng and Forbes 2009). Thus, while education in itself is a mere service, educational export is a mixture of services and goods and can be described as a combination educational service, because it includes certain programs that are not just educational but also goods.

2.1.2 Internationalisation of education

The mechanism of integrating global or cultural exchange elements into the activities of educational organizations, studies as well as services is called the internationalization of education (Harman 2005). In the process, education is moving towards internationalization. This concept is much broader than educational exports and includes scholarships, management and research issues, employee and student exchanges (Ibid 2005). Many countries around the world have realized that internationalization should be a mainstream in their education.

The term internationalization is now commonly used not only by colleges and universities, but also by other organizations like UNESCO and the World Bank. In contrast, the term has been used in literature with different meanings without precise definition. In Year 1999, Knight has stated that internationalization means something different for different people and therefore, various interpretations of this concept exist. In practice, the term internationalization in literature is used for one or a composition of activities listed below (Harman 2005).

- Student mobility
- Staff mobility
- Internationalize curricula to gain a deeper sense of knowledge about cultures and nations as well as foreign languages.
- Free learning initiatives and new technologies build diplomatic ties between countries.
- Shared linkage among governments and corporations of university education throughout different nations to cooperate in studies, curriculum creation, student and staff exchanges as well as other international operations.

- Multinational cooperation through international organizations or consortia.
- Education export where educational services are commercially delivered in other nations and students who study inside their own country or in the supplier country.

The most important contributing factors to the internationalization of education are (Rizvi 2004; Altbach & Knight 2007; Marginson 2007; Tran 2012; 2013):

- Globalization
- Neoliberalism
- demand for the knowledge economy and
- changing global / national / local markets.

The goals of internationalization of education can be divided into four main categories: humanitarian, developmental, cooperative or commercial. In some Asian countries, enhancing international understanding and engagement with the world is the main goal of education internationalization (Tran et al. 2014). Educational institutions in Latin-speaking countries associate internationalization with the commercialization of education (Marginson 2007). While internationalization is, for some developing countries, a developmental nature and a tool for the development of skilled labor. For other countries, this process is mainly through the interaction and collaboration approach (Tran & Dempsey 2017).

- **Levels of internationalization of education**

In year 2011, Mattila introduced a three-level pyramid for internationalizing education based on the number of students participating in various international actions. Although the Pyramid of Internationalization can be adapted to all levels of education, Mattila has designed it for basic education and VET. The various international educational activities are described in the Pyramid and each level is complementary to the other. Domestic international actions that play a key role in providing equal educational opportunities for all students are considered at the lower three levels of the pyramid. The top two levels of the pyramid include international or national activities such as student and teacher mobility as well as various projects.

Individual internationalization: At the pyramid bottom level are specified activities relating to individual international processes. The primary objective of these activities would be to increase students' knowledge and understanding of multiculturalism and disparities between people and nationalities. Implementation of this goal is made possible by the provision of cultural and global education in educational institutions (Siekkinen 2013).

Internationalization at home: Activities related to internationalization at home are considered in second Level. Internationalization at Home refers to a collection of "at home" facilities and operations aimed at expanding international and intercultural competences in all pupils and students (Beelen & Leask 2011).

International students are not required in this process, although it can be an advantage. It's a useful way to explore the global and intercultural curriculum concepts (Jones 2013b; Jones and Killick 2013). There are various ways to implement internationalization at home. For example, holding educational weeks in different countries and cultures by educational institutions can be beneficial. Digital learning and online collaboration, guest lecturers of international partner universities, international case studies and practice as well as language teaching are part of the international at home (Beelen & Jones 2015).

National and regional international: national and regional international are included in third level. International partnerships with various educational institutions and work organizations, innovation sharing with other partners, international qualification researches are considered at this level (Siekkinen 2013).

International mobility: student/teacher/staff mobility is considered in the top Level of pyramid. International mobility involves selecting and moving employees/students to perform international tasks/courses as well as the preparations, activities and events that take place before, during and after these assignments. International movements can enhance development opportunities, corporate culture, and enable the transfer of expertise and knowledge sharing between partners in different countries.

Students stay as overseas exchange students and experience internships or job training internationally. Overseas residence can vary short-term (several weeks) or

long-term (whole school year). In general, exchange programs in higher education have a longer duration than VET. Teachers will travel to various cities and countries to experience mobility related to different foreign ventures, and teach courses in various countries. VET teachers can also be exchanged at some of the workplace organizations in another country. In this way, information on the various training systems, training methods, job skills requirements and specific professional techniques will be transferred to the host training system (Mattila 2011; Koramo 2012).

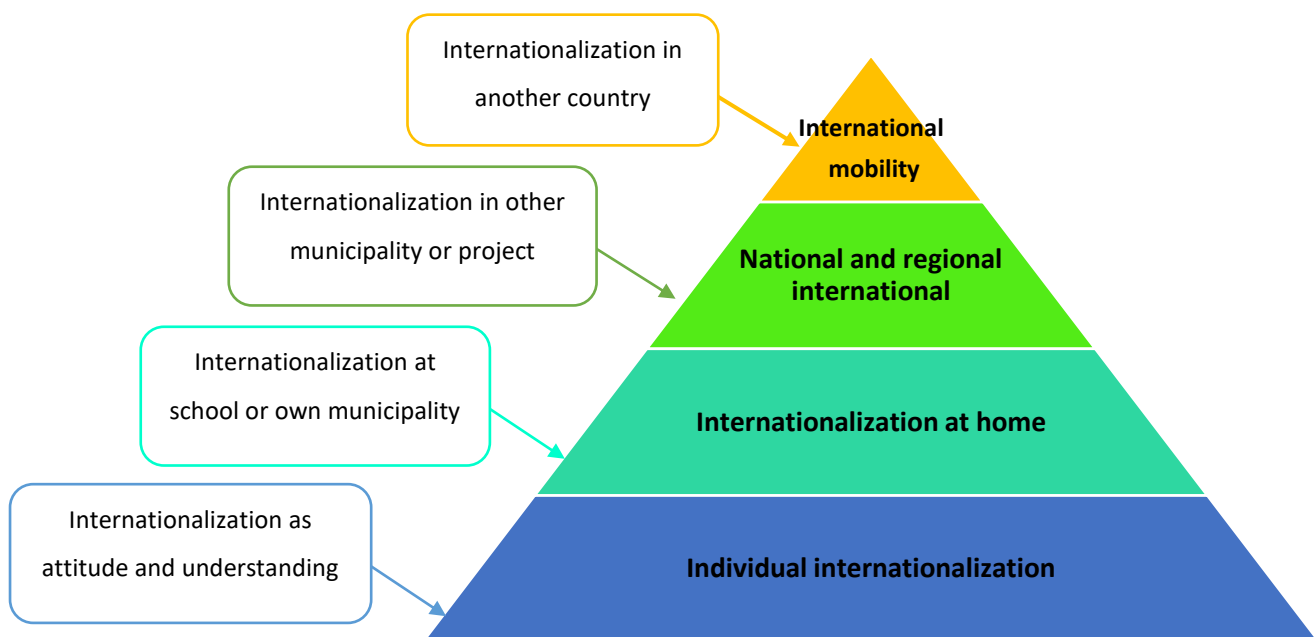


Figure 5. Internationalisation pyramid (Mattila 2011)

- **Modes of supply for trade of educational services**

There are various modes in which educational services trade can be defined and classified. The following classification is introduced by APEC (Larsen et al. 2002; Mallard & Maharey 2001):

Mode1: Consumption abroad which refers to when the student is transferred to a supplier country to receive education.

Mode2: Cross-border supply or distance education where educational services are provided across borders and without an international student or teacher movement.

Mode3: **Commercial presence**, makes reference to the construction of commercial facilities overseas through training suppliers, such as "local schools" or collaborations with educational institutions in the home.

Mode4: **Presence of natural persons**, including an educator (teacher, researcher, etc.) travels temporarily to another country for the provision of education.

In practical applications, these services are often combined. In twinning programs usually include elements of "consumption abroad" and "commercial presence". These modes include all possible services except services that are not commercially or competitively provided. Table 2 provides an explanation and an example of each of these modes.

Table 2. The forms in which education facilities are supplied globally (Naidoo 2009)

Mode of supply	Explanation	Education Examples	Types of Cross-Border Education	Size/Potential of Market
Mode1:Consumption Abroad	The delivery of the service including the passage of the customer into the supplier's nation	- Students wanting to study in some other country	-People (student) mobility	- Right now, it represents a significant market share
Mode2: Cross-Border Supply	Providing a service in which the service traverses the frontier (would not necessitate the client's physical movement)	- Distance education	-Programme mobility	- A relatively small market currently but perceived to include enormous potential
Mode 3: Commercial Presence	In order to provide service, the supplier develops or has commercial facilities in another country	- Local branch campuses - Twinning partnerships - Franchising arrangements with local institutions	-Institution mobility	- Activity rising and a high promise of future development
Mode 4: Presence of Natural Persons	Persons who travel to some other countries temporarily to provide service	-Academics, educators, scientists who work temporarily overseas	People (academic) mobility	-Probably a strong segment, with professional versatility increasingly in sight

2.1.3 Export of educational services

Exports of education are a cross-border transaction that involves offering educational services in return for payment. According to the World Trade Organization (WTO), educational services can be divided into five categories: (1) elementary education; (2) secondary education; (3) higher and vocational education; (4) adult education; and (5) other educational services (Balbutskaya 2015). Supporting education such as exchange programs, in the various forms of education programs, is classified in category 5. Education exports specifically apply to the first four categories, the conventional export of education services, although other fields of education are overlooked, such as guidance or technical education and training (ibid 2015).

When all is said and done the idea of educational export is seen distinctively in different nations. In English speaking nations, educational export essentially implies enrolling outside understudies to consider in their advanced education organizations and pay educational cost expenses (ibid 2015). In Finland, the Ministry of Education and Culture describes this as "selling educational services to foreign corporations, private persons throughout the private sector, members of the public sector or organizations". In addition, education does not need to happen outside the Finnish border. Exports of training can be tailored to the needs of customers which is held in Finland. In this case the client or payment institution must be foreign (Delahunty 2016).

2.2 Internationalization of vocational education and training

In the world, the orientation, exploitation and development of all sectors of education are under the influence of internationalization. In developed countries, the VET sector has struggled to internationalize its practices in the last two decades. They have also offered their programs to international students by paying full tuition fees as part of their strategy to improve the sector in a globalized economy based on knowledge; generating revenue and increasing competitiveness in educational markets.

Other factors influencing this process include the current global context and the global workforce mobility. Accordingly, students need to receive the training needed to operate in a transnational, globalized and intercultural environment.

In other words, student, business and industry expectations for skills training in a global knowledge-based economy must be met by vocational training (Levin 2000, 2006). Therefore, it is imperative that curricula be formulated in accordance with market demands. Smith et. al. (1999) argues that the creation of programs to prepare students for employment in international fields should be a key feature of the curriculum. Various opportunities, such as overseas job training or teacher exchange programs, enhance international aspects of learning and teaching.

The biggest challenge facing many developing countries, according to the World Bank, is the disconnection between the system of education and the employment market, given the huge number of college graduates. Therefore, vocational training is expanding as a response to these governments' need for skilled labor. To this end, there is a growing partnership between vocational education providers in developed and developing countries. Indeed, in many developed countries, the export of vocational training programs to many other nations has been an essential component of internationalizing vocational education.

Australia's export education practices have been very successful. Currently, Australia is the third largest export sector of education and the bulk of exports is the country's services. In 2017, the economic impact of international education rose by 22 percent, reaching AUS \$ 32.2 billion (ICEF Monitor 2018). Also, compared to the same period in previous years, the enrollment of foreign students in Australia has risen by 13 percent (ibid 2018). By removing legal barriers to the development of exports of technical and vocational education, the country has been successfully training travel services and other educational services. (Vanhanen 2016). Mostly, Asian countries, such as China, are the target of Australian education exports (ibid 2016).

In Australia, these are state-run VET institutions in the state of Victoria, which are partnering with Chinese VET providers. The sixteen Victoria Institutes of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) are among the major players in collaborations with suppliers of VET services overseas. TAFE Institutes are Australia-owned government and public

VET Bodies. Such institutions offer offshore English courses (77.4 percent) or a combination of English and local language (8.18 percent). 50 percent of instructors in these courses are local instructors in the destination country and 45.1 percent of Australia travel to their destination country. Of the training courses provided by government agencies abroad, most courses (67.5 percent) have lasted less than 12 months, and most students (65.2 percent) enrolled in courses with one year or more. (Tran & Dempsey 2017.)

Three collaborative models between Chinese VET institutions and their foreign partnership were identified in research conducted in 2011 by Xiang and Li. These three models are loose, successive and integration model. (ibid 2017.)

In the loose model, collaboration has been conducted mainly through visits and exchange. Few Chinese executives and teachers would be sent to the international institution to view their programs and evaluate them. International teachers from Countries such as Australia and the US were invited to give lectures in China. Students from both institutions have occasionally visited one another in summer exchange courses. The purpose of these programs was to gain a cultural experience rather than studying a particular course. (ibid 2017.)

The successive model in China is more common among universities and their partners. A range of VET institutions like Shenzhen Polytechnic, however, have also implemented collaborative programs that focus on this model. In this model, students spent two years studying at a university or local Chinese institute and two years studying in a foreign university (two plus two) or three years at the Chinese Institution and two years at a foreign university (three plus two). Students who completed the course can be awarded a degree from both universities. This model is popular among Chinese students because they can receive two degrees simultaneously and, also, studying in a foreign university allows them to learn English better. (ibid 2017.)

An agreement is established in the integration model to decide courses, services, teaching methods and methods for assessing the teaching in the programs. Throughout this direction, Australian partnerships dispatch Australian educators to China to train local Chinese teachers with Australian teaching methods. The assessment methodology is the Australian system of merit-based education. Classes

are much smaller than typical Chinese classes and teaching is done in English. (ibid 2017.)

All in all, the internationalization of VET is not in itself a goal but a necessity that has been influenced by other factors (Tran & Dempsey 2015)

- Business and economy are globalizing.
- staff and student mobility are growing.
- Individuals required to have international competencies.
- Development of competencies required by internationalizing work life.
- Growing labor mobility among national economies
- The growing rate of international and transnational corporations,

Hence, the main factors that shape the process of internationalization of vocational education are: education in multicultural marketing, immigration laws, emerging technology, enterprise and the growth of offshore global online schooling. (Tran 2011; Tran & Dempsey 2017; Tran & Gomes 2017).

2.3 Market-oriented VET Internationalisation Model

In Year 2014, Mewaldt introduced a three-phase market-based model for internationalizing VET. The phases of VET internationalization are initial step, the entrance into the overseas market and the growth of the overseas market (Mewaldt 2014). The model includes internationally approved VET measures. In the first phase of VET International, customer-centricity, international managerial behavior and entrepreneurial mindset are key elements of the entire successful international process. Transformational leadership, personal VET facilities and staff preparation are important in the process of entering the foreign market. In the market growth process, regional branding as well as further growth of VET programs through local quality control and accreditation are among the most important factors (ibid 2014).

Initial Phase of VET Internationalisation

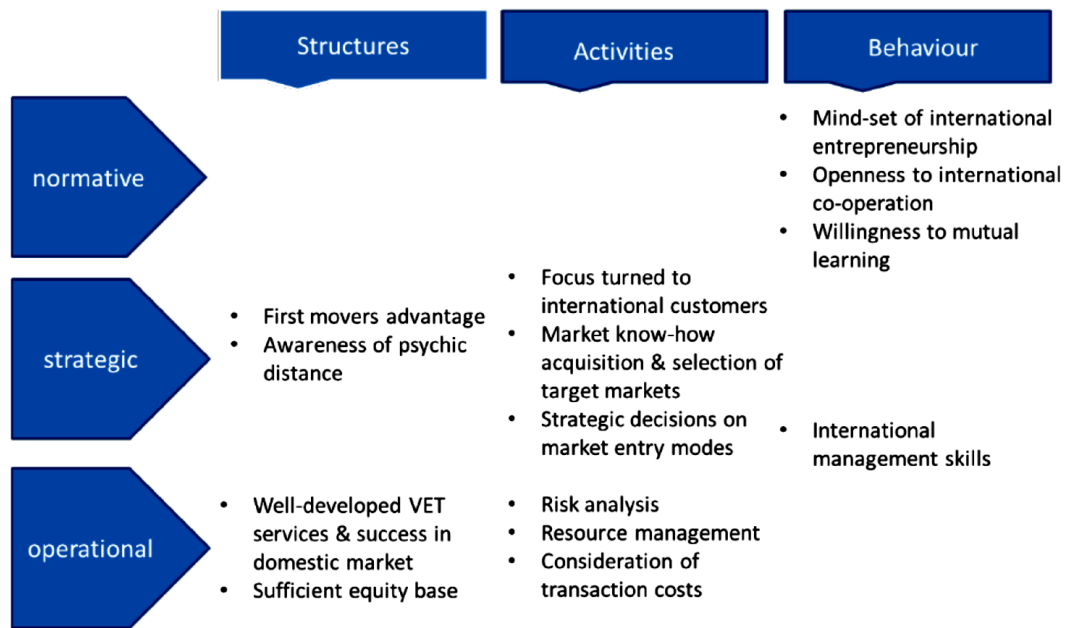


Figure 6. Market-oriented VET Internationalisation Model (I) (Mewaldt, 2014)

Foreign Market Entry Phase

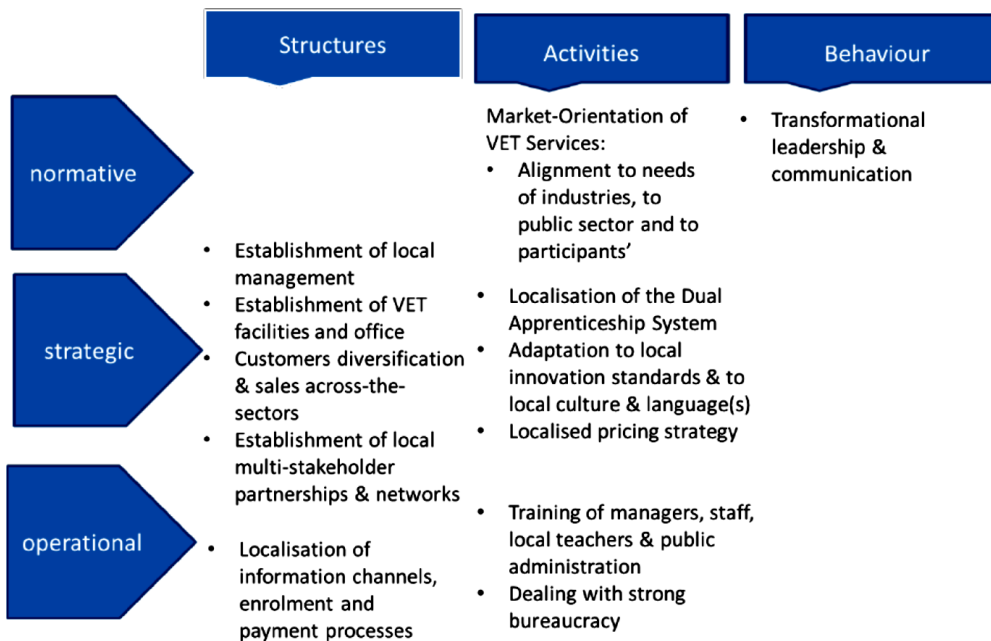


Figure 7. Market-oriented VET Internationalisation Model (II) (Mewaldt, 2014)

Foreign Market Development Phase

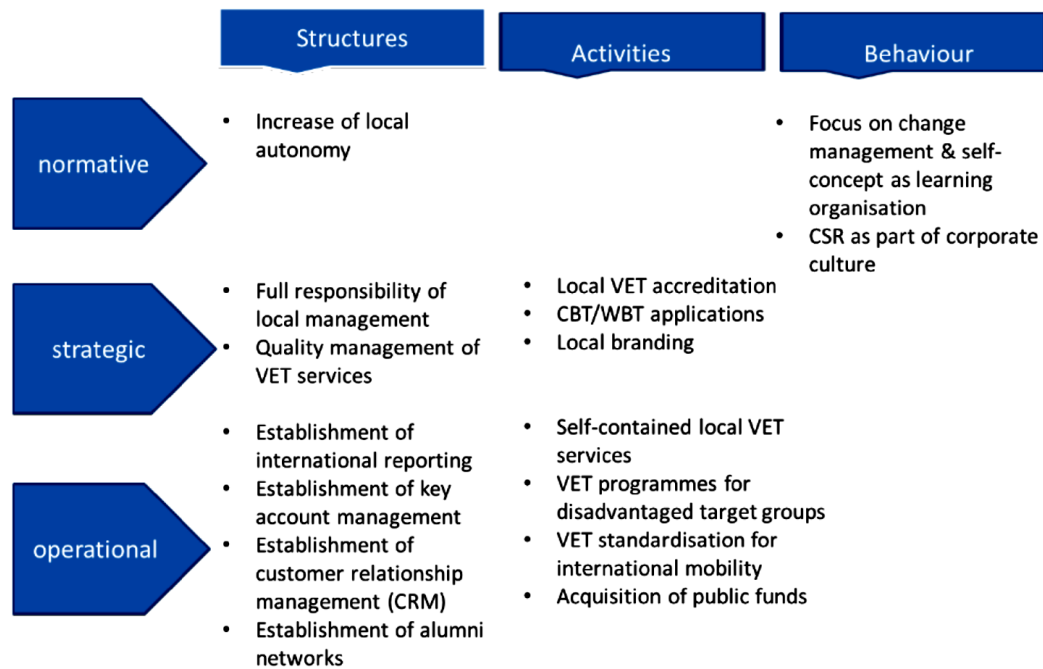


Figure 8. Market-oriented VET Internationalisation Model (III) (Mewaldt, 2014)

2.4 Opportunities and challenges for internationalization of vocational education and training

According to literature, there are various opportunities for international cooperation in VET. Summarized them in the following figure.

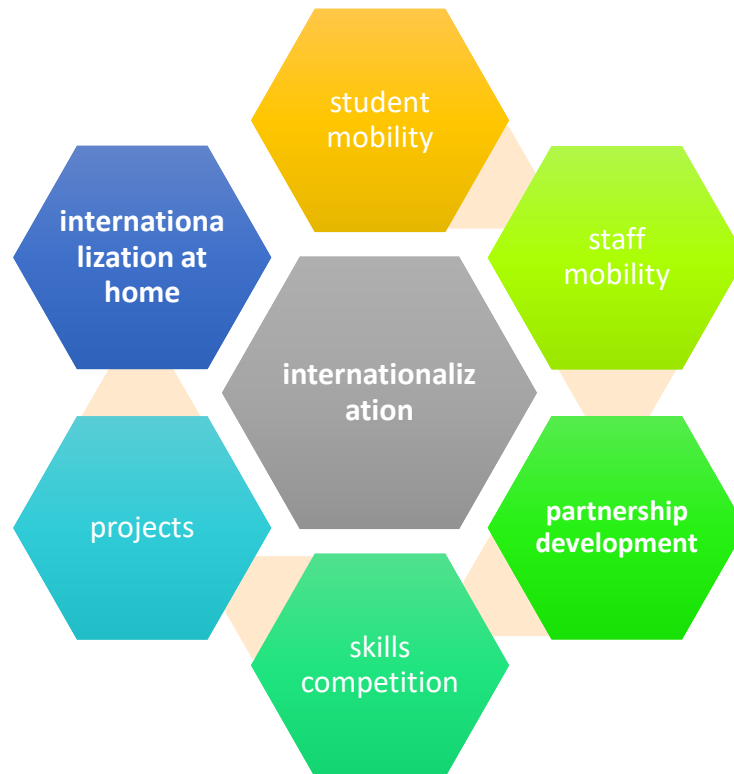


Figure 9. Opportunities for internationalization of VET

These activities will bring lots of benefits including innovation, competencies for work life, well-being, networking and partnership, new methods and ways of working, to students, staff and organizations. However, there are many challenges in implementing them

Kate Dempsey and Ly Thi Tran (2017), in their book "Internationalization in Vocational Education and Training", identify three key challenges, including the absence of comparable, reliable and system-wide data on VET structures and learners, limited studies on VET programs and apparently lower VET social position for researchers and even households pursuing access to education, and a link between higher education funding in advanced countries and the need for swift teaching of skilled and qualified staff in third world countries.

Table 3. key issues for internationalisation of VET (Tran & Dempsey 2017)

Key issues for Internationalization of VET		
The absence of comparable, reliable, and system-wide data concerning VET systems and students.	Restricted work on VET programs and clearly lower VET position for researchers and even households seeking educational access	Linking higher education funding in developed countries with the need for swift training of skilled and qualified staff in developing countries

A. The absence of comparable, reliable, and system-wide data concerning VET systems and students

It is difficult to obtain information on VET internationally, whether in developed or developing countries. Researchers in the course used case studies to complete limited or no formal statistical information. Many researchers have documented a lack of information on domestic VET systems and a lack of statistical information on student movement and acceptance of VET systems among countries. Many authors stressed that official figures cannot accurately represent the reality of the experiences of offshore teachers, program managers and students in a foreign country. (Tran & Dempsey 2017).

B. Restricted work on VET programs and clearly lower VET position for researchers and even households seeking educational access

Despite the increasing trend towards the internationalization of vocational education and training, VET internationalization remains a largely under-researched and less theoretical area. Further work is being carried out in the higher and university domains. Scholars have neglected research on VET internationalization. Families all over the world perceive the VET sector as second-rate, undervalued, low status and low consumption (ibid 2017.)

C. Linking support for higher education in developed countries with the need for rapid training of professional and trained workers in developing countries

In developing countries, governments place great importance on vocational training because of the need to train technical specialists to rapidly develop

and modernize the manufacturing and technical industries. In line with their goals of modernizing their productive workforce, the adoption and rapid development of a vocational training system became more of a priority with the aim of joining the world market and global economy. As developing countries struggled to grow their economic capacity, developed countries had a strong emphasis on market superiority, competitive value, performance-based budgets, and non-investment in state-owned companies. Due to the financial need in developed countries and the intense focus on marketing, entrepreneurship and education self-financing, education has become a place for business that may not benefit the students, primarily because the host country defines the standards according to its needs and culture. Student needs should be prioritized in all education, including VET. Education should not just focus on economic needs. If only the demands of the supplying country were to be addressed, the training at regional and local level would remain (ibid 2017.)

According to Paula Paronen (2014), There are three effective pillars, including management, teachers, and strategy, on the internationalization process of VET, which can be challenging if each of them fails to function properly in an organization.

- **Challenges related to management**

The level of management must be internationally committed and encouraging. Management support for internationalization of organizations is essential. International operations are often not considered to be the organization's main functions. Such activities are considered to be a separate sector which they can use if they are economically poor. Collaboration among managers, employees and the International Department is necessary. In certain cases, it is imperative that management requires everyone within the organization to take part in international activities (Paronen 2014.)

The importance of being part of some international networking should be emphasizing by VET enterprise management. Running a network is a very successful way of involving new people in internationalization. This is very useful for newcomers. They will not be left alone and can start small projects or do joint projects (ibid 2014.)

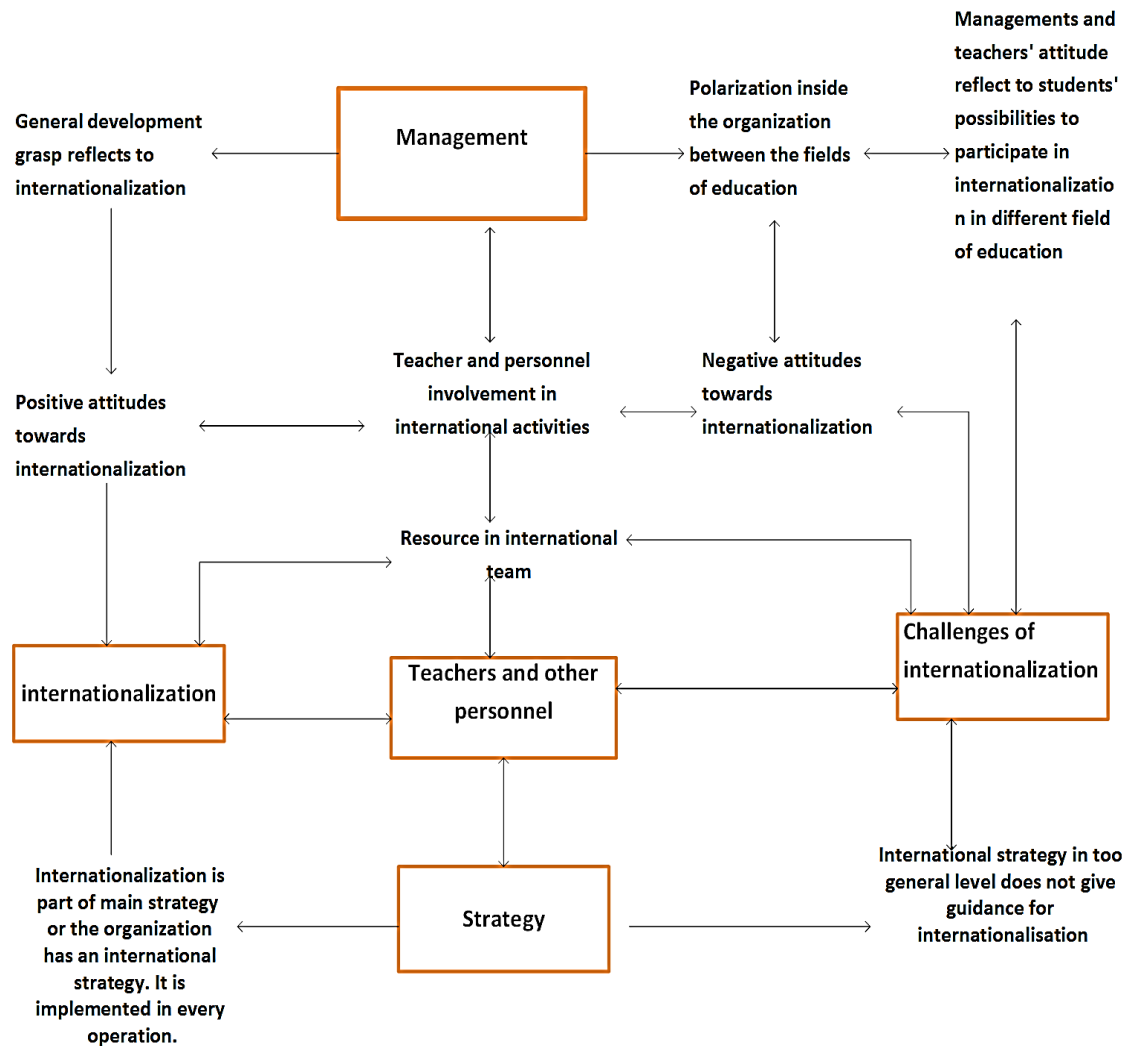


Figure 10. Relations of the pillars of effective internationalisation (Paronen 2014)

- **Challenges related to teachers**

Teachers' attitudes directly influence students' motivation to internationalize. Teachers also have a major impact on encouraging students to apply for study abroad courses or participate in mobility activities. Thus, he can bring new international content to daily education and thus enhance internationalization at home in a specific VET context. If the teacher is not motivated enough and thinks that he does not have adequate language skills or that he is not worried about internationalization, this should influence the quality of education and decrease the amount of international activities in a specific area of schooling (ibid 2014.)

Another big challenge is the time teachers work. teachers' working time is limited to collective agreement. International tasks will take time out of their

free time, however, and the reimbursement for weekend work is doubtful. This reduces the motivation for teachers to participate in international activities (ibid 2014.)

- **Challenges related to strategy**

Strategy plays a key role in creating efficient internationalization. Internationalization activities can easily be excluded from the organization's activities if internationalization is not part of the organizational strategy. It also is necessary for every educational area to provide an operational model on international operations. This organizational model will be part of the internationalization plan of the organization. Unlike very high-level planning, the organizational model should include short-term action goals and ambitions (ibid 2014.)

- **Other Challenges**

- Regional economic life will play an important part in the internationalization of VET institutions. In areas where local businesses need international experts, educational institutions are paying more attention to internationalization, otherwise the VET institutions may not see the importance of internationalization (ibid 2014.)
- Polarization between different fields of education is also one of main challenges in VET institutions. Even if there is equal opportunity for internationalization for all disciplines in VET institutions, in some disciplines they have more internationalization activities than others. Many fields, like tourism and catering, provide long history of international collaboration, others are completely absent from internationalization activities. Researchers have identified teachers as the main reason for this. When the educator is not involved in international practices, it may discourage the learners from being internationalized and the entire field of activity (ibid 2014.)
- Another challenge is creating a comprehensive internal system for internationalization. For some organizations, internationalization is exclusively the responsibility of certain educators and departments, nobody else thinks that internationalization will include

everyone. Also, in many cases, those who are in charge of it do so as an interest and view it as a hobby. It is sometimes difficult to define international activities. Many international activities at the school level are carried out in spare time, which is one of the reasons why other workers do not feel they need to take part in international activities as this is considered as an additional task (ibid 2014.)

- Internationalization activities are sometimes seen as luxury operations. Some have a negative view of internationalization and argue that internationalization activities such as travel, foreign guest speakers, are not something that improves the actual educational tasks (ibid 2014.)
- There are other challenges such as students' background (like their family's attitude), financial problems as well as finding companies that are willing to work with courses (ibid 2014.)

Nyahoho (2011) divided the barriers to exporting educational services into two categories, domestic and external. Certain measures that contribute to educational services and their perceived quality are placed in the first category. These include the institution's scale, the curriculum on offer, qualifications and fees. The second category is aimed at restricting or eliminating exports by countries. Examples of these obstacles include limiting market access, preferential treatment of local agencies, international institutions' dedication to educating foreigners and their reluctance to accept international diplomas. For better understanding of second group, Nyahoho expresses some samples in each supplying mode which is summarized in Table 4.

2.5 Possible solution to overcome some challenges

Since a company's hasty and unplanned decision to export its products or services to international markets can be a dangerous move, successful companies will thoroughly review some key issues before they start exporting, which can be used as an influential factor in the important decisions of the next step. Some of these factors include strategy, customer needs, service use, sales channel, service expectation, culture and environment. Evidence shows that developing appropriate strategies reduces the level of micro and macro barriers. In addition, companies that develop effective strategies

Table 4. Samples of external barriers (addapted Nyahoho 2011)

Mode of supply	Sample barriers
Mode 1: Cross-border supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrictions on the importation of instructional content • Restrictions on electronic transfers of textbooks • Failure to recognize evidence obtained by distance mode
Mode 2: Consumption abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrictions on traveling abroad by field of study • Currency and currency export restrictions • Quota for the student population applying to the country or organization • Prescribing minimal or standard achievements
Mode 3: Commercial presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local partner determination • To ensure that the supplier is certified in the country of origin • Insistence from the formal academic system on partner / collaborator • Insistence on fair representation of foreign and local partners in academia • Dismissal of franchise transactions • Restrictions on certain disciplines / areas / programs considered to be contrary to national interests • Limitations by education providers on foreign direct investment • Joint venture approval challenge
Mode 4: Presence of natural persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visa-restriction • Limitation on quota basis for countries and disciplines • Requirement for nationality or residence • Restriction on earnings repatriation

through the use of a network-based approach will gain more export success because of their high entrepreneurial orientation. Also, firms benefit from the export benefits created by the government and other official institutions, will have a high chance of success in exporting. Improving innovation capabilities is also essential to export success. Technology advances in the current generation at a very fast pace. Virtual environments and new technologies increase access to services. Lastly, making good use of networking relationships will increase your chances of success in the business (Paul et al. 2017.) In addition to the above-mentioned factors, Hyatt (2017) expresses that adapting services to customer needs is one most important factor in export success. When selling, you should focus on the customer and his needs rather than focusing on your business and services. You need to know what the customer cares

about and what goals they want to achieve. It is imperative to comply with the economic, cultural and political conditions of the destination country.

Riddle (2004), added one more factor to this list, credibility. Services cannot be inspected prior to purchase; thus, customers depend on referral and approval when choosing their service provider. Creating credibility in regional and global markets for service companies is another key to their success. One way to achieve this is to join international professional associations.

Paronen (2014) argue that the key to a successful international is to have clear and planned models to implement international operations. From the outset, sufficient time must be devoted to planning, organizing, and engaging students and teachers. Since working with other cultures can lead to conflict and misunderstanding on multiple levels, there must always be a solidarity program. Furthermore, sharing information in a great way to increase staff motivation for attending in international activities. Transferring the experiences of teachers and students who have worked abroad can stimulate other students and teachers to join these activities. Human resources management can also help internationalize organizations by hiring motivated and efficient staff.

2.6 Theoretical framework

According to studies in Sections 2.3 and 2.4, there are seven core methods to develop the Finnish VET system to the UAE. These include institutionalized VET research and consultancy, distance education, Local branch campuses, Twinning partnership, staff and student mobility, and specific in-company training. Each of these approaches has different cultural, political, economic and managerial challenges. Based on Section 2.4, problems due to lack of information and experience can be avoided by setting up a robust and comparable VET internationalization data system. Also, it is obvious that the most effective factors for successful and efficient internationalization in VET are management and international strategy. Internationalization should not be limited to a single small office in the enterprise, but by defining the right strategy in corporate level as well as collaborating between management and staff, all organization should be involved.

Table 5. External and internal challenges and solutions for VET internationalization

Challenges	Solutions
<p>Strategy challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Lack of internationalization in the strategy of the VET organizations b) Lack of operational model in VET organization's internationalization strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the basic elements of international strategy i.e. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. organization's values. B. its core skills C. its mission D. an analysis of the operating environment and its development trends • developing appropriate international strategy in corporate and business Level
<p>Socio-Cultural challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) students' background and their families' attitude towards VET and internationalization b) Polarization between different fields of education in VET institutions c) Language problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consideration of local needs • local consultation about the project • Choose suitable and experienced logistic partner • financial benefits and support • Identify competitors • Using returned students as mobility ambassadors for prospective students by involving them in advertising programs • publicizing of good employment performance from graduates and personal stories from employers • Online training
<p>economic & Political challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Limitations on certain fields of study / regions / programs considered to be contrary to national interests b) Limits on imports of educational materials c) Visa-restriction d) Absence of stimulant and funding support e) Inability to achieve competitive advantage in foreign market 	
<p>knowledge based challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Lack of system-wide and comparable data on VET systems b) Small VET systems study and a lower value for investigators and households c) Adaption problem in market entry d) accreditation of programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal organization networking and precise definition of tasks • Visit events • Partnerships with local educational organization • use of networking relationships • Review on UAE requirement and VET education standard
<p>Management & Human Resource challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Lack of a comprehensive internal system for internationalization in VET organization b) Lack of collaboration between management, personnel and the International office c) Problems in teachers and staff motivation and attitude towards internationalization d) Problems in teachers' working time and payment for internationalization activities 	

3 Methodology

This section of the study describes the research strategy, followed by the empirical part of the research. The question tailored to serve the topic of this research is the opportunities and challenges of Finnish Vocational Education institutes in the UAE. The answers for this study are obtained from the experience, thoughts, and opinions of the educational experts working in the education sectors in Finland and UAE, adopting empirical inquiry to create theoretical clarity about export and internationalization of education from Finland to UAE.

The phenomenology can help the researcher to understand from others' experiences. However, to collect the opinions of the people in the community, you need to understand the world of this community and the community of these people (Shankar et al. 2001). The author used different kinds of analysis, hermeneutics, phenomenology, gestures and hesitation to understand reality (Saunders et al. 2007).

Hermeneutics in this study means thinking, social, and cultural facts, which is connected to understand the phenomenon of opportunities of Finnish vocational companies for exporting education (Gummesson 2000).

The research strategy pursued in this study is inductive, which starts with observation and theories are proposed as a result of observations at the end of the research process (Goddard & Melville 2004). The inductive approach includes searching for a pattern of viewing and developing explanations - theories - for these patterns through a series of assumptions (Bernard 2011). In other words, generating semantics from the data set collected to identify patterns and relationships to construct a theory are the primary purpose of this approach. Thus, the basis for inductive reasoning is the learning from the experience of individuals to draw conclusions, identify patterns, and similarities and differences.

In the literature review, the researcher starts with elaboration and conception from literature to formulate the interview questions. Then, the researcher moved to the second step to conduct the interviews and observations which conduct at the same time with technical information. Moreover, this stage was the section of systematic combining, which is helpful in creating new theories (Dubois & Gadde 2002) and creative process (Kovacs & Spens 2005). It leads to recognize the empirical

phenomenon. The third phase optimizes the proposed design and descriptive research by analyzing the newest literature. Hence, this thesis is blending theoretical and empirical field and using non-linear all the time to plentiful both empirical and theoretical understating concepts opportunities of Exporting Finnish vocational education in UAE.

3.1 Research approach

Qualitative work was carried out to fulfill the goals of the thesis. The basis in the method of qualitative analysis is reason, logic, thinking, and is mostly exploratory (Corbin and Strauss 2014; Khan 2014). Qualitative research approach used when considering the conceptual framework. Humanism and naturalism are two fundamental foundations in the philosophy of qualitative research. Therefore a great deal of attention was paid to the human function in this form of research (Khan 2014).

The key feature of qualitative research is that it is ideally suited for small sample sizes, but can't quantify its findings (see Table 6). Its fundamental advantage over quantitative research is that it provides a thorough explanation and analysis of a research topic (Langkos 2014). However, the skills and abilities of the researcher are strongly influenced by the effectiveness of qualitative research. Furthermore, because most results come from the judgements and assumptions of the researcher, the results may not be accurate (ibid 2014).

This study aims to clarify the areas of possibilities of Finnish vocational educations providers in the UAE and how to overcome barriers and challenges in the UAE. As with Amaratunga et al. (2002), when the object of the study is examined, quantitative approach is better and more fitting to use social behaviour, cultural difference and building understatement of a subject. In this way, after presenting the research topic and hypotheses, the researcher analyzes the collected documents based on a mental rather than a statistical approach.

This research using the philosophical approach explains how the literature sorted, analyzed, and approached throughout the search. (Trochim& Donnelly 2001). There is a variant of strategic options for different purposes, such as exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory (Saunders et al. 2007, 133).

Table 6. Features of Qualitative and Quantitative Research (Langkos 2014)

Qualitative research	Quantitative Research
The target is an exhaustive, clear description.	In an attempt to explain what is observed, the goal is to identify features, count them, and create statistical models.
The Investigator may know about what he / she is searching for approximately in advance.	Researcher clearly knows what he / she is searching for in advance.
Provided during earlier research phases.	Supported during latter research project phases.
As the analysis unfolds, the concept emerges.	Until data is collected all aspects of the analysis are carefully designed.
The investigator is the instrument for collecting data.	To gather numerical data the researcher uses instruments such as questionnaires or equipment.
Data is in word, image, or object type.	Data is as numbers and statistics.
Subjective – interpretation of events by individuals is important, e.g. using evaluation of participants, in-depth interviews, etc.	Objective: seeks to accurately measure and analyze target concepts, e.g., use surveys, questionnaires etc.
Qualitative data is more 'solid,' more time-consuming, and less generalizable.	Quantitative data is more effective, capable of testing hypotheses but may lack details of meaning.
The investigator tends to get subjectively immersed in the subject matter.	The investigator remains fairly objectively detached from the topic.

In addition, the exploratory study method is used to consider the education landscape in the UAE and the choices for Finnish education in the UAE. In the second stage, the author using descriptive research to assist in finding new information deepen the understating of possibilities of Finnish education in the UAE (ibid 2007).

Overall, as explained below, the primary source of data was in-depth interviews. At this stage, using semi-structured, and exploratory interviews, opportunities and barriers for exporting Finnish technical and vocational training to UAE were identified. The interview method is helpful in getting the answers for the research questions and

useful for author to get more information to understand the real situation in the topic (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008).

3.2 Research context

Educational cooperation between Finland and the UAE is not new. UAE is one of the main markets for EduCluster Finland Ltd (ECF) in the Middle East. The primary owners of this company are Jyväskylä University, JAMK University of Applied Sciences and Jyväskylä Educational Consortium. The company is one of Finland's leading educational export firms, with branches in several countries, including Qatar, the UAE, as well as China. Its clients are interested in modeling schools, enhancing teachers' professional skills and managing their educational institutions, and improving their country's education system in a Finnish way (JAMK annual reports 2015).

Between the years 2010-2015, a program was implemented in the UAE, called Educational Partnership in Abu Dhabi (EPA). The program is a cooperation initiative between EduCluster Finland and the UAE Abu Dhabi Education Council, aimed at combining the Abu Dhabi and Finnish perspectives to create world-class schools in Abu Dhabi and Al Ain (Hadid 2013.)

This program considers the foundations of the Finnish primary curriculum to design a new curriculum in Abu Dhabi. In this process, a classroom teaching pattern is designed in the new Abu Dhabi curriculum. EPA has developed prototype schools, developing new teaching skills and knowledge that allow Abu Dhabi educators to improve learning and teaching methods via the teacher model in the classroom. The EPA also provides the UAE coaches a career development program run by EduCluster Finland (ibid 2013.)

A rapidly growing business district in this company is exporting vocational education competence (JAMK annual reports 2015). One of the most critical challenges for education planners right now is to create effective educational programs and vocational training for attracting young people. All parties must work together to do this.

- **Development of internationalisation of VET in Finland**

Finnish authorities have high regard for international collaboration in technical education and training in Finland. Internationalisation at home, in educational

materials and in virtual collaboration and abroad via international collaboration and mobility are the main methods that have been used. Enhancing the competitiveness and quality of Finland's working life, providing students with personal and professional skills as well as developing educational systems, are critical goals in internationalizing VET. Also, the goal is to provide global insights into the skills and competencies increasingly needed in an international labor market and multicultural society Finland (Finnish national agency for education 2019).

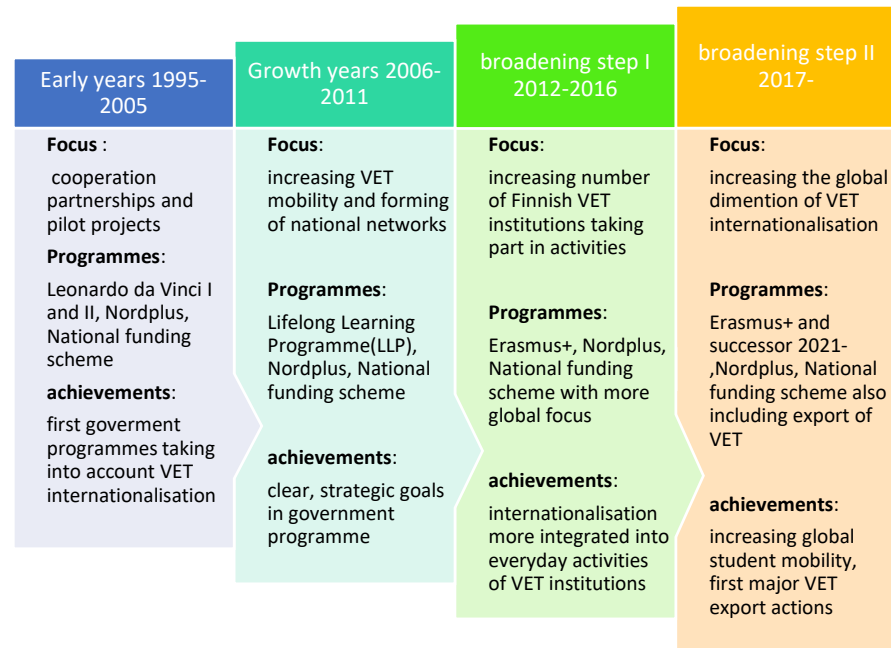


Figure 11. Development of internationalisation of VET in Finland (Finnish national agency for education 2019)

The Leonardo Da Vinci Program and later the Erasmus + programs have been the most crucial scholarship schemes. In addition to sponsoring international mobility and cooperation, these programs also support the establishment of structures and partnerships and develop the knowledge and skills of vocational and technical education institutions. The most significant contributors to the internationalization of the sector include their overall progress to larger centers of knowledge and competence as well as the autonomy these institutions (ibid 2019).

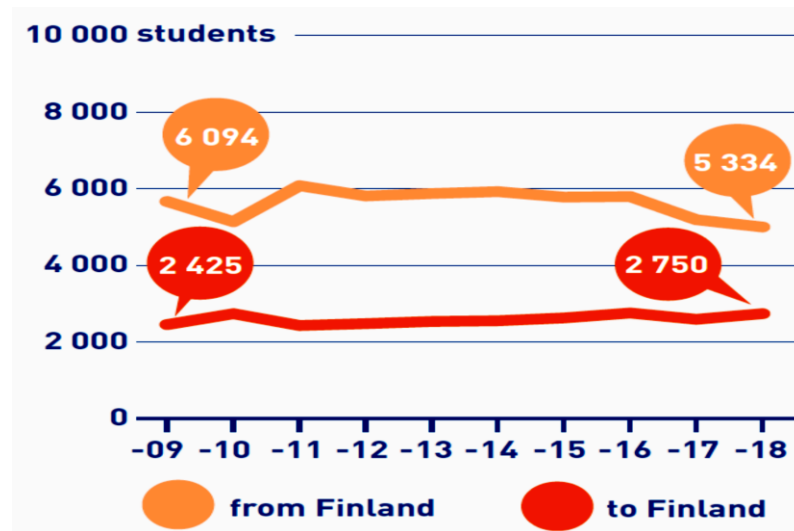


Figure 12. Mobility of VET students 2009–2018, absolute numbers (ibid 2019)

- **Market potential in UAE**

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a federal state created on December 2, 1971. The country consists of the union of seven small emirates called Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah, Ras al-Khaimah, and Umm al-Quwain. In June 1996, the federal government approved the constitution of the United Arab Emirates. The official language of this small country is Arabic. Also, English, Persian, Urdu, and Hindi have many uses. Emirates has a desert climate. The land is smooth and the eastern side is mountainous and colder. Only ten percent of the country is Emirates originality. Twenty-three percent of the population of the country is from the Arabs of other countries and about fifty-nine percent of the population of South Asia. Based on the most recent statistics available in 2020, the country's population is estimated at nine million and eight hundred thousand, with a majority of seventy-six percent Muslims (United Arab Emirates Population 2020.)

Because of the natural oil and gas resources, eighty percent of the UAE's economic and financial resources are concentrated in Abu Dhabi. The United Arab Emirates has an open economy and a high commercial surplus. Efforts by the rulers to diversify the economy have reduced the share of oil and gas in the economy to about twenty-five percent. Since the discovery of oil in the UAE so far, the country has become a wealthy country with a high living standard for UAE citizens. This country, after Saudi Arabia and Iran, is the third-largest economy in the region (ibid 2020.)

The United Arab Emirates has a youth education system that has undergone significant reforms over the last fifty years. Historically, education in this country was heavily influenced by Islam and led by the Imams in mosques (Kamal & Trines 2018). New forms of education began to develop in the last five decades slowly, but there were few formal schools that most of their students were male. In fact, after the establishment of the first university in Al Ain, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, the new education system has begun to work (Wilkins 2002). Since then, the country has expanded its efforts to ensure high literacy rates, new programs, and women's participation in education. The country has been investing in improving its youth education. At present, about twenty-five percent of all government spending is allocated to education, and the overall literacy rate is ninety percent, according to UNESCO (Unterbrunne 1987).

The technical training in the UAE goes back to 1958, when the Development Council, under the supervision of British authorities in Sharjah, opened the first technical college, with departments in mechanical, electrical, auto-mechanics and building trades. Between 1964 and 1969, four more similar schools were established in Dubai and Ras Al-Khaimah. Those five schools were intended to train skilled craftsmen. One department for technical education was established in the Federal Ministry of Education after independence in December 1971 and is situated in Dubai (Unterbrunne 1987.)

Nowadays, the UAE must train 10% of UAE students with technical and vocational skills for each university graduate to achieve a knowledge-based and sustainable economy. Therefore, the Government focuses on establishing a holistic system to guarantee the standard of technical and vocational education. The government's goals are developing skills relevant to emerging systems, technologies, and materials, as well as creating equal educational opportunities for men and women, both in higher education and VET. The country currently has more than ten technical and vocational training centers and three regulatory bodies, the Vocational Education and Training Awards Council (VETAC), the Abu Dhabi Center for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ACTVET), and Dubai Qualification and Awards (QAD).

However, in recent decades, the UAE's political leaders have recognized the importance of the issue that investing in human resources is the best long-term

national investment, and that proper education is a means to advance society and provide a backing for its renewal (Zahran et al. 2016). Since the power of a nation is not measured at the moment by the capital and natural resources or the number of its citizens and its military power, then the intellectuals and innovators are of great importance as the backbone of change and leadership of the development process. The UAE's Ministry of Education has been analyzing and evaluating the current status of the ministry, including written documents and meetings with the technical and administrative staff of the ministry. As a result, several strategic approvals along with the design of practical problems in the field of country education was studied. It should be remembered that this ultimately contributed to the creation of the 2020 educational outlook. This perspective is known as the quantitative view of education in the UAE by 2020, whose main goal is to achieve better education for more people at a lower cost.

Among the achievements in designing this vision is to improve the skills of staff at educational institutions, as well as provide long-term in-service training on access to and use of new educational technologies. The project has also helped to use day-to-day information on education and create a sense of responsibility for the work and social life of most Emirates. Motivation among all different social classes and at all levels of education to participate in the educational revolution is another outcome. The primary implementer of the 2020 perspective is the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Education and Youth. The 2020 perspective has seven strategic concerns relating to education policies, concrete plans, executive plans and unique initiatives to improve the education system of the country. In general, introducing training as an incentive for national development, enhancing the quality and quantity of the educational system, increasing the public educational participation, introducing education as a stimulus for culture and knowledge, flexible and dynamic infrastructure for the educational system and organizing education, and developing evolution among training courses are the leading educational strategies of UAE.

3.3 Data collection

There are six types of data for case studies according to Yin (2003): direct observation, interviews, archival records, documentation, participant observation, and physical artifacts. Three types of these methods, including interviews, documents, and observation, have been used in this study. The procedure of verifying evidence from different groups of people, data forms, or data collection methods in explanations in qualitative research topics is called a "triangulation" referring to multiple sources of evidence (Cresswell 2002). Triangulation is essential in case study research for improving the results according to increasing the reliability and accuracy of the study (Gillham 2005).

The first phase in this research starts to review other theses, online research, news, reports, websites of the education ministry, and related articles. Using the online environment is a crucial strategy to get variety and much information in qualitative data (Belk, Kozinets & Fischer 2013). The research starts focusing on education in UAE and the possibilities for Finnish educations companies, then focusing on the internationalization of education. The obtained information was used to design the interview questions.

The primary method of data collection in this study was semi-structured interviews. The method follows a loose thematic guide to help the interviewee to elaborate more and feeling relax to speak about this topic with their ideas and thoughts. It was vital to let the respondents speak their own words about their experiences and ideas in their own language (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008).

In-depth interviews were used to obtain detailed insights through semi-structured interviews. This procedure is a particular type of knowledge production between the interviewer and the interviewee in which the two discuss a particular topic (Hennink et al. 2011). Therefore, it was suitable for gathering preliminary data to produce valid and reliable results. To collect the baseline data, the list of questions in Appendix 1 is designed concerning the potential challenges covered by the theoretical framework in Section 2.5 of the literature review chapter.

A group of five semi-structured interviews were performed to get correct answers to questions built on the basis of the theoretical framework's basic elements. Interviewees have titles such as teachers, managers, senior consultants, experts, speakers, and senior coordinators, mostly in the field of international education and, or its trade. The names and specialties of the interviewees are given in Table 7 with their permission. After the interviewees answered the interview questions, they were asked to identify people who were in the professional field. Other interviewees were selected based on these views.

All the interviews were done in person in UAE and Finland. The researcher observes the interviewees behaviors and reaction to every question. In the qualitative research, the observations are the core data collection tool (Belk et al. 2013). All interviewees had the same questions but the orders of questions and structures changing depending on the conversations and discussion happen through interview. While the interviews held, the researcher was using a recoding machine and two mobiles to recoding that to be sure not lost any information and to have spare with

Table 7. Interview table information

institution	Interviewee	Position	Date	Duration
PINO Net Work, Oulu University of Applied Sciences	Mr. Jussi Haukkamaa	Project Manager	25-02-2020	20 mints
EduCluster Finland Oy	Ms. Sanna Nummela	Vocational education Expert	26-02-2020	30 mints
Abu Dhabi Vocational Education & Training	Ms.Mahra Majed Al Qassimi	Career Counsellor	01-03-2020	40 mints
Higher Colleges of Technology	Mr. Mohamed Samir	Senior Specialist - Work Placement	02-03-2020	35 mints
Secondary Technical School's (STS)	Mrs. Nadine Berjawi	Business Teacher	05-03-2020	30 mints

the permission of interviewees. The analysis of data then began with the complete transcription of the reported interviews and afterwards coded and analyzed. Some interviews held in Arabic because interviewees were feeling free to explain and express more about their thoughts then translated to English.

The first institution that interviewed was PINO network, which provide variety of high quality and services from Oulu region. PINO stands for "Pohjoisen Innovaatiot" in Finnish, meaning "Northern Innovation". The Oulu University of Applied Sciences, in collaboration with the University of Oulu, the Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Oulu Vocational College and the City of Oulu, have launched a project to develop a network to help the expansion and internationalization of educational exports in Northern Ostrobothnia. PINO lets the members extend their exposure to the world. It would help network and identify job opportunities associated with international education. Jobs and export-training organizations may access the PINO network for free.

The second institution that interviewed was EduCluster Finland. EduCluster Finland (ECF) is a specialist organization representing the excellent Finnish educational experience and practices. The organization operates in the export of Finnish know-how at all levels of education in the world. In addition, it plays an important role in improving the standard of Finnish education system by incorporating new learning and teaching methods and performing standard evaluation, performance evaluation, and teacher education. To date, the organization has carried out training work in many European, Asian and African countries. The organization acts as a section of the University of Jyväskylä. (EduCluster Finland 2019.)

Then the next interviewed was from Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT), which is the largest applied higher education in the UAE. HCT has a formal agreement with many institutions of higher education and international higher education organizations, as well as corporate alliances with local and multinationals. Many programs include foreign licensure: for example, the University of Melbourne is creating an HCT bachelor's degree with the university and accredited by it.

The remaining two interviews were conducted with Abu Dhabi Vocational Education & Training which established in 2007 and has seven (7) entities around United Arab

Emirates and Secondary Technical School's (STS) which is a branch form Abu Dhabi Vocational Education & Training. The establishment of these institutions represents the need of UAE government to young people educated in vocational education and training.

3.4 Data Analysis

The content analysis is the technique applied in this study as a practical tool for qualitative data analysis. The primary purpose of the method is to identify patterns found in video, text, verbal messages. This method can be applied with an inductive or deductive approach. Inductive approach is recommended if there is insufficient or fragmented prior knowledge (Elo & Kyngäs 2008). According to the absence of reliable, and system-wide data concerning VET systems and students, a three-step inductive content analysis including preparation, organization, and reporting is used in this study.

Table 8. Content analysis in this study

content analysis in this study	Preparation
	selecting the unit of analysis/research method making sense of the data and the whole
	Organization
	open coding, categories creation, and abstraction
	Reporting
	model, conceptual system, conceptual map or categories

The preparation phase began with the selection of interviews and observations as the unit of analysis which are the most relevant unit of analysis as said by Graneheim and Lundman (2004). In the next step in this phase, a complete transcription of the recorded interviews was done (the whole discussion between the interviewer and the interviewee) in order to gain a deep understanding and detailed input of all the interviews. It should be noted that all interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees.

As can be seen in Table 8, the organizing phase involves open coding, categories creation, and abstraction. The phenomena in the texts shall be called, categorized and explained using the open coding process. The answers are read carefully to find answers to important subjects and resources (Silverman, 1991). So, the written information has been re-study at this stage, and the appropriate headings have been written in the margins to explain all aspects of the content. The headings were moved from margins to coding sheets and grouped freely. Then the grouped lists are categorized under higher rank titles. The purpose of data categorizing is to reduce the number of batches by collapsing similar or incomparable batches with higher order batches (Elo & Kyngäs 2008). The process of grouping and abstraction continued as far as possible. The codes obtained are in accordance with Table 9. According to the code described in the Table 9 that corresponds to all the challenges, the Excel file lists possible solutions suggested by the interviewees for data analysis.

Table 9. Semi-inductive coding used for preliminary analysis of the field note

CATEGORIES	SUBCATEGORIES	CATEGORIES	SUBCATEGORIES
Strategy challenges	Internationalization strategy	Economic challenges	Financial support
	Vision and mission		Expenses and costs
	Operational models		Getting the support from the government
Management and human resource challenges	proper networking and relations development		Financing students
	qualified teachers		Finding local sponsors/ partners
	teacher training		connection with industry
	professional development		Teacher and staff wage/salary/benefit
Knowledge-based challenges	Poor national research skills	Socio-cultural challenges	Cultural differences
	Accessible/career information		Language problems
	poor communication systems		Social value of VET
Political challenges	Poor legal substructures		Gender inequality
	structural differences		Adapting trainings to local needs
	bilateral cooperation		

Coding provided an initial, cumulative, and non-iterative set of possible solutions to any challenge encountered in the sample. This comprehensive set of challenges and solutions provided rich insights, but their accuracy was still in doubt. Thus, by comparison, this collection has been reduced to only those identified in secondary sources such as articles, reports and websites. Therefore, using Word and Excel files, the interviewer can obtain relevant results after analyzing which can be considered as a theory development.

3.5 Verification of findings

There are different ways to confirm the findings in an empirical study in quantitative and qualitative studies. Lincoln and Guba, 1985, argue that the validity, reliability, and objectivity of qualitative research findings can be determined by examining the four factors of trustworthiness in the findings, which are confirmability, transferability, credibility, and dependability (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

Confirmability

Confirmability means the degree to which others accept or support the findings. Lincoln and Guba point to several strategies to increase confirmability. These strategies are: external-audit , audit-trail , triangulation, and reflexivity (ibid 1985.) In this study, external-audit and audit-trail techniques are used to enhance the confirmability. A clear description of the research process carried out from the beginning of the research project to data collection, analysis and formulation of themes, development and reporting of the findings is available to the audience so they can audit the research. Also, the process of conducting the research and the obtained results were provided to the supervisor and some experts in the field for verification of the research.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the question whether qualitative research findings can be generalized or applied to other contexts. Lincoln and Guba (1985) has been described "thick description" as a method of obtaining some kind of transferability. By describing the details of a phenomenon, it is possible to evaluate the degree of transfer of results to other situations, individuals, or times (ibid 1985.)

In this study, the researcher has tried to enrich the transferability by thoroughly explaining the research process including the topic, how the participants are selected, their characteristics, data collection and their analysis steps. So, the reader can easily judge the applicability of the results to other situations.

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research refers to the accuracy of the study explanations and conclusions and indicates the degree of trust in the validity of the results. It also shows that the findings reflect the research purpose and social reality of the study participants. To this end, Lincoln and Guba point to issues such as prolonged contact with the research environment, continuous observation, reviewing from different angles, peer review, adequacy of references, and member-checking (ibid 1985). To ensure credibility, the most careful consideration was given to selecting the interviewees. All participants were valid because they all had years of experience in the subject. This means that the findings of the interviews provide in-depth explanations by covering detailed views on the subject of the research. The peer debriefing, and member-checking methods were used to improve the validity of the results. The data analysis and its results were presented to the experts in the field and their corrections were made. Also, after the interviews were written, the interview transcripts and extracted codes were provided to all participants and they commented on its validity and any inconsistencies.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency of findings over time. Dependability involves participants' evaluation of findings, interpretations, and study recommendations so that all data is supported by data from study participants (ibid 1985.)

During repeated interviews with various interviewees, repeating the same interview questions helped the author to deepen the subjective questions and obtain more informed answers to ensure reliability. After interviewing the participants, the interviewees' responses were transcribed. The raw data as well as the results of their analysis were provided to the participants and corrections were made according to their views.

4 Results

The key field of research is to recognize opportunities and challenges that Finnish companies face in exporting Finnish VET from Finland to the UAE, and how these challenges can be overcome.

In particular, it has been pointed out that there could be potential challenges such as lack of internationalization strategy in VET organization, lack of operational paradigm in international VET strategy, student background and their families' attitudes to VET and internationalization, polarization between different fields of education in VET institutions, language problems, restrictions on specific areas of study, areas and programs that are considered contrary to national interests, restrictions on the import of educational materials, no incentive and no budget support, inability to gain competitive advantage in the foreign market, the absence of a comprehensive internal system for internationalization in the professional organization, lack of cooperation between management, staff and international office, teachers' problems and staff motivation and attitude to internationalization.

It is also noted that there are seven main ways to develop Finland's VET system in the UAE. These include institutionalized VET research and consultancy, distance learning, local campus, Twinning partnerships, staff and student mobility, and in company-specific training. Every one of these methods has its own cultural, political, administrative and economic challenges.

Subsequent parts of this chapter shed light on the opportunities, obstacles and solutions addressed in the five semi-structured interviews with experts from two sides: i) Finnish vocational educational providers and exporters; (ii) Emirati vocational educational importers; which were conducted in February and March 2019. Every interview question is formulated in conjunction with the theoretical structure described in section 2.6 of the chapter on literature review. Appendices list the interview questionnaire as Appendix 1. For suitable solutions, each problem must be thoroughly clarified, so that educational institutions can solve these challenges.

4.1 Evaluation of Seven Core methods to enter the UAE vocational education and training market

In order to identify the best way to develop Finnish vocational education and training in the UAE, interviewees were asked to evaluate the conditions of the UAE in seven core type of activities and partnerships (institutionalised VET research and consultancy, distance education, local campus, Twining partnerships, staff and student mobility, and in company-specific training). For this evaluation six rates were considered: very good, good, rather good, rather bad, bad and very bad. The results show that most of the interviewees are very optimistic, especially about the mobility of staff and students. Most of the negative expectations are related to twining partnerships and partly local branch campus. In their statements, respondents justify their skepticism about these key methods, noting in particular that institutions in the country concerned do not favor cooperative processes and that this is not in line with prevailing political and social culture.

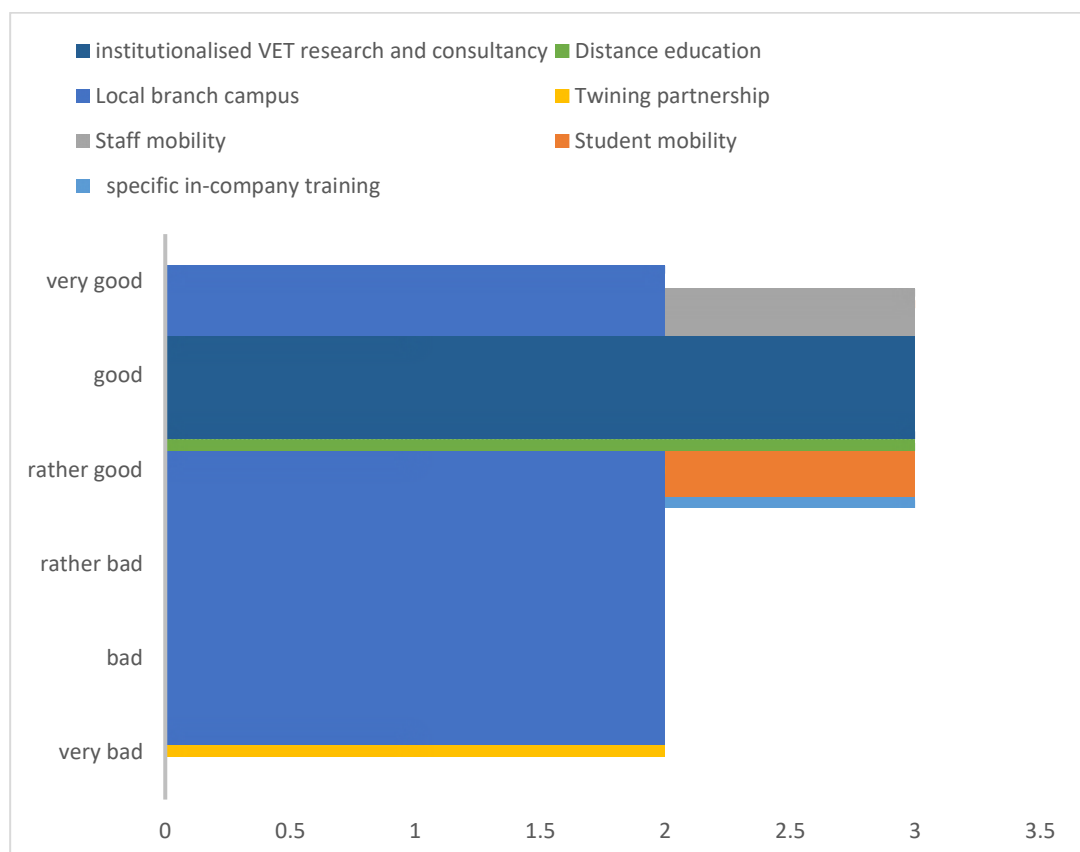


Figure 13. Opinion on the implementation of seven core methods of Finnish VET exportation to UAE

They also note the high financial cost of doing these kinds of activities, finding the right partner, difficulty in connection with industry in UAE and fear of conflicts. With regard to the mobility of staff and students, respondents point to their local partners' strong interest and demand, as well as their ability to innovate due to skill mismatches and frustration with the current situation.

4.2 Strategy challenges

The strategic development plan of internationalization is the most clear and successful carrier for the VET organizations to turn the idea of internationalization into the achievement of internationalization. If an organization does not have a goal orientation and structured preparation for the implementation of the internationalization programs, practical and successful international activities are difficult to execute. The organization's "internationalization" will become a mere term of formality or meaninglessness.

In this study the interviewees were selected from five separate institutes: Oulu University of Applied Sciences, EduCluster Finland Oy, Abu Dhabi Vocational Education and Training, Higher Colleges of Technology and Secondary Technical School's (STS). Among these institutions, Finnish Institutes, namely the University of Oulu and the Finnish EduCluster oy have an internationalization strategy. The EduCluster Finland sets its strategy according to the region, the cultural and economic conditions of the nation with which it cooperates.

The interviewees' response in the UAE made it very clear that the VET providers in the country were unaware of the need to establish an internationalization strategy and the impact this strategy may have on the growth of UAE institutions and countries. In other words, most VET providers in the UAE lack a plan for internationalization. They express that VET institutions in the UAE are involved in local and national business needs, so they don't see internationalization activities as a priority. Thus, there are less explanations provided by these companies for their failure to formulate an internationalization strategy and to adopt the applicable organizational model during the interview.

However, Internationalization is an unavoidable necessity for the advancement of domestic goals by VET organizations, as well as a solution to the desire to adapt to the

dynamic 'economic globalization' and 'regional economic integration' situation in support of jobs. Considering the attractive prospects for foreign-oriented regional economic growth, VET organizations should concentrate on becoming international in order to be the institution's most relevant business strategy programme. Follow-up results will be beneficial in meeting this particular challenge, in order to regain care of it.

Table 10. Solutions to overcome strategy challenges

Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with UAE strategic-level organizations and develop international cooperation expertise in VET; • Promoting strategic planning and institutional development; • Hiring experts or consultants.

After careful discussion with the interviewees as well as the use of secondary sources such as research and scientific articles, it can be concluded that one of the effective ways to overcome strategic challenges is cooperation UAE strategic-level organizations and develop international cooperation expertise in VET. Strategic organizations in UAE are ministry of education, ministry of foreign affairs and international cooperation (those responsible for education, training and international affairs); ministerial agencies responsible for all educational issues; organizations representing educational and training providers at national level such as the national institute for vocational education and Abu Dhabi vocational education and training. Overall, the responsibility of such organizations is leadership, strategic planning and alignment, budget plan preparation and management and engagement in policy dialogue. Such collaborations include policy discussion at the strategic level, as well as technical assistance and infrastructure development which leads to the transition of VET designs, standards or procedures. These practices resulted in structural organizational modifications of VET structures. This will lead to a change in the approach of VET providers and encourage them to participate in internationalization activities and set new strategies at the macro level.

Next, strategic organizational strategy stresses the effectiveness of the operations of the organization. This preparation allows, unlike doing wrong things, to do effective and right things with high performance. Only efficiency will improve mission success.

The value of a strategic plan is that it provides the framework for deciding the organization's future course, prioritization, policy creation, resource allocation and evaluation. With the right strategic planning, VET companies can provide tools and processes that clearly outline organizational goals and ways to achieve them. In order to develop such a plan, the situation analysis (internal and external), strategic concerns, the vision and mission of the organization, objectives, program priorities and resource requirements need to be carefully examined. Such studies, while sometimes neglected, are an important step for VET institutions. Without such analyzes, organizations can see resource wastage or, worse, gaps in their plans, which can make recovery challenging for an organization.

Finally, it should be noted that most VET providers do not have a clear understanding and definition of international cooperation in VET. Overall, however, in national and international programs this is still fairly new, although understanding what lies behind international cooperation will differ from country to country. Hence VET companies in both countries can recruit in their company some technical experts or a team of specialists who can first change the types of potential partnerships, strategies and operational models they need.

4.3 Socio-Cultural challenges

All interviewees in the study emphasized that cultural challenges have always been a major challenge for institutions to export education. During the interview two of the five interviewees admitted that they had language problems. But Mrs. Nadine Berjawi's opinion was different. She said foreign Language barrier is minimal at the moment. She also stated that time has proved that post oil economy effects and luxurious living style is changing at the moment. UAE locals are understanding that their country is understaffed with UAE nationals at all education levels. However, all interviewees agreed that many cultural aspects of UAE are completely different from Finland. They pointed out that education and learning can vary in different cultural fields, which is sometimes unbelievable.

Given the fact that the public is a customer of education, the attitudes and views of education among the UAE citizens are very different from the citizens of Finland.

Modern education in the UAE is not as popular as Finland. Unlike emirate women who are mostly illiterate, especially in poor families, Finnish women are highly educated. There is a huge gender inequality in the UAE society. Females have a smaller share of professional and political careers, which is influenced by the religious beliefs of the country.

Unlike the culture of trust in Finnish teachers, which allows them to concentrate more on learning rather than on curriculum planning; in the UAE, the power is controlled by ministry and education directors. In UAE, teachers follow the orders issued by the ministry. The role of managers and leaders is very low. There is a culture of distrust and difficulty working together. Trust presence does not guarantee advanced academic performance, but lack of it results in failure signals. Since trust has been created slowly over a long period of time, and is heavily rooted in Finnish history and culture, it is impossible to trade and consolidate it in other cultures. The flexibility of Finnish curriculum planning is based on responsibility, accountability and trust. But it does not seem that these foundations exist in the education of the UAE.

Another important point that has been mentioned is that the UAE working mindset might be a challenge that is still refusing technical positions. Emirati citizens see the technical positions as undervalued, low status and low consumption.

Table 11. Solutions to overcome socio-cultural challenges

Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating positive image of 'Finland' VET models in UAE; • Announce international conferences, collaborations, exhibitions and workshops on VET; • Reform of career guidance systems in UAE; • Identify local needs and materials that are useful for local market. Introduce the features of the Finnish system to meet these needs, such as curriculum and teaching aids; • Local consultation about the project; • Choose suitable and experienced logistic partner for international cooperation; • Hiring local experienced teachers and instructors in the industry and familiar with both Arabic and English languages; • Implementing AP Capstone Diploma program for research and English proficiency; • Development of VET schools and curricula suitable for Emirati women due to gender inequality in the country.

VET, both secondary and post-secondary, is clearly suffering from low credibility in the UAE. The reputation needs to be strengthened not only in the minds of young people but also in the minds of their families as well as other senior players including teachers, employment counselors even companies. There are several ways to improve Finland VET image in UAE.

The first option would be to provide quality information on VET programs, especially VET Finland programs. For instance, the level of programs and material, entry criteria, and how they are delivered may be covered by this information. Also, it is essential to include information on the efficiency and usefulness of services to the labor market, such as work market targets, former students' jobs and income rates. It will be more attractive to young people if Finnish VET models are seen to contribute to fast-paced jobs in the job market.

Second, develop acts in UAE to support the Finland VET program. Activities like advertising and marketing campaigns, skill competitions, VET weeks, visits of students on public routes to VET schools and companies with internships, seminars, workshops and exhibitions will increase visibility and help to build a positive picture of the Finnish VET system. Finally, Start providing positive models to show the young people what Finland VET system can do. Current and former VET students who share their experiences among others can be called VET representative, which would be a valuable way for young students to learn through their friends about VET choices.

Furthermore, there should be work guidelines and training policies in all VET institutions for the education of Emirati women. Given the gender challenges in the UAE, identifying the right jobs and skills for Emirati women can be an important opportunity to provide VET training in the UAE. Regular training sessions and seminars are also of particular importance for educating staff at all levels about the culture of Emirati citizens. Hiring and executing skilled labor would therefore be necessary for local consultancy on projects. Such activities have very positive results for all stakeholders (individuals, institutions and governments). Self-esteem and motivation for education will be increased. Institutions will see improved service satisfaction, educational outcomes for learners as well as reduced withdrawal from VET programs. Governments will also see a reduction in the unemployment rate of VET graduates and an improvement in the image of the VET system.

4.4 Economic and Political challenges

Finland and UAE have its own unique vocational education system, which continues to describe the VET as something like a follower of the national agenda. At present, VET is essentially locked in nation systems that meet economic, cultural, and social purposes. However, this is the basic economic objectives that will provide motivation to the direction of motion by VET in regard to policies. These points make international cooperation a minefield of bureaucracy.

Two of the five interviewees noted that getting the right government support, both financially and legally, is one of the key challenges for VET's international cooperation between the two countries. Others cited difficulties due to institutional disparities, such as long-term investment in the area and the alignment of Finland's training plan with the UAE training programme. In fact, many operational differences can be caused by structural differences.

Next, while the private sector provides the most jobs in the UAE, the resignation of Emirati people employed in the private sector is substantial. Low salaries are by far their most popular grievances, particularly because opportunities are very lucrative in the public sector. Other issue would be that especially non-Emirates employers, who lead the UAE private sector, have the misconceptions of Emirates people. This, in effect, along with the low level of private-sector UAE involvement, leads to mistrust between Emirati workers and their employers.

Moreover, gaining a competitive advantage in the UAE education market was another topic raised by the interviewees. In response to the challenges of globalization, several countries around the world have taken the decision to undergo international training, which is no exception to the United Arab Emirates. By the beginning of 2012, there have been more than 39 international educational institutes in the UAE, which show that the UAE has been pioneering the reception of international universities, more than any other country in the world. The majority of these universities are a branch of a high rank and reputable American or British university. Given that Emirati students prefer studying in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, and that choosing students to study rather than quality education is affected by the reputation of schools and colleges; it can be inferred that attracting students may be a major

challenge to VET Finnish providers. Therefore, it is necessary to obtain a competitive advantage for VET Finnish providers.

Table 12. Solutions to overcome economic & political challenges.

Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developments in bilateral cooperation between Finland and the UAE; • VET institutions must work to find external sources of enterprises and industries • Choose suitable and experienced logistic partner; • Offering of on - the-job training and apprenticeship programmes; • Involvement of all VET stakeholders in designing and developing VET programmes; • Implement international manufacturing and technical standards and international facilities into the education and learning cycle; • Positive activities and innovative thinking to meet local needs in an entrepreneurial way; • To get approval from the higher education with full proposal and clear information.

Diplomatic relations between Finland and the United Arab Emirates have historically been strong even though the two countries are fairly far from each other geographically and culturally. Trade and international collaboration have long been an important part of relationships. However, in order to develop bilateral relationships and increase the degree of government support, there must be some constructive and supportive policies for international VET activities between the two countries. On the other hand, when designing their own internationalization, VET providers should pay careful attention to national political path and diplomatic strategy, since the ultimate aim of these organs is to prepare valuable, professional human resources for the national undertakings.

Next, vocational and technical institutions do have to look for external support to improve their conditions. To this end, in addition to aggressively seeking favorable state and local government policies and financial services, the most important thing is to seek business capital. Successful partnership between VET and business organizations will not only enhance the standard of human resource education but also strengthen deep and strong cooperation between VET and businesses. VET providers must work effectively to put together industry and organizational capital to engage in school operations, support the operating budget of the school and increase the performance of the school.

At the same time, using the right conditions for cooperation between the two countries, they should hire reputable local partners and researchers and technology experts from the industry to participate in the development of school training programs and educational exercises. It is the perfect way to see how Finland's training programme can be matched with the UAE training system for VET providers.

In addition, VET providers need to integrate international business and technology standards and international facilities into the education and learning cycle so that they can create a clear connection between education and standard international skills requirements. This method both encourages students and teachers to participate in international activities and increases their competitive advantage in the UAE by cultivating students who are proficient in international quality skills.

4.5 Knowledge-based challenges

One of the major challenges that VET faces in the UAE is the lack of publicly accessible information on all facets of VET. In fact, this sector's graduates don't have the problem of lack of job opportunities but they are less interested because of lack of information about its broad benefits. In VET institutions, given the opportunities, the enrollment rate is just 1-3 percent, which is lower than the global average. Students have a clear interest in business instead: more than 64% of them want to pursue their studies in business colleges. Trade and banking are preferred to manufacture and technology, because competency requirements are less strict and advertisement is simpler and more convenient.

The lack of information available to government and providers, on the other hand, may also cause systemic problems. This sort of lack of knowledge is primarily explained by the three issues of lack of accountability, lack of control and evaluation, and poorly structured systems for communication. In this scenario with minimal knowledge control and accountability, conducting impact analyses with VET on labor market results, diagnostic tests, expense-benefit analysis and another research are not feasible. Information shortages not only hinder study and research, but also build barriers to entry, as they do not provide the public with available knowledge, restricting participation and retention in the system.

Table 13. Solutions to overcome knowledge-based challenges.

Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategy for promoting VET among Emirates to raise the social value of VET; • Improving career information and awareness in trainees; • Growing interest of individuals in the advancement of skills; • Design an efficient system of communication between government, VET providers and labor market; • Use local consultants and partners; • Design a system to provide comparable data on VET systems.

Measures must be taken at the national level to address the challenges posed by the lack of information and knowledge. To strengthen the social values of VET and increase people's participation in skill growth, a range of promotional activities can be on the agenda, such as skill competitions with valuable prizes, seminars, workshops, and raising graduates' living standards.

The ever-changing work market and the increasing need for highly qualified and skilled labor pose many obstacles for the UAE's economic growth. Tackling these issues requires very specific policies for vocational education and training in the UAE. The development of such policies needs reliable and up-to-date information on the state of society and the labor market. The design of programs and policies and the implementation of a systematic and coordinated national strategy for VET academic qualifications and standards is therefore crucial for the UAE Government. It is also needed to build a robust network of contact between policymakers, VET providers and the labor market to help decision-makers understand the policies and plans for future developments in training as well as the UAE labor market.

On the other hand, due to the enormous cultural, economic and political differences between Finland and the UAE, Finnish VET providers may use local consultants and partners to obtain accurate and precise information from the UAE and how to enter the market in the region. But the argument raised by the interviewees is that it is often problematic to find an acceptable local partner within the UAE. The Emirates Government will also help to solve this issue by providing a suitable environment and providing information about possible partners.

4.6 Management and Human Resource challenges

Interview with experts confirmed that unavailability of qualified educators as well as quality education are among the main problems in the UAE VET program. The UAE's education system has historically relied in recent years on teachers from Egypt and other countries in the Middle East. Recently, and generally for cultural reasons, politicians employed Western teachers to promote the education sector's modernization. At the other hand, the interviewees claimed that being fluent in Arabic was very useful to the teachers working in this section. That way, they can interact better with students and pass information. They also mentioned that there are a lot of teachers who don't want to work internationally, or in other words, attracting motivated and qualified teachers to work internationally require more effort and time and also higher salaries than regular teachers who are available everywhere.

Table 14. Solutions to overcome management and human resource challenges.

Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating incentive for employees, teachers, coaches, companies to build workplaces that use skills appropriate for organizations with high results; • Expanding the professional skills of teachers by in-service training programmes; • Implement a structured programme of teacher training; • Building a forum for offering advice and distributing best practices regarding academic teachers' career development; • Participate in staff mobility programs.

It would seem that the UAE would take a more consistent approach to recruiting, retaining and preparing qualified VET teachers for better development. To do so, it should collect more detailed evidence of how comparatively different factors affect VET teacher engagement (e.g., wages and benefits) and various types of assistance.

VET providers may implement a formal training program with government support to create a new curriculum, which requires a mix of face-to-face classes, online courses, webcasts, and seminars. Attempting to explain the curriculum framework, reinforcing preparation and enhancing organizational skills and curriculum delivery, increasing teachers' understanding of the right qualifications, as well as increasing their industrial awareness, are among the topics that should be considered in this program.

Moreover, UAE vocational education and training providers should create a coordinating organ providing guidelines for professional development preparation, growth, and participation. Through promoting innovative teaching techniques, emphasizing laboratory courses, using emerging tools and promoting curriculum training, it can improve the skills and competencies needed in the job market. These organizations may also develop a successful program for teachers to visit or study in order to coordinate and implement training and visit and develop teaching models for teachers from Emirati in partnership with international experts.

5 Discussion

Through relating literature review to experimental results, the research examines the opportunities and obstacles to exporting Finnish vocational education and training to the UAE. The theoretical portion addressed primarily the issues of internationalization and the methods of exporting educational services, while the findings gathered the views, thoughts and experiences of those involved in the field of technical and vocational education in Finland and the UAE. Exporting education services has traditionally been viewed in Finland as exporting fully prepared service packages, but in today's reality it is all about manufacturing what the consumer wants in a manner that makes such items sealable and, quite significantly, profitable.

Globally, due to the various variations in attitudes, concepts, opinions and strategies of stakeholders in this field towards internationalization, it is difficult to meet the expectations of technical and vocational education customers. Additionally, there are also other problems emerging from the consumer and business viewpoint (section 2.4).

To assess the development of Finnish technical and vocational education in the UAE, it is recommended that you first identify UAE stakeholders involved in VET international cooperation. In this study, stakeholders are divided into four main categories, including strategic-level organizations that set policy agendas for international cooperation (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, National Qualifications Authority), organizations providing

technical support, and developing capacity (Vocational Education and Training Awards Council, Abu Dhabi Center for Technical and Vocational and Training, Qualifications and Awards in Dubai), VET providers (National Institute for Vocational Education(NIVE),Emirates Aviation University , and so on), and companies involved in VET provision (Petroleum institute) (Section 3.2).

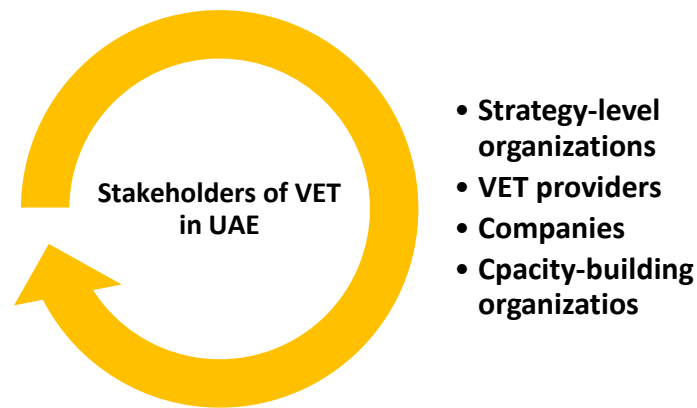


Figure 14. Groups of bodies participating in UAE's international VET cooperation

These four classes are the principal players in the UAE's technical and vocational education market. For extending Finnish vocational education and training to UAE, therefore, managers should remember that collaboration or partnership with these four groups can of course solve many of their possible challenges.

Furthermore, according to the findings of this study, exports of technical and vocational training to the UAE can be made at three levels: (i) collaborating with UAE strategic-level organizations. This collaboration can include activities such as development of a program of VET education for government, municipalities or authorities, curriculum design, teacher competences, Development of training techniques, and so on. (ii) cooperation at VET provider level along with activities like partnership with local technical and vocational schools and colleges, workplace training for businesses that need special skills or qualifications, establishment of VET training centers in the UAE and so on. (iii) Knowledge sharing and awareness-raising with marketing, network, research activities which can play a part in the process of policy making.



Figure 15. Levels of international cooperation of VET in UAE

5.1 Answer to Research Questions

To exploit the useful experience of the Finnish vocational education and training system, this research study focuses on acquiring in-depth information about the various challenges that VET institutions in Finland face in order to export their services to the UAE market and potential solutions.

This entire work was conceived to address the main research question:

RQ: How can Finnish vocational education be expanded to the UAE?

Also, the following sub-questions need to be answered:

RQ1a: What challenges and opportunities are there for education providers in the UAE?

RQ1b: How can Education providers overcome the challenges and capture the opportunities?

Inductive approach, semi-structured interview and content analysis were used to address the above questions.

5.1.1 Core methods to expand Finnish VET system to the UAE market

In this report, I have considered seven key methods for exporting Finnish technical and vocational education systems to the UAE according to Table 2 in Section 2.1.2 (The modes of supply international trade of educational services). These include: institutionalized VET research and consultancy, distance education, Local branch campuses, Twinning partnership, staff and student mobility, and specific in-company training. The results of this study in section 4.1 show that most of the interviewees are very supportive, especially about staff and student mobility. Their reasons for this optimism are the strong interest and demand from their local partners, as well as their ability to innovate because of skill discrepancies and frustration with the current situation. The interviewees assessed the conditions of the UAE as very good for these activities. This assessment is relatively good for VET research and consultancy, distance education and specific in-company training. Much of the negative expectations apply to twinning partnerships and partially the campus of local branches. Much of the negative expectations apply to twinning partnerships and partially the campus of local branches. They cite a number of reasons for this, such as the high financial costs of doing so, the difficulty in seeking a suitable partner, the problem of connection with industry in the UAE, the fear of conflict and the lack of interest in participating in joint ventures.

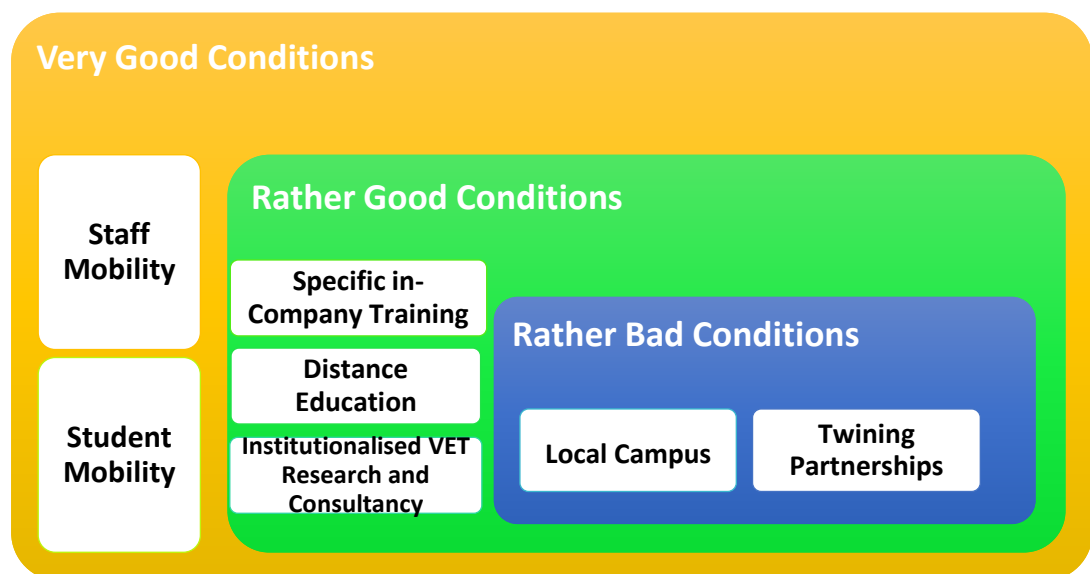


Figure 16. Approximate assessment of UAE conditions in each method

5.1.2 Key challenges facing Finnish VET service providers in the UAE

Using a systematic approach to interpret the data collection findings from semi-structured interviews, following Table represents the most critical issue in the UAE for Finnish VET providers (Sections 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6). I have divided these challenges into five main categories: strategy, socio-cultural, economic, political, knowledge-based, management and human resource challenges. It is important to remember that two or more groups can share some of these challenges.

Table 15. Key challenges facing Finnish VET service providers in the UAE

Challenges	Description
Strategy challenges	Lack of internationalization strategy among VET providers in UAE
	Language problems
Socio-Cultural challenges	Gender inequality
	Emirati citizens view of VET as second-rate, low value, low status and low consumption
	Different educational culture and perspective
Economic and Political challenges	Gaining government support (financially and legally)
	Institutional disparities
	Alignment of Finland's training plan with the UAE training program and Labor market
	Difficulty in long-term investment in the UAE
	Lack of interest among Emirates in private sector work due to low salaries compared to the public sector
	The misconceptions of non-Emirati employers working in the private sector of the UAE towards the people of the Emirate.
	Gaining a competitive advantage in the UAE education market
Knowledge-based challenges	Lack of publicly accessible information on all facets of VET and its benefits
	Systemic problems due to lack of information available to government and providers
	Poorly structured systems for communication
Management and Human resource challenges	Unavailability of bilingual, motivated and qualified educators
	Quality education
	High salaries of qualified teachers

First, the results of this study indicate that VET providers in the UAE were unaware of the need to establish an international strategy and the effect this strategy will have on the growth of institutions. That means most UAE VET providers have no plans to internationalize. They are interested in local and national business needs, and they do not emphasize activities related to internationalization (Section 4.2).

Second, based on the findings, cultural issues can be said to be among the most important issues in the UAE. Education attitudes and perspectives differ greatly between Emirates and Finnish people. There is considerable disparity between the sexes in UAE society. Unlike Finnish women, Emirates have a small proportion of education, in particular in poor families. They also have a smaller share of technical and political work, affected by religious beliefs in the region.

Another significant problem to note is that the people of Emirates do not have a favorable view of vocational education and training as well as technical employment. They see technical situations as low value, low status and low consumption. Moreover, Finland and UAE have different educational culture and perspective. Contrary to the culture of trusting teachers in Finland, which is the cornerstone of Finland's curriculum, in the UAE, teachers obey ministry-issued instructions. In other words, Finnish curriculum planning's flexibility is built upon responsibility, transparency, and trust. But this does not appear to be the case in education at the UAE. Finally, despite developments in the advancement of English-language learning at the UAE, language problems still tend to be one of the difficulties of exporting education to the UAE (Section 4.3).

The third Group of challenges is very critical for Finnish VET providers, addressing economic and political problems, including the use of support from UAE and the Finnish governments, Institutional disparities, alignment of Finland's training plan with the UAE training program and Labor market as well as difficulty in long-term investment in the UAE. Next, although the private sector provides the most jobs in the United Arab Emirates, the people of Emirates are unwilling to work in this sector. The main reason for this is the low salaries compared to the public sector, as well as the involvement of non-Emirates employers and their hostile attitude towards Emirates. In other words, these issues have given rise to mistrust between the Emirates and their staff. In addition, it can be expected that gaining a competitive edge in the UAE

education sector is an unavoidable obstacle for VET providers in Finland, for three key reasons. These reasons include the presence of various schools and colleges from well-known countries (Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia), the impact of school and university credits on student selection, and finally, the willingness of Emirati students to study in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. (Section 4.4).

The fourth category is the problems that are mainly due to lack of knowledge and data access. Emirati citizens do not have enough information about the value and importance of technical and vocational education. There is little publicity about these training, so the enrollment rate is only 1-3 percent which is lower than the global average. Moreover, the lack of data available to the government and providers cause systematic issues. Lack of information at this level leads to minimal control and accountability of knowledge, lack of effective analysis with VET on labor market results, lack of diagnostic tests, inability to analyze cost and profit and other research (Section 4.5).

Lastly, the findings of this study revealed that one of the most significant problems of the VET system in the United Arab Emirates is the lack of access to qualified trainers as well as the quality of the education. The results suggest that attracting motivated and qualified teachers to work internationally requires more effort and time, as well as higher salaries than regular teachers. Teachers also need to be fluent in both Arabic and English. Institutions should also consider ways to increase teachers' motivation to participate in international activities (Section 4.6).

5.1.3 Solutions to tackle challenges

While solutions are listed in Chapter 4 to resolve the key problems outlined in Section 5.1.2, some of them can be briefly clarified to Finnish VET providers. It is worth noting that some of these approaches require the support and assistance of the Finland and UAE governments.

For the first categories of challenges (strategy challenges), it was mentioned that collaborating with UAE strategic-level organizations and building international VET

Table 16. Suggested solutions to overcome challenges

Challenges	Suggested solutions
Strategy challenges	Collaborate with UAE strategic-level organizations and develop international cooperation expertise in VET
	Promoting strategic planning and institutional development
Socio-Cultural challenges	Hiring experts or consultants
	Creating positive image of 'Finland' VET models in UAE
	Reform of career guidance systems in UAE
	Local consultation about the project
	Choose suitable and experienced logistic partner for international cooperation
	Development of VET schools and curricula suitable for Emirati women due to gender inequality in the country
Economic and Political challenges	Hiring local experienced teachers and instructors in the industry and familiar with both Arabic and English languages;
	Developments in bilateral cooperation between Finland and the UAE
	VET institutions must work to find external sources of enterprises and industries
	Involvement of all VET stakeholders in designing and developing VET programmes
	Positive activities and innovative thinking to meet local needs in an entrepreneurial way
	Implement international manufacturing and technical standards and international facilities into the education and learning cycle
	Offering of on - the-job training and apprenticeship programmes;
Choose suitable and experienced logistic partner	
Knowledge-based challenges	To get approval from the higher education with full proposal and clear information
	Develop a strategy to raise the social value of VET among Emirates
	Design an efficient system of communication between government, VET providers and labor market
	Use local consultants and partners
Management and Human resource challenges	Design a system to provide comparable data on VET systems.
	Creating incentive for employees, teachers, coaches, companies to build workplaces that use skills appropriate for organizations with high results
	Expanding the professional skills of teachers by in-service training programmes
	Implement a structured programme of teacher training
	Building a forum for offering advice and distributing best practices regarding academic teachers' career development
	Participate in staff mobility programs

cooperation is one of the most effective ways to tackle such challenges, as well as several other existing ones. Strategic organizations in UAE include ministry of education, ministry of foreign affairs and international cooperation (those responsible for education, training and international affairs); ministerial agencies responsible for all educational issues; organizations representing educational and training providers at national level such as the national institute for vocational education and Abu Dhabi vocational education and training. In general, these entities are responsible for leadership, strategic planning and balance, budget preparation and implementation, and involvement in policy dialogue (Section 4.2).

What to collaborate with organizations at this level may include policy debate at the strategic level, as well as technical assistance and implementation of infrastructure leading to the transition of professional strategies, guidelines, or procedures. As a result, VET providers' attitude will change, and they will be encouraged to participate in international activities and develop new strategies (Section 4.2).

Various approaches to the socio-cultural problems have been suggested. Though the most significant of them, according to the author, is to create a positive image of the Finnish VET, as well as the use of local consultation about the project. Clearly, VET school at all levels suffers from poor reputation within the UAE. It is therefore important that all stakeholders in this sector plan and execute activities to enhance the image of VET not only in the minds of young people but also in the minds of their families, teachers, work counselors and even businesses. There are many ways in which a Finnish VET image can be enhanced at UAE (Section 4.3).

One of those approaches is to provide reliable and correct knowledge about Finnish VET programmes. Among such details can be the standard of programs and material, eligibility requirements and how they are portrayed, the effectiveness and utility of these services in the labor market, and the rate of income. When Finnish VET models are seen as leading to fast-paced employment in the labor market, it would be more appealing to young people (Section 4.3).

Additionally, promoting events such as publicity and marketing campaigns, skill contests, VET weeks, student visits on public routes to VET schools and businesses with internships, seminars, workshops, and exhibitions can improve awareness and help create a positive image of the Finnish VET program. Sharing the experiences of current

and former VET students, called VET representatives, is a good way for young students to get the information they need through their friends about VET. Regular training sessions and seminars are also important for educating employees on the culture of Emirati people at all levels. (Section 4.3).

One of the most important approaches to economic and political challenges is the quest for external sources of enterprises and industries, in addition to benefiting from the government's protectionist policies and financial services. Collaborations between VET providers and business organizations not only improve the human resource training quality, but also promote deep cooperation between VET institutions and businesses. VET suppliers must strive actively to put together business and organizational resources to participate in school operations, supporting the operating budget of the school and improving the efficiency of the school (Section 4.4).

Also, to ensure that VET services are adapted to labor market demands, it is possible to use the beneficial cooperation of stakeholders, private sector employers, and the opinions and initiatives of graduates in the educational planning of this sector. Most VET stakeholders understand that their presence in VET training preparation enables officials to recognize key problems on the job market and use theoretical principles in the end. This will improve the coordination between quality and educational needs of the labor market. The level of trust of industry in the education department will increase, which will have many benefits (Section 4.4).

Necessary measures must be taken at the national level to address the challenges posed by lack of information and knowledge. To find out the status of the labor market and the required manpower, an effective communication network between government, VET providers, graduates and the labor market is required. This network of communication helps to design programs and policies, and to enforce a consistent and structured national policy for academic qualifications and standards of VET. Finnish VET providers, on the other hand, may use local consultants and collaborators to obtain reliable and relevant information from the UAE, and how to penetrate the region market. However, identifying a suitable local partner at the UAE is always problematic according to the findings. The UAE government will also be helping to solve this issue by creating an acceptable framework and providing information on possible partners (Section 4.5).

Regarding the proposed solutions to managerial and human resource challenges, VET providers in UAE, need to introduce a comprehensive government-sponsored training program to train teachers and develop their expertise in this field. The curriculum can be a blend of face-to-face classes, online courses, online broadcasts and seminars. Topics to be covered in this curriculum include explaining the curriculum framework, strengthening readiness and strengthening organizational skills and presenting the curriculum, increasing teachers' understanding of the competencies required, as well as increasing industrial awareness (Section 4.6).

Moreover, establishing a forum that offers direction and dissemination of best practices for VET teacher professional development is a smart way to enhance the quality of technical and vocational education. VET providers in UAE can create a coordinated body that provides guidelines for preparation, growth, and participation in professional development. This will develop the skills needed to succeed in the job market by updating current teaching methods, incorporating laboratory classes, using modern technologies and enhancing curriculum preparation. The association may also develop an effective curriculum for Emirati teachers to organize and introduce training models in collaboration with international experts (Section 4.6).

5.2 Managerial Implications

Many VET providers have difficulties exporting their services to other countries or refuse to do so. The key explanation for this dissatisfaction is that at the beginning of the journey, managers find it difficult to recognize the challenges and opportunities in the destination area, and are sometimes frustrated by a number of often conflicting management consultations. The main findings of this research's empirical analysis can indicate that they are comprehensive and extensively elaborate for Finnish VET providers. Since this result correctly describes barriers to entering the market for technical and vocational education at the UAE and proposes potential solutions.

This research may be used by administrators, managers and other officials to make strategic decisions while exporting technical and vocational education services to the UAE. This study will help them get to grips with the various challenges of exporting technical and vocational education to the UAE market. Via this research, they will be able to identify the underlying requirements, including what problems exist in the UAE

market, how these problems can be solved, how these solutions can be used, where they can be handled, and the government agencies will help to solve the challenging issues. However, several management recommendations are given below, based on the results of this research.

First, Before VET is given to the UAE, managers are expected to agree on the level of their cooperation, as well as the community of partners and consultants. The development of Finnish VET to the UAE can be done on three main levels: (i) cooperation at VET provider level; (ii) collaborating with UAE strategic-level organizations (iii) Knowledge sharing and awareness-raising. Also, working with the four major players in technical and vocational training at the UAE, including strategic organizations, VET providers, capacity builders and businesses, can prevent many challenges.

Second, the UAE has excellent conditions for participating in mobility programs for students and employees according to the study. So, the best way to join the market for technical and vocational education at the UAE is taking advantage of these important opportunities. Also witnessing good conditions for consultancy and research operations, as well as in-service training, due to the country's huge investment in the development of technical and vocational training and the development of skilled labor.

Third, given the varied cultural and economic systems of the two countries, Finnish VET providers must be prepared to face significant cultural and economic challenges such as low social value for VET among Emirates, gender inequality, lack of interest in private sector work in UAE, integration of Finnish curricula with UAE curriculum, and competitiveness. At the other side, it would seem that if Finnish VET experts can find a suitable consultant or partner in the UAE, they would easily solve many of these problems.

Fourth, in order to create a competitive advantage and attract more students, VET Finnish company managers have to do valuable activities to create a good picture of the Finnish VET system. This goal can be made easier by encouraging activities such as marketing campaigns, skill contests, VET weeks, public student visits to VET schools and jobs with internships, conferences, workshops, and exhibits.

Fifth, the study advises VET managers and officials to search for external sources of businesses and enterprises, as it is difficult to obtain full government support along the way. Effective cooperation between VET providers and industrial companies not only improves the quality of human resource training, but also allows business and organizational resources to participate in school activities, support the operating budget of the school, and coordinately increase school performance.

Finally, the UAE is in dire need of skilled teachers in the technical and vocational sectors. Therefore, any investment in this area, including the teaching of Emirati teachers in person or online, the design of a structured teaching system, can be an effective way to expand the Finnish VET system.

5.3 Assessment of the Results in the Light of Literature

This study's experimental research and the literature examined from preceding studies are strongly related. Experimental study of this research has shown that the key issues with these challenges are: the lack of adequate knowledge to assess the market and compete in it, lack of an efficient communication system between the government, VET providers and the labor market in the UAE, difficulty in choosing the right and experienced local partner or consultant, cultural differences, the social value of VET in the UAE, and hiring efficient staff in VET institutions.

This study's results on strategic challenges support Paronen's previous studies (2014). Operating with strategic organizations in the UAE and improving the skills of international collaboration in this area is the principal solution to this form of challenges. This finding is consistent with the findings of Oberheidt et.al. (2015).

The findings indicate that VET providers in the UAE will face socio-cultural challenges such as language problems, gender disparity and VET's low social value. The results also suggest that building a positive picture of the Finnish VET program and seeking experienced local consultants and collaborators are effective ways to solve these problems. Such results are consistent with what some VET export researchers have found (Hadid 2013; Paronen 2014; Tran and Dempsey; Gao 2019).

Results in accordance with Al Hammadi (2016) sheds light from empirical study that alignment of Finland's training plan with the UAE training system and the labor market is one of challenges faced by VET providers in UAE. The challenges of not being interested in the UAE's private sector jobs due to low wages compared to the public sector and the lack of access to bilingual, motivated and qualified teachers are also in line with Al Hammadi's findings. While statistics provided by him show a substantial increase in education among Emirati women, this statistic also shows the low participation of Emirati women in technical and vocational training, which can itself be due to gender inequality in UAE Society as well as labor market.

Dan Wang will be offering ways to develop technical and vocational schools in 2019. Among his suggested approaches are to promote strategic planning and institutional construction, and to seek to find international financial capital in the manufacturing and commercial sectors. Such approaches are in line with this study's suggested strategies for addressing political and economic challenges.

Teachers have always played a central role in education, and when it comes to engaging in international events their role becomes more important. Since their views on this subject impact directly on the opinions of students and their families. In fact, the importance and benefits of participating in internationalization activities should be emphasized by VET teachers. In line with the findings of this study, some other researchers have pointed to the problems facing this community, including lack of sufficient encouragement, lack of second language skills, high salaries and proper training (Al Hammadi 2016; Oberheidt et.al. 2015; Paronen 2014).

Experimental studies suggest solutions to tackle the current human resource challenges, especially challenges related to teachers. Solutions like building a communication forum for offering advice and distributing best practices, Implementing a teacher training programme, these approaches will not only improve enthusiasm and promote successful teaching practices but will also develop the skills required to compete in the job market, improve cooperation between the educational institution and employees and reinforce the curriculum. These findings are in line with the content of OECD (2019a), OECD (2019b), and OECD (2017).

5.4 Research Limitations

Researchers have always found shortcomings in their study, some of which arise at the start of the work, but others become apparent during of the study or even at the end. One clear drawback of this study comes from the inherent essence of qualitative study in terms of results being generalizable. As just that, the results are only representative and might not be generalizable to all institutions and countries who want to take action in exporting and importing technical and vocational education.

Another concern was that high-ranking officials were not persuaded to take part in study activities. It would appear that more interviews with a larger number of interviews with people who are active at the level of strategic organizations such as ministries can increase the accuracy of the results.

Additionally, all participants chosen in this research were selected from administrators and educational sector officials. The aim of technical and vocational training is to develop skilled labor in the industry and business fields. Also, cooperation between the technical and vocational education sector and industry sector would produce extraordinary results in all sectors (business, economic, industry, educational sectors). Thus, the presence of participants from the industry and business sector added value to the results.

The English language used during the interviews is another limitation throughout this thesis, which was not the native language of interviewer or interviewees. When analyzing audio recordings, this challenge was created for the author and for participants to share their experiences and viewpoints. Furthermore, for each participant the research interview lasted an average of 35 minutes, which was not enough time to cover the enormous problem of exporting technical and vocational education and to recognize its numerous opportunities and obstacles. International education research is a complicated subject, which needs an integrative and innovative approach, according to the Finnish Ministry of Education.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Internationalization is a major phenomenon occurring throughout various national contexts in the vocational education and training systems. In order to work in a global

world like the UAE and Finland, the labor market needs international skills and not only language skills but also abilities. The study gives VET Finnish providers good results in understanding various problems in the export of vocational education and training services from Finland to the UAE, as well as potential solutions. Nevertheless, the findings of any work can also be strengthened and further developed.

According to the findings of this thesis, VET's internationalization activities are far fewer than the internationalization of higher education, and obviously there is a lack of resources and comparable data for VET providers and researchers in that area. Thus, too many aspects of VET internationalization are worth studying. Collecting and analyzing the approaches used in different countries' VET systems, identifying effects of internationalization methods on student growth and global employment, researching patterns in the globalization of work environments, identifying the innovations required to internationalize in VET, would provide useful information for decision-makers and officials.

In addition, the findings clearly demonstrated the significance of teacher 'attitudes as one of the most important influences on the attitudes of students towards internationalization activities. It was also strongly recommended that VET institutions make further efforts to set up teacher education systems and improve the cooperation of teachers with the institution in order to carry out the internationalization activities of VET better. Given the importance of this issue, more work on the teachers' professional development in response to VET internationalization would be interesting.

Finally, as described in the results, the use of international standards is one way of increasing the attractiveness and quality of VET. But there are no universal standards for teaching in many educational disciplines or the current standards are not applicable. Hence, it can be beneficial for many researchers and managers to perform studies on standards in various fields of VET and how to develop them both in terms of quality and reputation.

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6 Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1. Interview Questions

1- Name & Designation of interviewee

2- Name of organization/school / university and year of establishment

3- What level of degree/certificate the students get after graduation?

4- Does your organization have a specific strategy for internationalizing vocational training? If so, at what level of organizational strategy levels? (corporate, business or functional level) Why in this level?

5- Has your organization been active in the internationalization of education and in particular vocational training? What kind of activities has it done so far?

6- What was your divers for doing these activities?

7. How do you assess the conditions of the UAE for implementing the seven core opportunities in exporting Finnish vocational education and training system? Please note, in each case, what is the main challenge and the appropriate solution to it.

- Institutionalised VET research and consultancy

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Possible challenges:

Possible solutions:

- Distance education

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Possible challenges:

Possible solutions:

- **Local branch campus**

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Possible challenges:

Possible solutions:

- **Twining partnership**

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Possible challenges:

Possible solutions:

- **Staff mobility**

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Possible challenges:

Possible solutions:

- **Student mobility**

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Possible challenges:

Possible solutions:

- **Specific in-company training**

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Possible challenges:

Possible solutions:

8- What are the cultural challenges you faced for VET internationalization?

9- Did you find problems regarding to UAE students' background and their families' attitude towards Finnish VET system and internationalization, polarization between different fields of education or language?

10- How did you overcome those challenges?

11- What are the challenges you find in availing economic and political support from home country's Government as well as host country's Government?

12- Do you find problems regarding to Limitations on certain fields of study, programs considered to be contrary to national interests, Limits on imports of educational materials, Visa-restriction, competitive advantage in foreign market, or stimulant and funding support?

13- How did you overcome those challenges?

14- What are the challenges you faced to obtain information regarding potential market area, adaption problem in market entry, accreditation of programs, price competition, potential customers and their requirement?

15- How did you overcome those challenges?

16- Did you face challenges regarding the management and collaboration between employees within VET internationalization activities?

17- How did you overcome those challenges?

18- What is the attitude of your staff and especially your teachers towards internationalization of VET? Do they have enough motivation to participate in internationalization activities in UAE? How did you create that motivation for them?

19- Did you find problems regarding to teachers' working time and payment for internationalization activities? How did you overcome these challenges?

20. Please, mention if there are any other opportunities or challenges for exporting Finnish education and training system to UAE?