

Bachelor's thesis
International Business Degree programme
2020

Duyen Le

**STUDY OF TALENT ACCELERATORS' IMPACT ON
THE CAREER OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
CASE COMPANY: THE STARTUP SHORTCUT OY**



Duyen Le

STUDY OF TALENT ACCELERATORS' IMPACT ON THE CAREER OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

CASE COMPANY : THE STARTUP SHORTCUT OY

Although the concept of *accelerator* has grown exponentially under the forms of start-up or business accelerator, talent accelerator and its role are still not explicitly identified. This thesis explores the concept of talent accelerator and investigates its impact on international students' career within the Finnish market.

Based on the deductive approach, the study presents existing knowledge on the concept of accelerator to present its characteristics and its connection with the notion of *social enterprise*. While investigating the case company, a SWOT analysis is performed, and the Entrepreneur Competence framework is applied for further analysis. The thesis then describes the general impact of talent accelerator on foreign students in terms of competency, skills and networking. After that, both quantitative and qualitative data methods are applied in data collection for research purposes. The process of data collection is conducted based on the case company's own database, as well as semi-structured interviews with both participants from the case company's development programs and human resources experts. In conclusion, I found out that most international students and human resources experts acknowledge the advantages of talent accelerator and its role in the early stages of career development. Furthermore, the study gives a picture of talent accelerator's impacts on the individuals' psychology, unemployment matter and the existence of unconscious bias in the recruitment process . Lastly, the research shows that talent accelerator supports international students in associating within the Finnish market. It might lead to more opportunities for the international workforce and avoids brain drain phenomenon on the Finnish labour market.

KEYWORDS:

Talent Accelerator, International students, Impact, Career, Skills, Competence, Networking.

CONTENT

1	INTRODUCTION	6
1.1	Thesis motivation	6
1.2	Thesis objectives and questions	7
1.3	Thesis approach	7
1.5	Case company: The Shortcut	11
2	TALENT ACCELERATOR IDENTIFICATION	12
2.1	Accelerator conceptualization	12
2.2	Social Entrepreneurship	14
2.2.1	Social entrepreneurship definition and features	14
2.2.2	The opportunities and challenges	15
2.2.3	Talent accelerator is a social enterprise	15
2.3	Talent Accelerator SWOT Analysis	18
2.3.1	The internal factors: Strengths and Weaknesses	19
2.3.2	The external factors: Opportunities and Threats	21
3	TALENT ACCELERATOR'S IMPACTS ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' CAREER	23
3.1	Accelerating international students' competences and skills	23
3.1.1	Entrepreneurship Competence Framework	23
3.1.2	Talent accelerator applies EntreComp model in its operation.	26
3.1.3	Using the EntreComp Progression Model to design the training programs.	28
3.2	Creating networking in job seek and career management	33
3.2.1	Networking definition and features	33
3.2.2	Networking advantages in job seek and career management	34
3.2.3	Talent accelerator's impact on international students' networking	36
4	METHODOLOGY	38
4.1	Research design	38
4.2	Data collection method	39
4.3	Interview criteria	42
5	DATA ANALYSIS	44

5.1 Quantitative data	44
5.2 Qualitative data	48
6 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	51
6.1 Findings and answers	51
6.2 Discussion	53
7 CONCLUSIONS	55
8 REFERENCES	57

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 : The Shortcut Job match-making events	60
Appendix 2. The Shortcut Training Course	61
Appendix 3. The Shortcut Inspired Event	62
Appendix 4. Interview questions	63

FIGURES

Figure 1. Thesis approach diagram (Mark, 2012)	7
Figure 2. Thesis content	10
Figure 3. Age of The Shortcut workforce	44
Figure 4. The Shortcut activities 2019 (Shortcut, The Shortcut Database 2019, 2019)	44
Figure 5. Talent Heist Attendee (Shortcut, The Shortcut Database 2019, 2019)	46
Figure 6. Networking Event Attendee (Shortcut, The Shortcut Database 2019, 2019)	47
Figure 7. Google Analytics IQ Certification training attendee (Shortcut, The Shortcut Database 2019, 2019)	47

PICTURES

Picture 1. Format of SWOT matrix (Craig Rollason, 2014)	18
Picture 2. The Shortcut figures 2018 (Shortcut, 2018)	20
Picture 3. Foreign degree students in higher education institutions (education)	21
Picture 4. The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (Margherita Bacigalupo, EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework, 2016)	25
Picture 5. Six common sources of Evidence in Doing Case Studies (Yin, 2012)	39
Picture 6. The Shortcut figures from 2017-2019 (Shortcut, White Paper on Diversity & Inclusion in the Tech industry. November 2019, 2019)	45

TABLES

Table 1. Talent accelerator and Start – up accelerator comparison (Rotiélío e Silva Junior, 2019)	13
Table 2. Social Entrepreneurship opportunities and challenges (Parccientific, 2018) (Manuel, n.d.)	15
Table 3. The addressed problems and The Shortcut's solutions (Shortcut, 2018)	17
Table 4. The Components of SWOT Analysis (E., 2017)	18
Table 5. The Start-up Shortcut Oy SWOT analysis	19
Table 6. The Shortcut' operation under EntreComp model overview	28
Table 7. The Shortcut's education offered based on EntreComp Progression Model	31
Table 8. The Shortcut basic training programs (Shortcut, The Shortcut , n.d.)	32
Table 9. The Shortcut online platforms	37
Table 10. Sample overview of international students – group 1	41
Table 11. Sample overview of external experts – group 2	41
Table 12. List of questions for sampled group 1	43
Table 13. List of question for sampled group 2	43

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Thesis motivation

Finland never stops being one of the most attractive countries in terms of happiness rate and high-level education system. According to the annual United Nations World Happiness Report 2020, Finland has been named as the happiest country for the third year in a row (Anon. 2020). Also, Finnish education system is leading globally with high ranking for many years. “The Finnish education system is one of the top performing education systems in the world”, as quoted from Li Andersson – Minister of Education of Finland (Gunawardena 2019). Thus, possessing an opportunity to live and study in Finland is a dream for many foreigners, considering Finland as a valuable step in their education and career.

According to The Pies News, until 2019, the number of international students has reached over 20.000, from both university and university of applied sciences (Baker 2019) . The main sources of students are coming from Russia, Vietnam, Nepal, etc. Besides, many researches demonstrate that more than half of foreign students choose to stay and work in Finland after completing their degree (Hughes 2016).

Being an international student who has lived and studied in Finland for 4 years, the researcher has witnessed and experienced obstacles in job search process, among many business fields and company types. Along with technological and science development, it leads to an increase in demand of high-skilled workforce. However, international students graduated from Finnish institutes still face difficulties in their career development. For instance, Finland copes with a lack of technology and healthcare labour. The official calculations show 90000 needed positions for the next 4 years (Carvar 2019). However, the Finnish language and culture are some of the obstacles that international talents might face in their job search, even in some fields where Finnish fluency is not important (Carvar 2019).

In the Finnish market, language training courses are important for integration. Also, personal motivation and commitment are essential keys to be successful. In addition to that, there are some organisations that perform their main function on *Talent Development*. They are called *Talent Accelerator*. These organisations could be considered as a *bridge* between job seekers and employers, or a *launcher* for foreign talents. Their function is to improve competences, skills, networking and assist international students in their career achievement. I have personally worked at the Talent Development Department of The Shortcut- one of the newest talent accelerators in Finland. This opportunity made me curious about how international students improve their employment possibilities under the influence of talent accelerator, as well as interested in the organisational functions and operation of the accelerator itself. Moreover, talent accelerator appears as a new social-based concept, which could bring huge changes for international students.

This is where the idea of this research is born. The researcher aims at providing an understanding of talent accelerator as a new social organisation concept, and pointing out its impacts on international students' career.

1.2 Thesis objectives and questions

A talent accelerator is not the same as a start-up accelerator. The research follow “Exploratory research” model, which concentrates on “what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light” (Robson 2002). The intent of this study is to explore the talent accelerator characteristics and its operating activities towards the Finnish labour market. The study also presents talent accelerator impact on international students in career achievement. Besides, it is interesting to have deeper understandings on talent accelerator effectiveness. It is about talent accelerator contribution to international students' job search process, as well as its possibility to perform the sustainable operation. Furthermore, the research attempts to lay the groundwork in terms of social-oriented organisations that lead to author's future studies.

The research addresses the following questions:

1. How does talent accelerator operate?
2. What is the impact of talent accelerator to international student's career?

1.3 Thesis approach

The intent of this thesis is to clarify the characteristics of talent accelerators, and their impact on international students' careers. The research methodology follows the onion diagram by Saunders (AI, 2012). The methodology details are presented in a specific chapter.

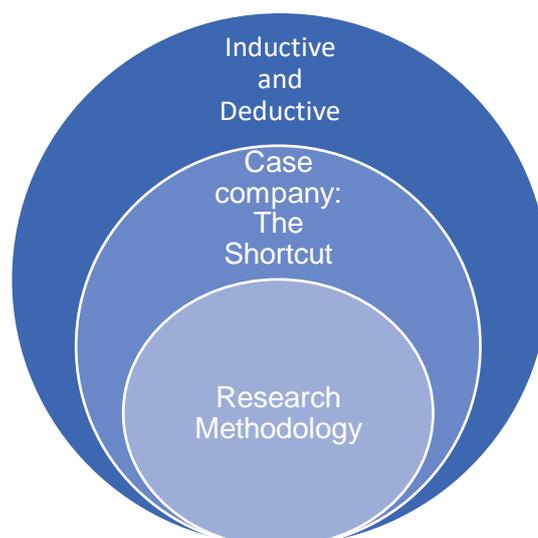


Figure 1. Thesis approach diagram (Mark, 2012)

The first layer: Research Methodology

The application of research methodology is for the purposes of exploring the impacts of a talent accelerator to international students' careers. In this phase, the qualitative method is applied, together with quantitative data collection and interviews. The details will be discussed in a specific chapter.

The second layer: Case company The Shortcut

Since the thesis aims to perform the explanatory question of how talent accelerator operates, the case company under the quantitative and qualitative approach is applied to address the problem. A case company is applied to get practical data about the addressed topic.

The third layer: Inductive and Deductive approach

Since talent accelerator is a new concept of an organisation, which is not alike as a start-up accelerator, there are limited applicable theoretical frameworks. Thus, the deductive approach is suitable to develop the concept of this organisation by reflecting, analysing, and combining the existing theories to explore the thesis topic (Essays 2017). Besides, it is important to examine the topic by inductive reasoning. The purpose is to perform a clear image of the thesis object, through the researcher's observation and experiences (Methodology n.d.).

1.4 Thesis structure

The thesis comprises 6 main chapters.

The research starts with a background introduction and facts that motivate the researcher to choose this topic. Besides, there is a brief introduction of the case company, *The Shortcut*, presented with basic figures (Chapter 1). Then, based on online and offline sources, along with the author's observations and case company information, the literature review will present the concept of talent accelerator, its characteristics, and impacts on international student's careers (Chapter 2). Next part, the researcher presents the research methodology and describes how the data is collected (Chapter 3). Based on the research methodology, the following parts show the data analysis that includes quantitative and qualitative data (Chapter 4). The research illustrates the main findings from the study, along with discussions and answers for the research questions (Chapter 5). The thesis ends with conclusion in chapter 6.

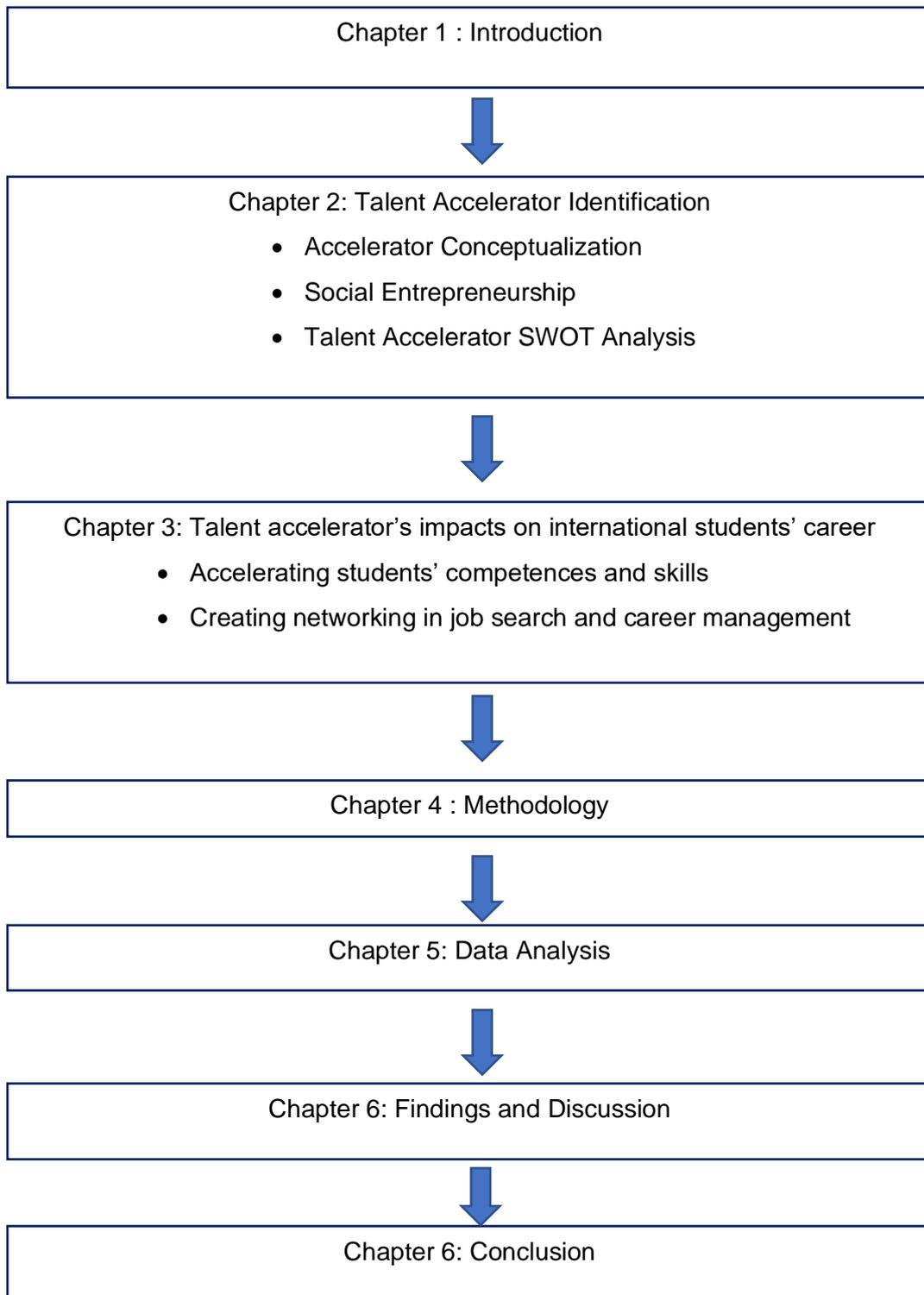


Figure 2. Thesis content

1.5 Case company: The Shortcut

The Shortcut or the original name is The Start-up Shortcut Ltd, is a community-driven organisation which was established in 2016, Helsinki, Finland. The company is located at Maria 01 – the Nordic’s leading start-up campus, at Lapinlahdenkatu 16 B, 00180 Helsinki. More information about Maria 01 could be explored here: <https://maria.io/>. The Shortcut organisation belongs to Start-up Foundation-Startup-säätiö (Anon. n.d.), alongside Slush, Junction, Wave Ventures, and Maria 01.

Four years after its launch, The Shortcut is now well-known as a talent accelerator, in terms of providing acceleration for people’s competencies, career achievement, and networking. The Shortcut mission is to accelerate talents from diverse backgrounds. Those who have studied and lived in Finland, especially fresh graduate international students. The Shortcut main activities and operation are through three pillars:

- Inspire and empower people by events and workshops with different topics by experts in specific fields, start-up founders, and others who have achieved a successful career.
- Provide hard and soft skills by training, courses, hackathon.
- Create employment opportunities: Encourage and create chances for people to join the start-up ecosystem, networking, volunteer, and intern.

In general, regarding customer segmentations, The Shortcut targets:

- Immigrants
- International students
- Asylum seekers as refugees and others who granted the resident permit.
- Young people with multinational background
- People who come to Finland whose spouse is Finnish

In this research, the researcher limits the population to the international student segment to emphasize talent accelerator’s impacts on the career achievement of this population. Besides, the researcher is an international student, who can reflect with her observation and experiences, as well as exploring the impact in detail.

2 TALENT ACCELERATOR IDENTIFICATION

2.1 Accelerator conceptualization

In the broadest sense, the concept of accelerator has been exhibited by Colorado Venture Centres – The US in 2001 and started to spread constantly to China and Southeast Asia, such as China Accelerator - Shanghai, China in 2009 (Wikipedia n.d.). However, that accelerator perception is illustrated as a seed accelerator for start-up, or it is called *start-up accelerator*. Although the idea of the accelerator has been well-known for start-up who are companies or entrepreneurs only, it is possible to adapt the start-up accelerator concept to define the notion of accelerator for individual development.

In general, a start-up accelerator is defined as the programs which provide on one hand the connections, sales, mentorship, and educational components to accelerate growths (Wikipedia n.d.). Besides, the accelerator's function also include short-period immersive education, learning opportunities at a rapid pace, learning-by-doing support in a competitive environment, and maturation acceleration (Nichola, Diane, Alberto 2020). Several start-up accelerators' researches distinguished between two distinct kinds of an accelerator, which are: private accelerators and corporate accelerators. In detail, a private accelerator is defined as the programs that create and assist an individual or organisational development. Meanwhile, a corporate accelerator generates the engagement between individuals, organisations and bigger cluster for technologies and knowledge accumulation. (Nichola, Diane, Alberto 2020)

Therefore, the accelerator concept can be exploited to formulate an innovative organisation such as talent accelerator. The functions of talent accelerator and start-up accelerator are quite equivalent. However, the noticeable distinction is the subjects and targets that each organisation aims to operate with. The researcher evaluates existing research about start-up accelerator (Rotiélío e Silva Junior 2019) and available information on talent accelerators, as well as using her experiences. From that, the similarities and differences of talent accelerator and start-up accelerator are presented in the table below:

	Criteria	Start-up accelerator	Talent accelerator
Similarities	Key concept	Providing acceleration and support with mentoring, space, time, knowledge and additional resources, networking, basically anything that assists individual, organisations and entrepreneurs to get start-up off the ground and accelerate its growth. (Digital 2015)	
	Business model	Investment, Non-profit	
	Venture stage	Early	
	Partners	Yes	
Differences	Target subject	Start-up organisation, companies, entrepreneurs.	Individuals' career development including competences, skills and networking.
	Duration	Fixed time programs for a certain subject.	Ongoing and heads to sustainable operation
	Selection frequency	Competitive, cyclical	Non-competitive
	Education offered	Seminars	Long -term and short-term programs, workshops, certificate, competence, and skill training.
	Mentorship	Intent by self and others	Intent by available resources, internal and external partners. A specific mentorship program in abundant fields.

Table 1. Talent accelerator and Start-up accelerator comparison (Rotiélío e Silva Junior, 2019)

By looking at the compared figures, it shows that talent accelerator performs different operating programs. The mechanisms of targeting subjects, selection, education, and mentorship focus on individual performance in terms of career development. However, the organisational structure and foundation of both organisations are identical.

2.2 Social Entrepreneurship

2.2.1 Social entrepreneurship definition and features

Social entrepreneurship is defined as an approach by individuals, groups, start-up companies or entrepreneurs, in which they develop, fund, and implement solutions for social, cultural, or environmental issues (Wikipedia, Social Entrepreneurship, n.d.).

For this type of business, profit is not a priority since its revenue turns back to the organisation's funds. There are many applications of social entrepreneurship through "any initiatives aimed at the social and economic development of a community" (Parccientific 2018).

The main functions are: (Praszkie 2012)

- Deliver innovative ideas to create social value.
- Perform creative and highly ethical social solutions.
- Aim at social changes toward global trends and sustainability.

Nowadays, social entrepreneurship appears as a common trend in the fast-growing start-up market based on its social purposes and missions. Applying social entrepreneurship presents significant opportunities, such as:

_ The operations focus on social changes and innovations. The business effectiveness is not measured by revenue but social impacts. So, the main products follow social purposes and create positive impacts on community life. There is no limitation in creation, ground-breaking ideas, innovations, or any method of business operations, as long as it leads to social value (Manuel n.d.).

_It is possible to build an organisational community with a diverse workforce and huge volunteer groups in different sectors. Within a social-based platform, people are encouraged to join social activities with their willingness and practical work. Social organisations could enrich their workforce and team management with a social-oriented spirit (Kulkarni 2017).

_Social entrepreneurship could lead to a wide network. It is possible to create a collaborative ecosystem, assist, and learn from each other to maintain sustainability.

Usually, social enterprises that apply social entrepreneurship are non-profit organisations.

2.2.2 The opportunities and challenges

Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being the social-centric organisation with the main focus on the environment, education, human resources, healthcare, community development. • The market is less forceful. Social enterprises have abundant choices in social problems and solutions for them according to innovations. • Environment- friendly business with less commercially competitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising funding and investment from capitalists. • Limited financial resources • High requirements and expectation of innovative strategy and implementation

Table 2. Social Entrepreneurship opportunities and challenges (Parccientific, 2018) (Manuel, n.d.)

2.2.3 Talent accelerator is a social enterprise

Talent accelerator - The Shortcut is a non-profit organisation and a social enterprise that applies the concept of social entrepreneurship in terms of human resources at the Finnish Labour Market. By addressing the social workforce problem, The Shortcut thrives to bring innovative ideas and solutions to unemployment phenomena, unrelated-occupational jobs, and competency development (Shortcut n.d.).

a) The features to make The Shortcut a social enterprise:

- The Shortcut team witnesses and recognises the social problems in the Finnish labour market, where international students are facing difficulties in career development after graduation in Finland. Thus, the organisation works on generating acceleration through inspiration, competences, skills improvement, and networking by free of charge training programs and networking activities. It could be considered potential solutions to address and solve the problems mentioned before.
- The Shortcut team consists of abundant international talents from different countries. The diverse team with solid experiences considers a strong spirit is a core value to achieve effectiveness at work. Besides, there is a wide network of volunteers, those who have a big passion for social activities. By bringing diversity at the workplace, The Shortcut delivers an image of the global working environment to the Finnish market.

- During the time of establishment and operation, The Shortcut is associated with a start-up ecosystem and sister organisations in each step of development. In the long run, the team aims to collaborate with other partners, create and maintain effective relationships.

b) Social problems of international students and The Shortcut's solutions

Social problems	Solutions
Lack of motivation in career improvement.	<p>Inspiration and empowerment programs: To inspire and empower people by events and workshops with different topics. The hosts are start-up founders and others who have made the journey to success. The programs stick to community building, network development to share and enrich the idea of entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Main activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspirational talks • Start-up Mingle lunches • Open meetings • Bootcamps • Community gatherings • Hackathons • Volunteering opportunities <p>E.g. My Start-up Debut events, Junction Hackathon workshop, Talk show, Start-up Bootcamp, Idea development week...</p>
Limited hard skills and soft skills.	<p>The programs provide, improve, and complement hard and soft skills by immersion training programs, certificate programs, and partner training programs. The association aims to build soft skills and push participants for higher competences. The professional environment helps participants to follow learning - by – doing methods.</p> <p>Main activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School of Start-up • Certificate training programs • Immersion programs • Coding courses • Digital marketing course, skill-boosting programs.

	E.g. 4 days - School of Start-up, Azure training programs, Data Science Training programs, Python courses, Inbound marketing course...
Lack of employment opportunities	<p>To create employment opportunities: Participants are motivated to join the start-up ecosystem, partner networking, volunteer work, and internship programs. Besides, there are entrepreneurial programs for developing personal ideas further. These programs assist participants in all stages of the business launch and start-up process.</p> <p>Main activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project and traineeships • Talent platform • Employability training • Access to accelerator opportunities • Coaches and mentors <p>E.g. Girl's coding project, Talent Heist, MEGE: Multicultural, Encounters, Growths, Entrepreneurship...</p>

Table 3. The addressed problems and The Shortcut's solutions (Shortcut, 2018)

2.3 Talent Accelerator SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is a strategic framework to plan, evaluate, and manage the multiple stages of an organisation, projects, or business activities. Based on internal and external, positive, and negative dimensions, SWOT analysis illustrates the overall measurement of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. (E. 2017, 10)



Picture 1. Format of SWOT matrix (Craig Rollason, 2014)

Organisational Strengths	Characteristics that give advantage over others in the industry
Organisational Weaknesses	Characteristics that place at a disadvantage relative to others
Environmental Opportunities	External elements in the environment that give benefits for the organisations
Environmental Threats	External elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the organisations

Table 4. The Components of SWOT Analysis (E., 2017)

In the case of talent accelerator – case company The Shortcut, SWOT analysis is implemented for assessing the overall performance. The analysis takes into account the positive factors as strengths and opportunities to demonstrate competences and the possibility of goal achievements. Also, the negative factors as weaknesses and threats illustrate current and potential difficulties that the organisation would encounter during its operation. In addition, talent accelerator is a brand-new type of non-profit organisation. Thus, it is essential to evaluate what they have done and what they have failed to do during the operations.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Is associated with a huge start-up ecosystem platform. – Young, robust and diverse workforce with different backgrounds. – Open collaborative space for a community with a strong volunteer base. – In collaboration with a variety of partners in different business lines. – Strong hands-on tangible skills and entrepreneurial mindset in tech growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No profits. – New enterprise model. – Limited capital investment.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – High demand from job seekers. – Active support from Finnish employment organisations. – The Finnish labour market integrates globally and leads to high demands for international talents. – Non-competitive market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Less-motivated participants – Program and event cancelation due to objective reasons. – Lack of influencers, speakers, and trainers.

Table 5. The Start-up Shortcut Oy SWOT analysis

2.3.1 The internal factors: Strengths and Weaknesses

One of the most prominent strengths is the association among a start-up ecosystem. The Shortcut is owned by the Start-up Foundation, which was established in 2012 by Finnish technology influencers, entrepreneurs and investors to thrive toward the global leading start-up ecosystem in the Nordic region (Anon. n.d.). Together with the development of other sister and brother organisations, such as Slush (Anon. n.d.), Junction (Anon. n.d.), Wave Ventures (Anon. n.d.), The Shortcut develops its reputation and effective business operations. According to Adam Hayes, the business ecosystem is the model that provides a “network between interlinked companies that interact with each other through competition and cooperation, to grow sales and survive” (Hayes 2019). In The Shortcut’s case, the business ecosystem is a start-up ecosystem that The Shortcut integrates and interacts from the

beginning of organisation formation. Thus, The Shortcut has huge advantages in development and innovation.

Besides, diversity in the workforce also plays a key role in The Shortcut activities. It builds up a global business image, lawsuits reduction, marketing opportunities, effectiveness recruitment, and creativity (Kelli A. Green n.d.). As the official working language is English, The Shortcut has a community with a robust and young workforce from Asia to the EU and the US. Thus, participants have different backgrounds and cultures. These factors generate an engine of growth which is powered by technology and entrepreneurship.

THE SHORTCUT AS AN ORGANISATION



THE SHORTCUT LAB



Picture 2. The Shortcut figures 2018 (Shortcut, 2018)

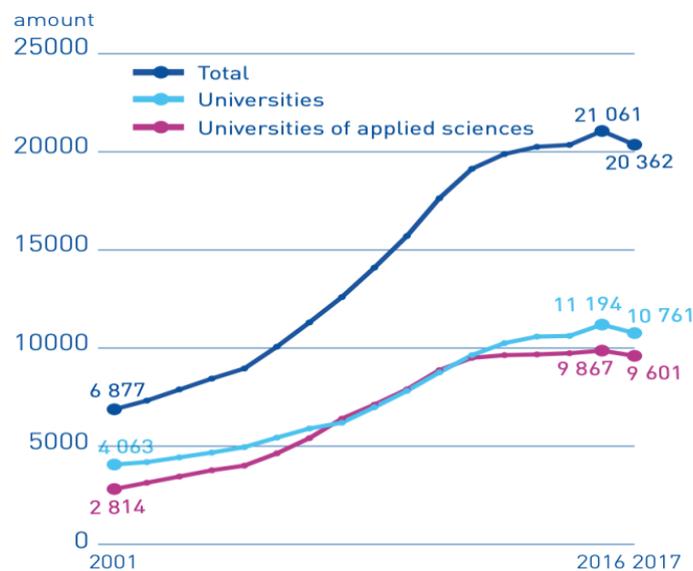
Besides, The Shortcut aims to perform a collaborative perspective, a community space, which is more dynamic than a private office. The Shortcut Lab welcomes people to visit for communication, integration, and collaboration. During 2018, there have been 6738 lab visits and more than 100.000 people from online, and face to face outreach (Shortcut 2018). Also, The Shortcut has a team with strong hands-on experiences and skills, along with abundant business partners, sponsors, and supporters in different fields. It not only ensures smooth operations and effective programs but also contributes to brand building and partner relationship management in the long run.

In other words, despite the huge advantages that The Shortcut has, the certain weaknesses might restrain the operational effectiveness of talent accelerator. Firstly, the organisation is a non-profit organisation, which has limited funding for research and development, as well as organisational activities (Mayhew & Thompson 2019). Thus, all programs and operating

activities are in the reliance on external investments or limited budget. It would narrow the operating scale during the economic downturn. Moreover, being a non-profit organisation would cause obstacles in attracting investment since shareholders and workers would not receive profits. Because when the business operates, the excess fund only turns back to the organisation (Ibele 2017).

2.3.2 The external factors: Opportunities and Threats

The Shortcut main programs and activities are designed and planned for foreign job seekers. In other words, the target customer is the foreigner in the first step of career building. In this research, the focused segment is international students who graduate and build up their career in the Finnish market.



Picture 3. Foreign degree students in higher education institutions (education)

According to the Finnish National Agency for Education, the number of foreign students in Finland reached 21061 in 2016 and 20362 in 2017 (picture 3) (education n.d.). The existing research shows that more than half of foreign students choose to stay and work in Finland after completing their degrees (Hughes 2016). Also, Finland is more and more integrated globally with a large amount of new international start-ups, enterprises, and cooperation from all over the world. Therefore, the demand for the international workforce is increasing, not only for Finns but also for international talents who are living in Finland. Thus, The Shortcut has various opportunities in its own market such as high demand and abundant customer segments.

On the other hand, as a non-profit organisation, The Shortcut has significant advantages in terms of financial policy. It means tax-exempt status is applied, the organisation is not required to pay tax and all earnings by any activities could be cycled back to develop itself (Ibele 2017).

Thus, there is no liability threat or negative profit margin during the operating cycle. Besides, active support from the government should not be neglected. Talent accelerator is in collaboration with the Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment service: TE Palvelut (Anon. n.d.), as well as Kela - the social insurance institution of Finland (Anon. n.d.). These departments support The Shortcut in terms of the database, programs, and activities at the foreigner segment.

On the contrary, while there are various opportunities and support from external objectives, there still exist noticeable threats that cause stagnant growth to The Shortcut development progress. One of the most difficulties is the participants' motivation during acceleration programs and activities. The phenomenon of unemployment depression appears in Finland, especially to foreign job seekers (News 2019). Participants at The Shortcut career incubation programs show their frustration and anxiety about their future. It might lead to an unfocused attitude and ineffective results. This phenomenon belongs to individual and objective factors that prove problematic and unable to control during the accelerating progress.

Moreover, since accelerating programs are training, events, workshops and networking, there could be unpredictable cancellation due to objective reasons. Speakers, trainers, and sponsors play a crucial role in The Shortcut operating programs. In the case of cancellation or postponement occurred from these groups, it would cause severe effects on schedule and the whole system, from preparation to production. Besides, lacking speakers, trainers, and influencers is also a threat to talent accelerator operations. Despite the abundant partners and sponsors, trainer acquisition is also a tough process that requires strong effort, wide relationships, and suitable strategies.

3 TALENT ACCELERATOR'S IMPACTS ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' CAREER

3.1 Accelerating international students' competences and skills

3.1.1 Entrepreneurship Competence Framework

Based on value-creating initiative purposes, Entrepreneurship Competence Framework is the reference framework for assisting talents in ability development, society association, and career-building. The framework utilizes entrepreneurship as competence to highlight value creation in private, public, and third sectors together with any hybrid combination of these three (Margherita Bacigalupo 2016). In general:

“Entrepreneurship is when you act upon opportunities and ideas and transform them into value for others. The value that is created can be financial, cultural, or social” (FFE-YE, 2012).

The entrepreneurship concept is applied to several fields of life. It focuses on value creation and assists individuals or organisations to improve their personal development. Also, the entrepreneurship concept develops social achievement and supports people to enter the job market. The EntreComp conceptual is shaped by three main areas, which are: “ Ideas and Opportunities, Resources and Into Actions”. The concept takes place from the beginning of the value creation process, to transfer ideas and opportunities into actions by utilizing the actual resources. The figure of the Entrepreneurship Competence Framework is illustrated by the picture below (Picture 4).

First, the process starts with Ideas and Opportunities stage, which means the foundation level and basic objectives for personal development. There are five criteria that individuals should follow:

- Spotting opportunities: This very first step encourages individuals to imagine, organise, and identify their ideas and chances. From that, they might create value by exploiting social, cultural, and economic landscape. At the same time, the needs and challenges classifications should also be taken into account.
- Creativity: This stage motivates creation and innovations in exploring and approaching solutions for current and future challenges. It applies a combination of knowledge and available resources.
- Vision: The future scenarios are visualised. It brings motivation and effort to empower actions toward future achievements.
- Valuing ideas: The judgment on valuable ideas is needed to specify which ideas are potential in social and economic sectors. Based on that, individuals could narrow and focus on the best ideas and opportunities. Later, they could implement them by suitable methods.

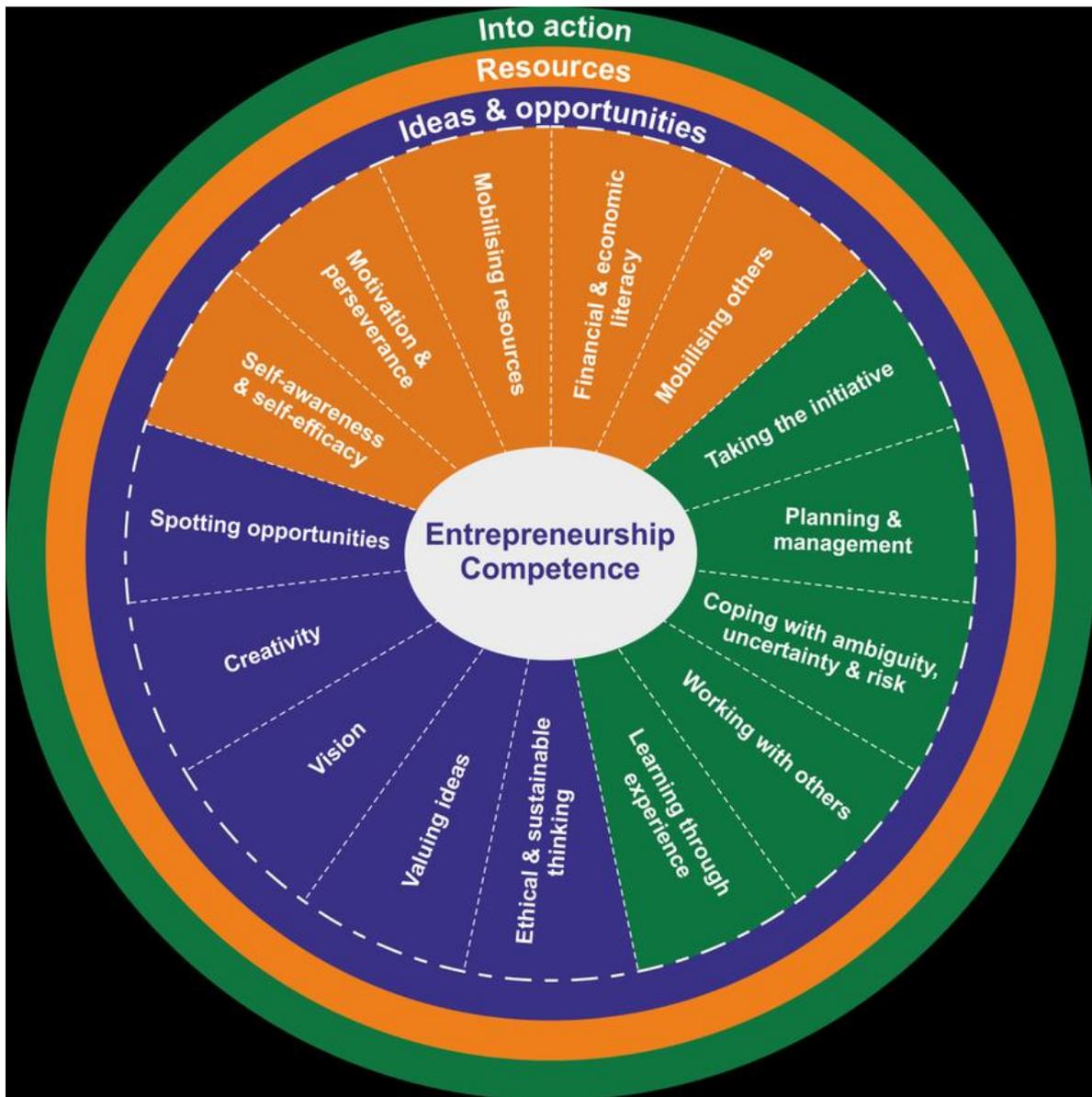
- Ethical and sustainable thinking: Individuals should estimate the impacts of ideas, and value created to society and environment. Based on ethical problems, they could plan for sustainable development.

The next phase is about Resources, which is important to evaluate, manage and utilize by appropriate methods. Thus, getting understandings about available and potential resources could result in appropriate preparation. The phase includes:

- Self-awareness and self-efficacy: Individuals should have a reflection about their self-capabilities as strengths and weaknesses to know what should be improved and promoted. Besides, motivation and self-belief should also be taken into account.
- Motivation and perseverance: “ Success is a process, not an event” said Gary Halbert. Thus, it requires people to be determined and patient in every stage of the process, from ideas to practical actions and results. Also, individuals should prepare for temporary failures, adversity, and pressure.
- Mobilizing resources: Based on the resource understandings, individuals could get and manage materials, non-materials, digital resources. Also, they could exploit the most valuable resources to support for transferring ideas to the process of actions.
- Financial and economic literacy: This stage is about having the right calculation about financial situations such as planning and estimating the cost of sustainable operation.
- Mobilizing others: This point could be applied for organisation, teamwork to inspire and enthuse members, stakeholders. In personal development, it means to get motivation and support from others to improve together.

Finally, it is the time for Into Actions. This stage performs the most essential steps to create value and achievements. They are:

- Taking the initiative: It motivates people to act and work to achieve targets, to face challenges and move forward.
- Planning and management: this stage encourages individuals to plan about long- and short-term goals, to define the actual actions, organise, and follow up.
- Coping with uncertainty, ambiguity, and risks: this step requires the management of unforeseen obstacles in the value-creating process. Testing and prototyping ideas from the early stage could be structured to avoid unpredictable risks.
- Working with others: It is advantageous to team up, collaborate, and handle the problems together. At the same time, it is important to build a network among professional people around.
- Learning through experiences: Learning by doing is a fruitful learning method. Besides, learning from others like peers and mentors would also bring good results.



Picture 4. The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (Margherita Bacigalupo, EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework, 2016)

3.1.2 Talent accelerator applies EntreComp model in its operation.

Areas	Competences	Hints	Descriptors
1. Ideas and Opportunities	1.1 Spotting opportunities	Identify opportunities for value creation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talent acceleration • Inspiration and empower • Active and build skills • Create employment opportunities. 	From social, cultural and economic landscape, The Shortcut ensures the effectiveness in human resources assistance by boosting competences, skills and networking. As the need of international students in their career is huge, The Shortcut aims to fulfil the gap between them and the Finnish job market. There are several challenges in motivation, program production, human resources and budget.
	1.2 Creativity	Develop creative programs, events and activities.	The Shortcut develops three mains solutions: inspire and empower, training and networking. The program content is updated following the market trends, technology and environmental modification. The Shortcut thrives to innovation and sustainability.
	1.3 Visions	At the Shortcut: Diversity is as an engine of growth.	By future imagination, The Shortcut looks toward a diverse workforce at the Finnish market. The purpose is to build an active start-up environment where international students play a significant role in building up the globally oriented economy.
	Valuing ideas	The Shortcut always focuses on core values.	The core value is accelerating people into the technology age. Also, to assist them in improving competences, skills and networking.
	Ethical and Sustainable thinking	The Shortcut cares about human-being, multicultural essence and sustainability.	The Shortcut focuses on people, especially international students, their competences, skills and networking. The Shortcut empowers them to entrepreneurial mindset, social contribution and future career.

2. Resources	2.1 Self-awareness and self-efficacy	The Shortcut has a diverse team with a strong spirit.	Each member of the core team has a different background with experiences, skills and a can-do attitude.
	2.2 Motivation and Perseverance	The team always stays focused on the core values and accelerating programs.	The Shortcut raises a spirit, motivation and perseverance among each team member, participant and volunteer. The team stays energetic and turns failure to experience.
	2.3 Mobilizing resources	The Shortcut has a variety of tangible and intangible resources.	The Shortcut exploits all possible resources to fulfil its programs and activities. The priority is to seek potential resources such as sponsors, partners, trainers.
	2.4 Financial and economic literacy	The Shortcut puts an eye on its financial situations and strategies.	The Shortcut plans its financial strategies usually and focuses on sponsor acquisitions and crowdfunding.
	2.5 Mobilizing others	The attitude is important at The Shortcut.	All the team, participants and stakeholders are encouraged to keep moving forward effective operation and achievements.
3. Into Action	3.1 Taking the initiative	The Shortcut has started from 2016 till now.	In every step of growing, The Shortcut measures the core values and potential opportunities for improvement.
	3.2 Planning and Management	Prioritize, Organize and follow-up	Every year, The Shortcut adjusts its programs and activities, records data for year's book and sets new targets in detail for the next periods. Also, the team identifies priorities, predicts and adapts to new changes.
	3.3 Coping with uncertainty, ambiguity and risk	The Shortcut predicts failure and obstacle to consider its preparation.	During The Shortcut operating activities, the team thrives to minimize risks, make decision with uncertain choices and handle problems in flexible methods.

	3.4 Working with others	Team up, collaboration and networking are encouraged at The Shortcut.	It is important to collaborate with partners in different fields and build up solid relationships.
	3.5 Learning through experiences	Learning by doing	The team aims to turn failure into lessons and experiences, keep up with a can-do attitude and no fear of challenges.

Table 6. The Shortcut' operation under EntreComp model overview

3.1.3 Using the EntreComp Progression Model to design the training programs.

Talent accelerator utilizes Entrepreneurship as competence in accelerating talents. The EntreComp model can be a reference for designing the curricula in the education and training sectors (Margherita Bacigalupo 2016). Acting as an effective reference, the framework shows the progress of pushing individuals and organisations from the foundation stage to the advanced stage. According to the authors, the progression consists of two main aspects:

- “1. Developing increasing autonomy and responsibility in acting upon ideas and opportunities to create value.
- 2. Developing the capacity to generate value from simple and predictable contexts up to complex and changing environments.” (Margherita Bacigalupo 2016)

The EntreComp Progression has four levels, which are: Foundation, Intermediate, Advanced and Expert. The Shortcut applies this model in designing the training programs for participants from the Foundation stage to the Expert stage. The table below shows the detailed progress:

		Levels of Proficiency		
Areas	Competences	Foundation	Intermediate	Advanced
1. Ideas and Opportunities	1.1 Spotting opportunities	Learners can find opportunities: The Shortcut brings learners to possible opportunities (career, competency and skill development).	Learners recognise opportunities to address their needs: The Shortcut assists them to clarify what they need to improve.	Learners seize the pots: From The Shortcut accelerating activities, learners could take opportunities and respond to challenges.
	1.2 Creativity	The Shortcut motivates learners in creating ideas and being innovative.	Learners are encouraged to test and modify their ideas by The Shortcut facilities.	Learners could apply creative ideas by using The Shortcut's resources to create value.
	1.3 Visions	Motivating learners by a visible and desirable future through inspirational talks and experience sharing.	Learners are encouraged to motivate themselves and inspire others.	Based on ambitious visions, The Shortcut motivates them to make their strategic decisions.
	1.4 Valuing ideas	Learners are trained to evaluate their ideas and keep it as a competence.	The Shortcut gives learners different methods for idea valuation.	The Shortcut motivates learners to apply idea valuation in developing themselves.
	1.5 Ethical and Sustainable thinking	The Shortcut gives a clear idea of ethical and sustainable development. It includes the impact of learner's behaviours and choices to themselves and society.	Guidance for learners are made under ethical and sustainable perspectives.	The Shortcut assists leaners in achieving ethical and sustainable goals: Skills, competences and networking.
2. Resources	2.1 Self-awareness and self-efficacy	In the Orientation stage, The Shortcut inspires learners to	Trainers assist learners to determine their strengths and weaknesses.	Learners are encouraged to team up and improve their skills according to learning

	2.2 Motivation and Perseverance	build confidence and trust in themselves.	Next, learners could create personal personas, SWOT and self-evaluation.	schedule and purposes. It is important to stay focused and patient.
	2.3 Mobilizing resources	The Shortcut gives learners chances to utilize all resources as much as possible. They are human resources, facilities, premises, training programs, etc.	Learners are motivated to exploit resources to pursue their projects during the training programs.	The Shortcut allows learners to have strategic usage purposes on resources to achieve their goals. The Shortcut also seeks new training partners to enrich the training content.
	2.4 Financial and economic literacy	The Shortcut offers learners the training programs for free, including its premise and facilities.	Learners who has certain goals in entrepreneurship or investment could have a chance for getting the supporting grant and other kinds of financial support.	
	2.5 Mobilizing others	The Shortcut has a community space where leaners can share and learn from each other.	During the training time, learners also get teamed up, group work and project work together.	The Shortcut motivates leaners through entrepreneurship. Leaners can also collaborate in some freelancing projects or business plans.
	3.1 Taking the initiative	The training courses are designed for learners' demands and market trends.		
3. Into actions Into Action	3.2 Planning and Management	The Shortcut defines goals and certain values of the training programs for learners.	The Shortcut creates and plans new training programs based on demands, market trends and strategic development.	The priority in the training programs is to focus on the effective skills and competences.
	3.3 Coping with uncertainty,	The Shortcut itself and participants are patient and ambitious in the training process and self-improvement.		Dealing with uncertainty and risk is one of The Shortcut strategies.

	ambiguity and risk		
	3.4 Working with others	<p>The Shortcut collaborates with its partners to provide training programs. There is a variety of technological and educational partners, an abundance of enterprises within the start-up ecosystem.</p> <p>Learners also participate in teamwork and group projects for together improvement.</p>	
	3.5 Learning through experiences	<p>The Shortcut brings an idea “failure makes an experience” to every learner in its training programs. With a can-do attitude, participants are responsible and able to judge what they can do and cannot. From that, they could adjust, improve and gain experiences.</p>	

Table 7. The Shortcut's education offered based on EntreComp Progression Model

To be precise, the training process from The Shortcut is scheduled and conducted according to market trends and technological needs. Following the social and economic trends, The Shortcut always tries to create and organise suitable training programs for participants in terms of improving competences and skills. Thus, its training programs are planned and changed flexibly every year. The table below shows The Shortcut basic programs and activities:

Training programs		Partners	Duration
Catalyst Programs	Immersion programs	TE Palvelut	3 weeks
	Hands-on projects	Kela	1 week
	Intensive training	Quru	1 week
	Traineeship in start-up or entrepreneurial projects.	Start-up Ecosystem Business partner Maria 01 Start-up Sauna Agrid	2.5 months
Python courses		Holvi Ltd	2 months
Google Certified	AdWords	Google	Depend
	Fundamentals		
	AdWords Mobile		
	Google Analytics		
Docker Training	Linux, Coding	Eficode	2 months
Microsoft Azure Cloud Computing Services	Azure Certificate	Microsoft	2 months
MEGE	Multicultural, Encounters, Growth, Entrepreneurship	Haaga Helia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki Business College, Aalto University.	Depend
ReactJS	JavaScript	Mapbox	Depend
Digital Marketing		Start- up Ecosystem	Depend

Table 8. The Shortcut basic training programs (Shortcut, The Shortcut , n.d.)

3.2 Creating networking in job seek and career management

3.2.1 Networking definition and features

There are several distinguished classifications of networking. The concept has different meanings in many aspects of computer science, technology and business in modern society. In this research, social and personal networking is a central feature that should be focused on.

Some researches imply that networking is simply a behaviour “defined as individual’s attempts to develop and maintain relationships with others who have the potential to assist them in their work or career” (L.Forret 2014). Moreover, the foundation of networking is a process of “information and ideas exchange among people with common professional and specific interests”. The most important function of networking is widening a circle of acquaintances, increasing knowledge and awareness of trends in specific fields and job opportunities (Kagan 2019). However, building networking is not simple, which means the minimum requirement of a supportive relationship must base on trust. The trustworthy relationship could bring information, advice, supports, friendship or resources and a foundation to further interaction. (L.Forret 2014)

According to Monica L. Forrer, four main characteristics cause an effective relationship. First, it is important to have an awareness of specific fields, knowledge, and expertise of the person that individuals seek to build a relationship (Rob Cross, Andrew Parker, Laurence Prusak, Stephen P Borgatti 2001). Thus, individuals should have solid understandings of the targets’ background. It can be done by utilizing skills of listening, questioning, and desire to learn about personal competency. Second, people should focus on relationship maintenance. In short, the way of giving and taking occurs when a relationship is developed and assessed when necessary. Therefore, interaction, sharing, caring, and together development could keep it rock for the long term. Third, benefits from information sharing and standpoint should bring benefits to a willing - engaged person. Sometimes, flexibility is accepted but it is essential to balance the advantages taken from both sides. Besides, personal emotions and feelings in a relationship are also important in exchanging information and knowledge. To be precise, when occurring questions, insecurities, or anxieties, engaged objects should perform comfortable feelings without fear of rejection. (L.Forret 2014)

In addition, technology is changing human life in every single component of our communication process. Thus, networking should be assessed through both online and offline channels (Martin 2015).

a) Online networking channels

- Social media networks:

- Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/>
- Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/>
- Twitter <https://twitter.com/explore>
- Reddit <https://www.reddit.com/>

- Professional network platforms:

- LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/>
- Mighty Networks <https://www.mightynetworks.com/>
- Meetup <https://www.meetup.com/en-AU/>
- Opportunity <https://www.myopportunity.com/>
- JobCase <https://www.jobcase.com/community/foryou>

⇒ Apart from those platforms, there is still a variety of other social networks that have specific purposes and interactions (Bishop 2019). Based on personal demands and professional fields, it is crucial to choose the best suit online platform for networking.

b) Offline networking channels

Unlike the online environment, the traditional method to create a relationship is direct communication. It is essential to recognise an appropriate space and time in relationship building. Communication skills and a suitable environment are key elements. Also, the opportunities are seen, which are professional events, training, workshops, job fairs, etc.

⇒ In a nutshell, at the right place, paralleling with open communication skills, individuals could exploit, build, and maintain effective relationships. (Belyh 2016)

3.2.2 Networking advantages in job seek and career management

Nowadays, it is no doubt that networking influences the recruitment and hiring process. Thus, adaption and improvement in career management are indispensable to create and maintain achievement (Martin 2015).

First of all, in terms of a job hunt, networking plays a crucial role in information and trend awareness, along with recruitment platforms and virtual recruitment resources. According to CareerXroads, there are 25% of external hiring employees were made through referrals (L.Forret 2014). In 2007, the Hudson survey on 2024 US workers illustrated that the most common job approach of recruiters and current workers is networking. The fact implies that utilizing social relationships in job hunt has become an international trend. In addition, the study of workers from 28 countries about their journey to get current jobs showed that personal contact is one of the most effective methods, which ranges from 26% in Finland to 83% in the Philippines (Hangartner 2006). Another research of the Society for Human

Resources Management also performs a tactic poll of job seekers in terms of using their contacts or networking to find their job. The results show that there were around 78% of respondents supposed networking is one of the most effective channels (L.Forret 2014). Thus, possessing outstanding online networking and effective relationships could bring advantages in multiple ways in the job-seeking process. Based on a personal network, individuals might get information about non-advertised jobs, trust, and introduction from referrals. To be precise, given information includes recruitment decisions, requirements, hiring process, and promotion of the acquaintances' workplace. It is also possible to get psychological support and guidance to refine their job hunt strategies regardless of success or not (L.Forret 2014).

In other words, regarding career management strategies, networking seizes a huge role in maintaining and upgrading the ongoing relationships. It also creates employability and adaptation in the uncertain job markets. According to Sullivan and Baruch, there are massive changes in the job market and workforce due to objective reasons. They are restructurings, technological achievements, globalization, and competition to name a few. Individuals are required to adjust their career strategies and attitude in response to unpredictable changes (Sherry Sullivan Yehuda Baruch 2009). Furthermore, some researches show that "boundaryless" is a prominent feature of career management. It means people tend to change their job during working progress, within their current workplace. They might pursue new and suitable positions across organisational, occupational, industry, and even national borders (Sherry Sullivan Yehuda Baruch 2009). Therefore, to pursue an ambitious career and get adapt to job market changes, it is important to utilize networking for improving career strategies to move with the times. As Inkson and Arthur said, there are three career competencies, which are: knowing why, knowing how, and knowing whom (Kerr Inkson, Micheal B. Arthur 2011). In fact, "knowing why" is concerning to career identity about working life, purposes, targets, and efforts among every stage of the working process. Thus, people could recognize their interests, have a greater sense of job types that satisfy their ambition. "Knowing how" could be understood as the ability to evaluate personal experiences, education, skills, and capabilities as "strengths" to fulfil the requirements of target job positions. Essentially, individuals should classify their skill set and background if they are appropriate for potential chances. Also, "knowing whom" is relevant to networking and personal contacts, which means it is possible to exploit advantages and information from them during the job-hunting process. In general, networking fulfils the three mentioned competencies by enlarging the individual's network contacts, gaining personal and organisational "words of mouth" reputation. Besides, individuals might cultivate a professional network among

their qualifications and interested fields to pursue a further solid relationship as well as strengthening career competency. (L.Forret 2014)

3.2.3 Talent accelerator's impact on international students' networking

As one of the most prominent functions, networking is an essential area that talent accelerator aims to make a huge change and improvement for international students. There are two main aspects that perform opportunities for individuals to create and maintain their relationships within talent accelerator's resources.

a) Offline networking

In the case of The Shortcut, networking is one of the priority purposes when new activities or programs are planned. These activities belong to the annual operational schedule and also be adjusted according to global and job market trends. During offline and open activities such as events, workshops, training and projects at talent accelerator premise, individuals have potential opportunities in both space and time for relationship cultivation. By following specific topics in each event and workshop, people could seek professional persons in their job fields, or who has the same interests, to lead a conversation to a closer level naturally.

About event and workshop production, speakers and hosts are important. Talent accelerator has a wide network among the Finnish business market. These partners vary from economics, technology, social science, environmental solutions to other ongoing fields. Thanks to that, talent accelerator creates occasions for people to associate and in contact with experts as well as their organisations in different fields. All invited speakers are influencers and experts with abilities to motivate and inspire people by their qualifications and stories of the journey to success. Thus, an appropriate opportunity with correct persons would lead to an effective relationship.

In addition, as a result of having a community space, everyone is welcomed and encouraged to mingle and create relationships at The Shortcut lab during the opening time. Moreover, the talent accelerator premise is located at the start-up hub, a complex area where there is a vast array of other enterprises with different specializations. According to certain schedules, tours and open conversations could be arranged around this huge area to show a friendly workplace with interesting introduction talks and interaction.

b) Online networking

At the age of technology, talent accelerator also utilizes technological power to generate and maintain strong online networks in the purpose of assisting individuals in their personal brand and relationships. As important as offline platforms, The Shortcut provides participants abundant online services and helps them to reach people worldwide and those

who have the same concern in specific fields. The Shortcut online community is a virtual house of thousands of people with different backgrounds and qualifications. Along with that, experience sharing and learning platforms also allow people to search, collaborate and get to know their acquaintances.

Some of prominent online platforms of The Shortcut are:

Facebook	Page The Shortcut https://www.facebook.com/theshortcut/ Group The Shortcut Community https://www.facebook.com/groups/theshortcut.org/
LinkedIn	The Shortcut – Civic & Social Organisation https://www.linkedin.com/company/theshortcut/
Website	The Shortcut https://theshortcut.org/
Twitter	The Shortcut shorturl.at/oquDT
Instagram	theshortcutorg
Blog	The Shortcut Blog https://theshortcut.org/blog/
Mighty Networks	The Shortcut Community : Trainings, Networking and an International Experience https://www.theshortcutcommunity.org/sign_in

Table 9. The Shortcut online platforms

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research design

The purpose of this research is to explore how does talent accelerator operate and its impact on international students' career achievement and employment possibilities. To achieve the research objectives, the mixed method including quantitative and qualitative approaches is applied, along with a case study to enrich the practical data during a short-time scale.

According to Gillham, qualitative methods focus on kinds of evidence, which illuminate issues and turn up possible explanations (Gillham & (Firm) 2000). Besides, the qualitative method also enlarges understandings of behaviour, perspectives and experiences of individuals, groups and cultures. It also reflects an interpretive approach to social reality (Holloway 1997). Meanwhile, the quantitative method performs "a process of gathering observable data using statistical, computational or mathematical techniques" as well as "measurable and numerical relationships" (Devault 2019). In this research, the use of qualitative research enhances an investigation of talent accelerator as a social phenomenon through experiences of participants and human resource experts' examinations (Malterud 2001, 397-400). Besides, in terms of the "explanatory" research question model, the case study method appears as one of the most effective ways to address the target problems and provide rich descriptions or insightful explanations raised from a case study (Yin 2012). Also, the case study delivers an exhaustive study of the social unit – here is talent accelerator. In this research, a case study provides real-text data, practical information from talent accelerator's participants, and organisational activities. As a result, it is possible to formulate and examine relevant features of talent accelerator concept. Also, the quantitative approach to the case company database shows the activity figures that talent accelerator achieves. Based on that, the researcher can analyse and emphasize talent accelerator operational effectiveness, especially at the international student segment.

In order to know about personal opinions and experiences, the interview approach will be applied. This qualitative research technique involves "conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation" (Carolyn Boyce, Palena Neale 2006). By interviewing case company's participants who are international students and also some human resource experts, the researcher might enrich understandings and shreds of evidence about talent accelerator's impact on the target segment, along with talent accelerator effectiveness from experts' points of view.

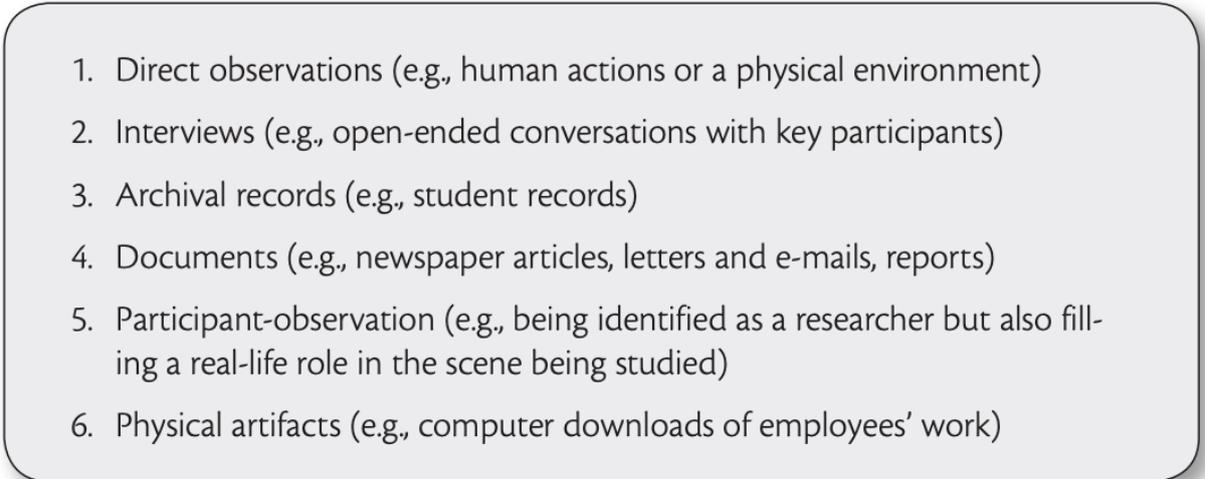
Furthermore, sample selection plays a key role in achieving practical and valuable interview data (al. 2014). As the number of The Shortcut participants is huge, in conjunction with time and access limitations, sampling is a suitable technique to obtain the necessary data. Also, "

A sample should always represent the full set of cases in a way that is meaningful and which we can justify” said Becker (al. 2014). For the current thesis, probability sampling will be chosen since the selected cases among The Shortcut participants are already determined. The process will consist of two different sampled groups:

- Sampled group one: The cases are selected based on study major which varies from Business, Technology, Design, etc from The Shortcut participant data of international students. This approach is to assess talent accelerator’s impact on international students.
- Sampled group two: The human resource experts from integration organisations of development for international students. This sector aims to perform talent accelerator effectiveness from an expert’s perspective.

4.2 Data collection method

According to Yin (Yin 2012), there is no limitation to any single source of data from a study case, the researcher can exploit multiple of evidences from six common sources as below:

- 
1. Direct observations (e.g., human actions or a physical environment)
 2. Interviews (e.g., open-ended conversations with key participants)
 3. Archival records (e.g., student records)
 4. Documents (e.g., newspaper articles, letters and e-mails, reports)
 5. Participant-observation (e.g., being identified as a researcher but also filling a real-life role in the scene being studied)
 6. Physical artifacts (e.g., computer downloads of employees’ work)

Picture 5. Six common sources of Evidence in Doing Case Studies (Yin, 2012)

In this research, both quantitative and qualitative methods are involved in assessing case company The Shortcut, author’s direct observation, and interviewing process. As advised by Yin, data collection is conducted by:

- Direct observations: the researcher applies a conventional manner of collecting observational data as using five senses, taking field notes, and examining what could be seen, heard, or otherwise sensed (Yin 2012). As the researcher worked at The Shortcut, the observations could contribute in analysing the operational effectiveness and some ongoing activities.
- Archival records and presenting case study evidence: Archival data consists of information stored in existing channels such as electronic records, libraries, files, and case study evidence

refers to a case study database (Yin 2012). To get practical data at the nearest time, the researcher explores The Shortcut Year reports and white papers, along with specific operating activity reports and other materials from individuals.

- An open-ended interview or can be called as “non-structured interview”, is an effective qualitative data collection method that provides “more extensive materials than data from surveys or even the open-ended portions of survey instruments” (Yin 2012). During the open-ended interviews, participants reveal their reality, experiences, and opinions about a situation or phenomenon and contribute to expand certain features. In this research, an interview will be conducted with international students from several countries and backgrounds, those who have participated in The Shortcut activities and other involved individuals in the current topic. The interview would follow both non-structured and semi-structured with different subjects and situations. The list of interview questions consists of key questions to fulfil main targets. However, the researcher can adjust a flow of the interview process, as well as adding more sub-questions based on interview ambiance (Saunders 2016). Due to the practical situation that pandemic has occurred, the formality of the interview is online communication such as call interviews, phone calls, emails. The average time is around 20-30 minutes for an interview section. Before and after an interview, the public information of the interviewee is examined through social media networks, LinkedIn and other channels to verify the gathered information.

-In terms of sampling, as research design, the two sampled groups are identified based on the appropriate size and the possibility of representing total target subjects. The first sampled group is international students participated at The Shortcut activities. 10 students with different backgrounds are carried out, along with nationalities and status of employment.

The two groups are as tables below:

Code	Country	Study major	Employment status
A	Vietnam	International Business	Entrepreneur
B	Nepal	Computer Science	Employed
C	India	Graphic Design	Employed
D	Chinese	Project management	Employed
E	Korea	Business Administration	Internship
F	Estonia	Graphic Design	Freelancer
G	Italy	Customer Service	Unemployed
H	Germany	Computer Science	Employed
I	Russia	International Business	Unemployed
J	Nepal	International Business	Traineeship

Table 10. Sample overview of international students – group one

The second sampled group is certain experts who have experience in human resources and people management. They are working at some organisations that provide products and services for international students.

Code	Organisation/ Company	Field
Z	AIESEC	Senior management
Y	Integrify	Human Resources
W	Junction	Event management
S	International Job seekers in Helsinki	Founder, senior management

Table 11. Sample overview of external experts – group two

4.3 Interview criteria

Topic	Criteria	Detail	Approach
Personal Information	Age/ Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male/ Female / LBGT 	Observation
	Residence time in Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living time and settled plan in Finland 	Interview
	Education Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University • University of Applied Sciences 	The Shortcut Database
	Study Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Administration • Computer Sciences • Graphic Design • ... 	
Career Management	Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project experiences • Traineeship/ internship experiences • Previous job experiences 	The Shortcut database
	Competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and abilities 	
	Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard and soft skills 	
	Job search difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture barrier • Language • Network 	Interview
The Shortcut's impacts on career management	The Shortcut awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time of visiting The Shortcut premise • The Shortcut reputation 	Interview
	The Shortcut inspired activities and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of activities • Participation • Personal Achievement • Application in career management 	Interview
	The Shortcut training programs		
	The Shortcut networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on personal networking • Advantages • Opportunities • Achievement 	Interview
	The Shortcut's overall impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competences and skills • Networking • Career management • Others 	Interview/ The Shortcut database

The Shortcut sustainability	Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Shortcut activities • The Shortcut improvement 	Interview
------------------------------------	----------	---	-----------

Table 12. List of questions for sampled group one

Topic	Criteria	Approach
General information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation 	Observation Investigation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field 	
International student development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected competences and skills 	Interview
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability in Finland 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job search difficulties 	
The Shortcut reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of The Shortcut and its activities 	
The Shortcut function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of The Shortcut effectiveness 	
The Shortcut sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of long-term operation possibility 	
Personal feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Shortcut improvement 	

Table 13. List of question for sampled group two

5 DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Quantitative data

- a. The Shortcut structure:

The Shortcut data illustrates a workforce structure from 2017 till 2019:

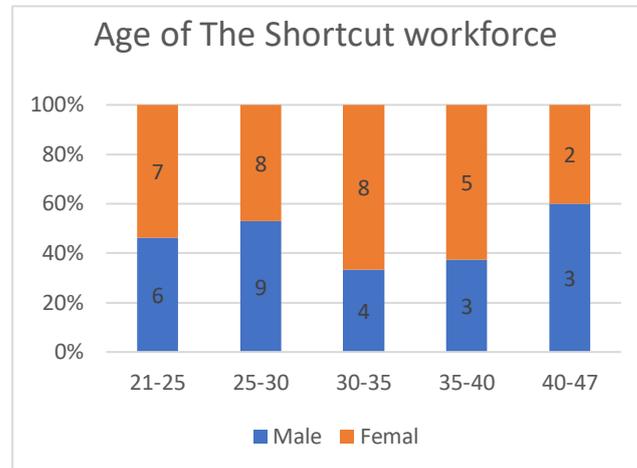


Figure 3. Age of The Shortcut workforce

By looking at the chart, it can be seen that a dominating 55% of workers working at The Shortcut is female and the age varies from 21-47. The figure reveals that The Shortcut workforce is young and performs gender balance so far. According to The White Paper, there are 55 team members from 24 unique nationalities among organisation (Shortcut 2019).

- b. The Shortcut activities: In general , some of the prominent offers from The Shortcut are : Long training courses, short training courses, events & workshops for networking and inspiring.

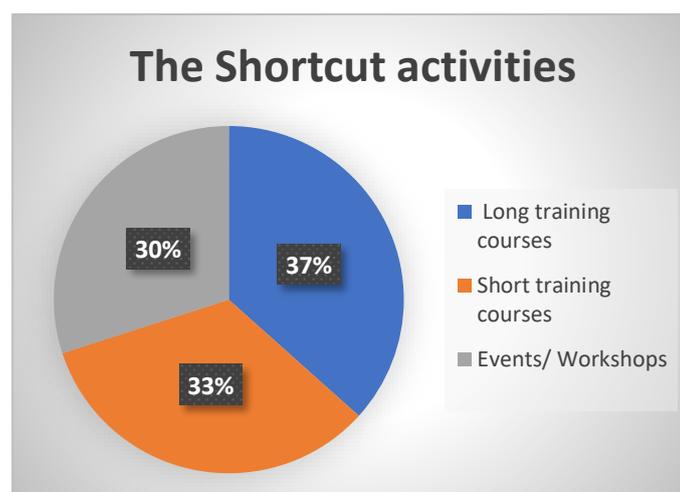
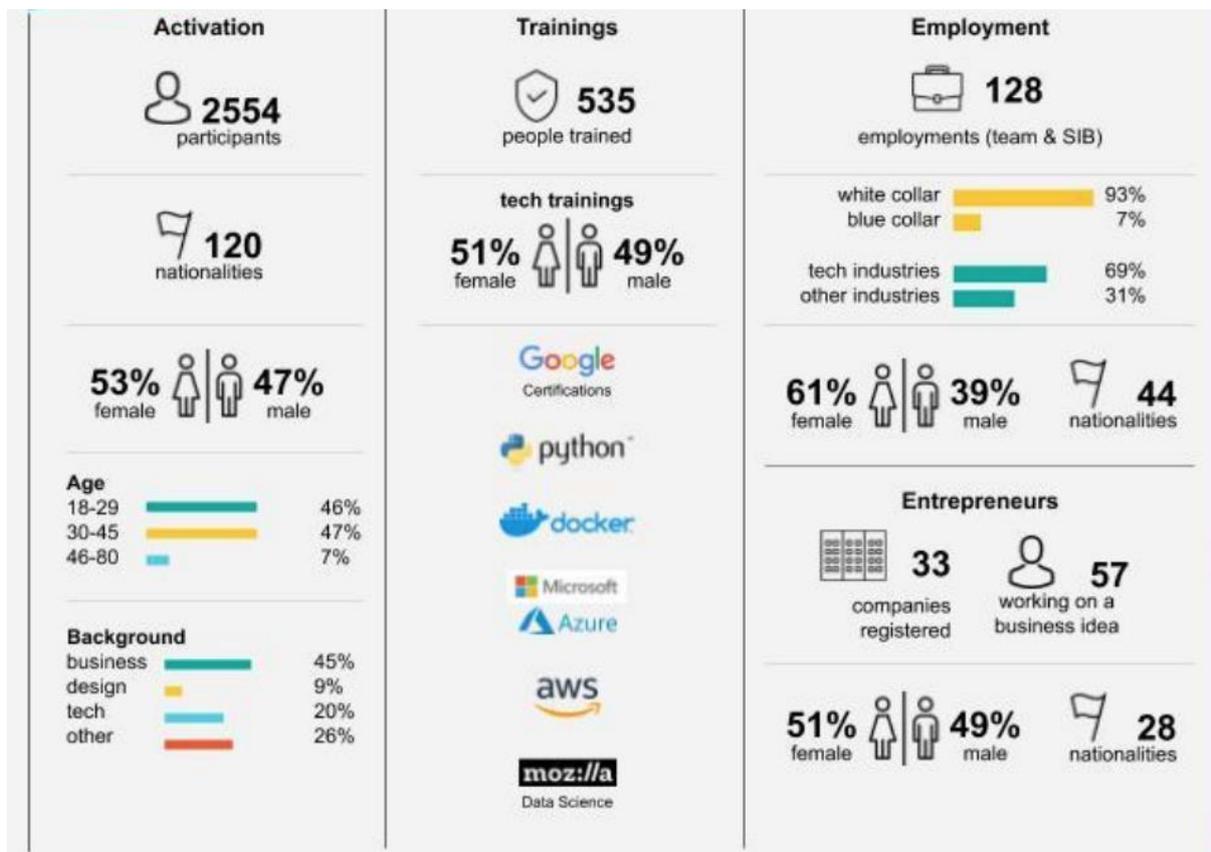


Figure 4. The Shortcut activities 2019 (Shortcut, The Shortcut Database 2019, 2019)

Based on the chart, it is noticeable that The Shortcut tries to develop an operating schedule with a well balance of each category. Precisely, a long training course seizes a higher percentage with 37%, following is a short training course with 33% and the rest for events and workshops.

The Shortcut’s goal is employment made for participants. Thus, in order to enlarge the overview of The Shortcut operational effectiveness, the researcher analysed data from a larger period of time. The Shortcut’s white paper 2017-2019 demonstrates operational figures as follow:



Picture 6. The Shortcut figures from 2017-2019 (Shortcut, White Paper on Diversity & Inclusion in the Tech industry. November 2019, 2019)

Looking at the figures, the number of participants from 120 countries at The Shortcut in 2019 reached 2554 people. It is easy to see people in working-age varied from 18-45 seizes 93%, along with quite balanced gender ratio. The result also performs participant backgrounds, which 45% of Business major, 20% in Tech, and the rest for other majors such as Design, etc. Besides, training programs have been offered to 535 people with a balance in gender as 51% female. Also, there are various training partners including some famous names in the Tech world as Google, Microsoft, moz://la.

As a result, the figure illustrates 128 employments made for people from 44 countries. There is a difference between gender as 61% of people employed are female. Besides, it is noticeable when white-collar employment seized 93% compared to blue-collar employment. It can be explained that all participants at The Shortcut possess an outstanding background with professional, managerial, and administrative abilities. Furthermore, The Shortcut creates job opportunities following market demands. For instance, in the age of Technology, the Tech employment contribution is 69% of total achieved employment. In terms of entrepreneurship, it shows that people from 28 countries are operating in entrepreneurial fields. To be precise, 33 companies have been registered legally and 57 entrepreneurs are working on a business idea. About the feedback collected after each activity, 70-80% of participants expressed satisfaction and wished to attend more similar activities.

In general, during 2017-2019, The Shortcut performed an effectiveness in delivering a community space, hands-on competences, and skill training programs. Team effort and appropriate programs lead to a great achievement of employment made.

c. International students' participation in The Shortcut activities:

To have an overview about the number of international students participated at The Shortcut activities, the researcher analysed three figures from the nearest job match-making event, networking event, and training course.

- Job match-making event: [Talent Heist](#) during Slush (18/11/2019 - 22/11/2019)

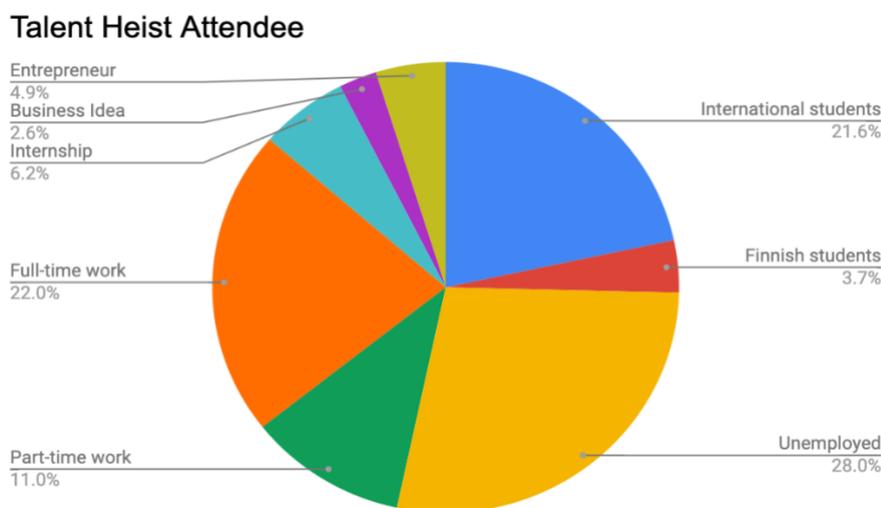


Figure 5. Talent Heist Attendee (Shortcut, The Shortcut Database 2019, 2019)

- Networking event : Networking your way to success : 29/10/2019

Networking Event Attendee

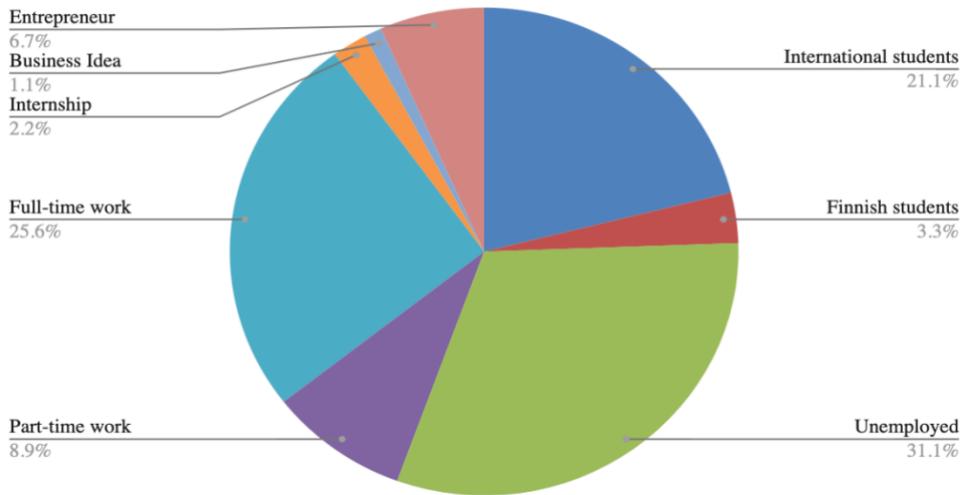


Figure 6. Networking Event Attendee (Shortcut, The Shortcut Database 2019, 2019)

- Training course: Google Analytics IQ Certification training 22/1/2020

Google Analytics IQ Certification training attendee

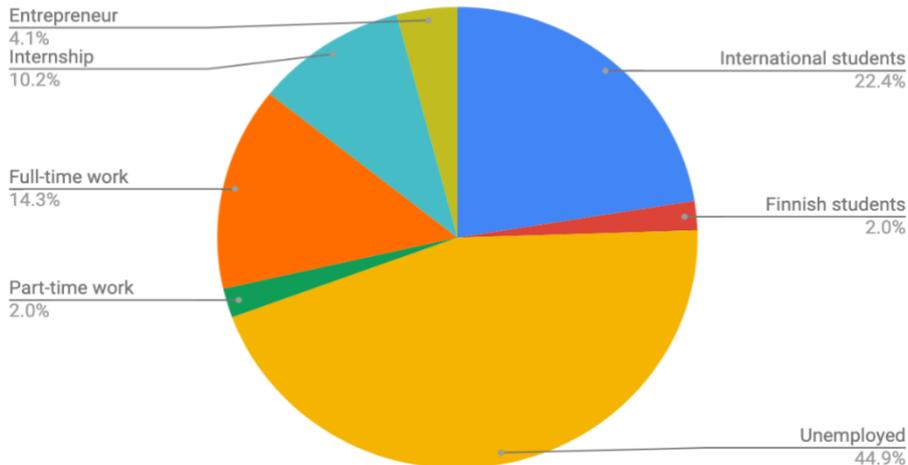


Figure 7. Google Analytics IQ Certification training attendee (Shortcut, The Shortcut Database 2019, 2019)

These charts above illustrate a percentage of international students attended The Shortcut activities. It can be recognized that at the job match-making event, the number of foreign students is the second highest with 21.6%, only behind the unemployment segment (28%) . In terms of networking events, the international student sector ranks 3rd (21.1%) after unemployed (31.1%) and full-time work (25.6%) sectors. Besides, about the training course, foreign student sector again seizes 22.4%, ranks 2nd after the unemployed group (44.9%).

Overall, the international student appears as one of the initial groups participated at The Shortcut activities. Thus, it is no doubt that there are certain impacts of The Shortcut on the foreign student segment in Finland.

5.2 Qualitative data

In order to validate critical points of The Shortcut effectiveness, the qualitative data analysis follows the inductive approach by a combination of narrative analysis and thematic content analysis. The purpose of the narrative method is to highlight important aspects of international students' stories when being a part of The Shortcut. Meanwhile, the thematic content analysis reflects talent accelerator impressions and evaluation from human resource expert's perspectives (Canary 2019). During the interview process, online video calls and emails, records and transcription are made and read several times. The researcher creates patterns or themes among participants and groups similar categories. From that, it is easier to evaluate main findings and verify the preconceived talent accelerator concept.

a) Sampled group one: International students

In terms of background, 70% of participants possess bachelor's degree and the rest has a master's degree from Finnish education institutes. All are universities and universities of applied sciences from Helsinki, Tampere and Turku cities. When being asked about difficulties of job search process in Finland, the most common answer is "language". Some interviewed students said:

B : (...) "*Finnish is such a complicated language and I feel so hard to learn, but every company asks for that!*" (...)

However, some of the Tech-background students have another opinion, for them, experience is a key role, one emphasised :

H : (...) "*I applied for one position in company X, they ask for 2 years of experiences and I still did not get it however I also have 2- year experiences in web development*" (...)

When coming to The Shortcut reputation, most of the interviewed students heard about the company by social media, through LinkedIn, Facebook, and word of mouth. The respondents mentioned that they came to The Shortcut because of job opportunities and networking.

J : (...) "*I come because I want to meet people in the same situation, and to see if the company in the event has vacancies*" (...)

I : (...) "*I want to meet the experts and speakers in my industry (..) I think it helps in the future if I am going to apply to that company*" (...)

Some students also mentioned about the purpose of coming to The Shortcut is for training courses. It might help them to highlight their profile and skills in job applications:

A : (...) I took the Azure course since it is the important software to learn, also because it is free (...) my profile looks better and I can use it in future jobs (...) I am good at it now and I also got a certificate from Microsoft.

Also, when asking about “what are the benefits from The Shortcut”, all respondents expressed they got more friends, acquaintances, and connections on LinkedIn and Facebook. The new connects are people in the same situations, industries, experts and also managers from some companies. From the training courses, 80% of students found it effective to gain and enhance their hard and soft skills. Surprisingly, all students said they felt more engaged and happier during The Shortcut activities regarding motivation and de-stressing. Some students mentioned psychological assistance could also be one of the benefits that they have got since they joined The Shortcut activities.

C : (...) I got 7 more connections on LinkedIn after joining My Start-up Debut at The Shortcut, there is “person Q” from “company R” also (...) I still keep in touch until now.

D: (...) I was at CV clinic workshop and I fixed my CV after that (...) it was useful, I know what recruiter will notice on my job application.

G : (...) I am from the Catalyst program, I have not found a job yet, but I had more understandings and skills on digital marketing (...) I want The Shortcut to connect me with partner companies (...) It was happy when I join a marketing club, I had friends and memories and super fun.

However, some students said they would expect more from The Shortcut regarding bigger companies, more positions, job – matchmaking, and training programs, especially language training. Overall, all respondents said they could achieve some benefits when joining The Shortcut and they are pleased because all programs are free of charge. Also, Tech-background students reveal that they get employed easily when coming to job-match making events.

b) Sampled group two: Human resources experts

The interview was conducted with four managers from different organisations that work with international students. Answering the question “ what are the expected skills for international students to find a job?”, some respondents expressed that there are various skills needed. It depends also on language, study major, education level, experiences and soft skills. One five-year experienced HR manager emphasised networking and personal expression are key components in the Finnish job market:

Y : (...) You need to know who specialized in what industry you are in (...) there can be 80% hidden jobs in the Finnish job market, if you want to enter you have to find the way to go in (...) CV and motivation letter are important.

Another interviewee shared her witness about the “unconscious bias” in recruitment. Also, the differences in culture and working style inhibit job chances for international talents. One talent acquisition specialist said:

S: (...) there is always unconscious bias if foreign and Finns apply to same job positions (...) you should notice the integration to working culture here (...)

When being asked about The Shortcut and its reputation, 80% of the interviewees have heard about talent accelerator before and just 50% of them have been at The Shortcut for visiting. However, all interviewees agreed with The Shortcut activities because of its social-oriented purposes and free of charge offers. Most of them support language, Tech, and soft skill training programs rather than others. They supposed that it is effective to create networking events for connecting people in the same industries. The head of an international youth-run organisation pointed out:

Z: (...) Leadership and teamwork are very important in multicultural communication and working environment (...) students should enhance their network and exchange globalist experiences.

W: (...) Tech- talents cannot be discriminated by language or culture (...) you need to practice and practice, club or peer or group, you should cultivate your skills day by day

Regarding talent accelerator effectiveness and sustainability, some respondents said they could see its effectiveness in networking and skill training. On the contrary, others revealed that they did not see clear effects of talent accelerator in employment made for students. It is because of many other factors involved in the recruitment process such as experiences and background. Some said:

Y : (...) The Shortcut events can help students in networking and get to know senior experts in their major. It is good to have those activities (...)

W: (...) It is hard to say the effective impact but there are many factors to help students to get jobs, maybe not from The Shortcut but his or her effort (...)

In general, not all human resources experts admit The Shortcut effectiveness, but their ideas evaluated the role of networking activities operated by talent accelerator. The result performs requirements of soft skills and networking for international students in career management and outstanding study background and experiences. Thus, talent accelerator could be a powerful assistant for students in their journeys. About sustainable development, some interviewees recommend that talent accelerator should take into account language courses and personal branding training programs.

6 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on quantitative and qualitative data, this chapter presents the findings and discusses talent accelerator's characteristics and trends for operations management. This chapter addresses the research questions and leads to a recommendation for talent accelerator sustainable development.

6.1 Findings and answers

-Research question one: How does talent accelerator operate?

Through theoretical considerations presented in chapter 2, there is a correlation between start-up accelerator and talent accelerator. In fact, being a social enterprise focused on individual development, talent accelerator operates a different range of services compared to a start-up accelerator. The accelerating programs may also include entrepreneurship and start-up planning. Besides, talent accelerator applies the notion of Social Entrepreneurship in its operations (part 3.1). Therefore, there is a close connection between talent accelerator and start-up accelerator. This point allows them to associate, cooperate, and share their similar social achievements in sustainable development.

Besides, the quantitative data indicates the diversity of talent accelerator workforce with 55 team members from 24 countries (part 5.1). This feature highlights an image of an international working environment in the Finnish market. It encourages start-ups and other enterprises to improve global integration and utilize the power of the multicultural workforce. About talent accelerator operation, the activities are designed following a purpose of strategic development. According to quantitative data presented in chapter 5, the prominent offers from talent accelerator are long training courses, short training courses, workshop, and events for networking and inspiring. These activities are scheduled for participants during an operating year to keep the operating flow smooth. Also, it is easier for different customer segments to have a wider choice of training or events and workshops which are suitable for their demand. In terms of operational effectiveness, acting as a social enterprise, talent accelerator has an awareness of social-oriented operations, which means all programs are designed according to social needs. The team clarifies frequent social problems of international talents and students in Finland. From that, talent accelerator activities focus on assisting them in their career, either finding jobs or launching a business. More especially, thanks to the Entrepreneurship Competence framework, talent accelerator is confident in assisting individual improvement from the Foundation to Advanced stages (part 3.1.3).

To be precise, the quantitative analysis (part 5.1) confirms a huge number of foreign talents associated with talent accelerator, and more than 30% of them are students. According to the qualitative data (part 5.2), students who have joined talent accelerator activities experienced an amazing experience with huge benefits in personal development and networking. By the

end of 2019, there has been 130 employments made with the support of talent accelerator. It rewards the hard-working team and validates the talent accelerator's effectiveness.

Besides, the research results emphasize the talent accelerator's function from a human resources expert's perspective. Through the qualitative analysis (part 5.2), the most prominent feature considered by human resources experts and senior managers is networking opportunity. In the long run, a recommendation for talent accelerator would be to concentrate on networking activities and language training programs. On the contrary, some of the gotten ideas supposed that it is initial for talent accelerator to perform different effective solutions in the accelerating process to participants. The effectiveness of talent accelerator should not rely only on employment made, but also the quality of talent accelerator programs.

Last but not least, for sustainable development, the results also present social demands and international talent's demands in terms of language and job opportunities. Throughout the qualitative analysis (part 5.2), one of the most job search difficulties in Finland is language. The participant feedback also reflects the language demand and expectation on talent accelerators. Likewise, job match-making events are awaited in Tech and Digitalization fields. Besides, talent accelerator is associated with a start-up ecosystem and many partners (part 2.1). Thus, with a confident spirit of growing together, talent accelerator collaborates them to pursue sustainable development.

-Research question two: What is the impact of talent accelerator on international student's career?

In general, the study reflects two types of talent accelerator's impacts on international students: impacts on competences and skills and impacts on networking in job search and career management.

First and foremost, the theoretical framework in chapter 3 points out the mechanism of applying the Entrepreneurship Competence framework in assisting international students to achieve hard and soft skills. The quantitative analysis (part 5.1) illustrates talent accelerator's training methods and courses in different fields. These programs are offered to participants following the design of the EntreComp model from foundation to advanced levels through a collaboration with reputable partners. The training programs vary from technology, digitalization to business-relevant skills. From the qualitative analysis (part 5.2), the interviewees mentioned certain impacts of talent accelerator training courses to their qualifications. Especially, tech and digitalization related skills appear as the prominent benefits that all participants at talent accelerator have achieved. Literally, there are several short-time and long-time training courses that focus on computer sciences as Python, AWS, JavaScript, etc. According to the collected data, these courses cannot be compared to professional education institutes. However, learning-by-doing methods, peer-practicing, mentoring, and engaging could accelerate students to apply, upgrade, and achieve higher levels. In addition,

all respondents revealed that thanks to talent accelerator training programs, they accumulate more practical experiences in working culture, multinational environment and the Finnish organisation model. Thus, participants could highlight their personal brand on online job search platforms, create a powerful CV with practical experiences and skill certificates.

In other words, the importance of networking was mentioned along with the talent accelerator's boosting methods (part 3.2). By utilizing its close relationships with partners and a start-up ecosystem, talent accelerator creates opportunities for participants to engage and build up effective relationships with people in the similar industries. From that, international students could seize more job chances within the Finnish labour market. Precisely, the quantitative data (part 5.1) demonstrates a large number of employments made by talent accelerator. According to participants and human resources expert's perspective (part 5.2), networking is the most prominent benefit offered by talent accelerator. All respondents agreed that their personal network increased, both online and offline relationships. In addition, the study shows psychological impacts from networking on international students in terms of job motivation (part 5.2). Participants at talent accelerator found the place pleasant with a friendly, encouraging atmosphere and ideal for sharing. Thus, foreign students are assisted psychologically if frustration occurs during their career journey.

6.2 Discussion

Overall, the research clarifies the concept of talent accelerator by gathering existing theoretical frameworks, personal experiences, and the deduction process. Also, the study figures out different perceptions of talent accelerator participants and human resources experts after the interview process and direct observation. In general, while some respondents expressed their positive achievements after their participation at talent accelerator, a small number of interviewees supposed some other factors also affect their career. To be precise, their journeys to get a job are not reliance on talent accelerator only.

In terms of talent accelerator operation, the research reflects characteristics, mechanism, and structure of the organisation. Following social-oriented purposes, talent accelerator pursues sustainable development and builds up its collaborative community. Talent accelerator also performs an image of a diverse workforce and the value of international talents within the Finnish market. From that, talent accelerator encourages integration and job chances for international talents. Thus, the organisation contributes to decrease the "brain drain phenomenon" of the Finnish labour market.

However, to follow the long-term sustainability, there are significant challenges that require talent accelerator to move with the times and be creative. Individual development is a complex process required agility, especially in the context of constant change in the dynamic global

economy. Thus, talent accelerator should take into account innovation, creation, and adaptation as core values.

Besides, about the impacts of talent accelerator on foreign students, the study reflects an image of talent accelerator, which is as a “bridge” to get closer to job opportunities and personal improvement. Thus, through this research, it is potential for students after graduation or those who are in the learning stages, to consider and exploit talent accelerator as an effective growing step in entering the Finnish market.

On the contrary, while talent accelerator can assist international students in the early steps of their career, this process still requires other personal factors. These factors are individual qualifications, experiences and motivation to name a few. Thus, it is important for each individual to self-motivate and improve their capabilities. Talent accelerator function is not giving jobs to participants. Therefore, an awareness of self-effort is important among all participants.

For social and community benefits, talent accelerator aims at reducing the unemployment rate, assisting foreign talents, and building up a global integration.

7 CONCLUSIONS

During the economic development history, the concept of *accelerator* is used for various organisations such as business accelerators, corporate accelerators, start-up accelerators, etc (Anon. n.d.). Step by step, accelerating organisations represent an initial milestone in incubation mechanism, growth-boosting, and motivation among the new dynamic international economy. In Finland, talent accelerator appears as a productive social-based organisation. It brings an essential and appropriate assistance to international talents in their career management.

Through this study, the researcher aims at identifying and validating the concept of talent accelerator - a new social enterprise model based on social-oriented purposes. Within the Finnish market, the study demonstrates the organisation's function in assisting foreign talents, especially international students to pursue their career by focusing on competence, skill development and networking. Furthermore, the researcher tries to explore participant's feedback on talent accelerator operations to contribute to its sustainable improvement.

By applying personal observation, addressing case company and mixed research methods, the study results validate the talent accelerator concept and its mechanism of operating. Also, the overall impacts on international students are carried out through the quantitative and qualitative data. In a nutshell, it is beneficial for students in every stage of study or fresh graduates to engage with talent accelerator community and benefit from its training programs. Along with talent accelerator benefits, the research results mention other necessary requirements of the job-seeking process from human resources experts' perspectives. Thus, international talents get a chance to identify and focus on needed requirements such as networking skills and qualifications. Besides, the research points out a psychological assistance from talent accelerator to its participants during their job search process. The psychological support is one of the strategic goals that this organisation intends to perform in sustainability. From the qualitative outcome, the study shows people's expectations in language training programs and networking. It would be more efficient if talent accelerator enlarges its network with partners and companies in different industries and prolongs language training courses.

Due to the practical situations, there exists a limitation in this study's performance. Therefore, it is initial to clarify the shortcomings during the thesis implementing process and gain experiences for future researches. The study is conducted within a short time scale and the occurred pandemic inhibits direct communication and theoretical resources (library resources). So, talent accelerator conceptualization is quite a lack of large and concrete theoretical perspectives. Consequently, the data collection process relied on the case company with its participants and small sampled groups of interviewees. Although the results

relatively cover research standards and study objectives, it would be more meaningful to go deeper into the accelerator concept and its mechanism in detailed fields, as well as gaining broader feedback from participants. Besides, the interviews were conducted online which caused an interruption in the process time and quality. A direct interview would have been more effective as the researcher could explore more in terms of individual emotions and larger information.

In conclusion, this research is a starting step in analysing social- phenomena, the concept of talent accelerator, and its role in international students' careers. As talent accelerator differs itself from other accelerators by its detailed focus on international individuals, future research might explore perspectives of investors, headhunting experts in terms of international talents and diverse workforce. All in all, with meaningful purposes and trend-driven innovations in personal development, talent accelerator presents a promising future in the sustainable human resources industry.

8 REFERENCES

- al., S.e. 2014. Summary Research Methods for Business Students (Saunders et al.) - English version. <https://www.worldsupporter.org/en/chapter/40519-summary-research-methods-business-students-saunders-et-al-english-version>.
- Anon. 2020. World Happiness Report. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Happiness_Report.
- Anon. n.d. Junction. <https://www.hackjunction.com/>.
- Anon. n.d. Kela. <https://www.kela.fi/web/en>.
- Anon. n.d. Slush. <https://www.slush.org/>.
- Anon. n.d. Startup Foundation. <https://thehub.io/startups/startup-foundation>.
- Anon. n.d. Start-up Foundation. <https://www.startup-saatio.fi/>.
- Anon. n.d. TE Palvelut. <https://www.te-palvelut.fi/te/fi/>.
- Anon. n.d. Wave Ventures. <https://wave.ventures/>.
- Anon. n.d. Wikipedia. (n.d.). World Happiness Report - Wikipedia. Retrieved February 16, 2020, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Happiness_Report (2019, December 5).
- Finland international student numbers just over 20k, led by. Retrieved February 16, 2020, from.
- Anon. n.d. Wikipedia.
- Baker, A. 2019. Finland: Vietnam is biggest source market. (n.d.). World Happiness Report - Wikipedia. Retrieved February 16, 2020, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Happiness_Report (2019, December 5).
- Finland international student numbers just over 20k, led by. Retrieved February 16, 2020, from.
- Belyh, A. 2016. 23 Networking Tips for Building Effective Relationships. <https://www.cleverism.com/23-networking-tips-for-building-effective-relationships/>.
- Bishop, A. 2019. 13 Awesome Professional Networking Alternatives to LinkedIn. <https://www.searchenginejournal.com/linkedin-alternatives/297409/>.
- Canary, A. 2019. How to Analyze Interview Transcripts in Qualitative Research. <https://www.rev.com/blog/analyze-interview-transcripts-in-qualitative-research>.
- Carolyn Boyce, Palena Neale 2006. CONDUCTING IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS: A Guide for Designing and Conducting In-Depth Interviews for Evaluation Input. PATHFINDER INTERNATIONAL TOOL SERIES Monitoring and Evaluation – 2.
- Carvar, C. 2019. Finland is not for unskilled job seekers, says the OECD. <https://www.foreigner.fi/articulo/work-and-study/finland-is-not-for-low-skilled-labor/20190418171302001735.html>.
- Craig Rollason, P.T.a.D.Y. 2014. Business analysis. BCS Learning & Development Limited.
- Devault, G. 2019. Advantages and Disadvantages of Quantitative Research. <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/quantitative-research-advantages-and-disadvantages-2296728>.
- Digital, D. 2015. Design principles for building a successful corporate accelerator.
- E., G.Ş. 2017. SWOT ANALYSIS: A THEORETICAL REVIEW. http://sosyalarastirmalar.com/cilt10/sayi51_pdf/6iksisat_kamu_isletme/gurel_emet.pdf, 10.
- education, F.n.a.f. n.d. STATISTICS ON FOREIGN DEGREE STUDENTS IN FINNISH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN 2017. 2018.
- Essays, U. 2017. Research Onion - Explanation of the concept. <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/psychology/explanation-of-the-concept-of-research-onion-psychology-essay.php>.
- Gillham, B. & (Firm), P. 2000. Case study research methods.

Gunawardena, L.D.V. 2019. Finland's Education System Leads Globally. <http://www.ipsnews.net/2019/07/finlands-education-system-leads-globally/>.

Hangartner, A.F.a.D. 2006. Social Networks and Labour Market Outcomes: The Non-Monetary Benefits of Social Capital.

Hayes, A. 2019. Business Ecosystem. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/business-ecosystem.asp>.

Holloway, I. 1997. Basic concepts for qualitative research. Oxford. Blackwell Science.

Hughes, J. 2016. Finland's International Students Choosing to Stay and Work Post-Graduation. <https://www.masterstudies.com/news/Finland%E2%80%99s-International-Students-Choosing-to-Stay-and-Work-Post-Graduation-1075/>.

Ibele, T. 2017. Advantages and Disadvantages of Nonprofits You May Have Overlooked. <https://www.wideapricot.com/blogs/newsblog/2017/08/09/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-nonprofits>.

Kagan, J. 2019. Networking. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/n/networking.asp>.

Kelli A. Green, M.L.A.W.a.K.K. n.d. Diversity in the Workplace: Benefits, Challenges, and the Required Managerial Tools1.

Kerr Inkson, Micheal B. Arthur 2011. How to Be a Successful Career Capitalist. *Organizational Dynamics* 30(1):48-61.

Kulkarni, C. 2017. How Social Entrepreneurship Can Benefit Businesses and the Communities They Serve. <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/303645>.

L.Forret, M. 2014. Networking as a Job-Search Behavior and Career Management Strategy.

Malterud, K. 2001. The art and science of clinical knowledge: Evidence beyond measures and numbers. pp.397-400.

Manuel, N. n.d. The Advantages of a Social Entrepreneur. <https://work.chron.com/advantages-social-entrepreneur-17538.html>.

Margherita Bacigalupo, P.K.Y.P.G.V.d.B. 2016. EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework. Joint research center.

Margherita Bacigalupo, P.K.Y.P.G.V.d.B. 2016. EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework. JRC For Policy Report.

Mark, S. 2012. Research methods for business students.

Martin, Y. 2015. Knock Em Dead-Social Networking : For Job Search & Professional Success. Jumpingdude Media.

Mayhew, R. & Thompson, R.b.J. 2019. Advantages and Disadvantages of Nonprofits. <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/advantages-disadvantages-nonprofits-11430.html>.

Methodology, R. n.d. Inductive Approach (Inductive Reasoning). <https://research-methodology.net/research-methodology/research-approach/inductive-approach-2/>.

Monica L. Forret, T.W.D. 2001. Correlates of Networking Behavior for Managerial and Professional Employees. *Group & Organization Management* 26(3):283-311.

News, Y. 2019. "I'm broken, depressed": Foreigners struggle to find work in Finland. https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/im_broken_depressed_foreigners_struggle_to_find_work_in_finland/10641139.

Nichola, Diane, Alberto 2020. BUSINESS INCUBATORS AND ACCELERATORS: The role of accelerators in firm survival: An fsQCA analysis of Italian startups. DOI: 10.1016/j.technovation.2019.102102.

Parccientific 2018. Perspectives and advantages of social entrepreneurship. <https://news.pcuv.es/en/perspectives-and-advantages-of-social-entrepreneurship>.

Praszquier, R. 2012. Social entrepreneurship : theory and practice. New York: Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press 2012.

Rob Cross, Andrew Parker, Laurence Prusak, Stephen P Borgatti 2001. Knowing What We Know: Supporting Knowledge Creation and Sharing in Social Networks. *Organizational Dynamics* 30(2):100-120.

Robson, C. 2002. *Real World Research : A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers / C. Robson.*

Rotiélío e Silva Junior, J. 2019. Role of accelerator programs in early-stage startups : Case study *Startup Journey*. Turku University of Applied Sciences.

Saunders, M. 2016. *Research methods for business students*. Harlow : Pearson Education 2016.

Sherry Sullivan Yehuda Baruch 2009. Advances in Career Theory and Research: A Critical Review and Agenda for Future Exploration. *Journal of Management* 35(6):1542-1571.

Shortcut, T. 2018. *The Shortcut Year Book*. Helsinki.

Shortcut, T. 2019. *The Shortcut Database 2019*. The Shortcut Oy.

Shortcut, T. 2019. *White Paper on Diversity & Inclusion in the Tech industry*. November 2019. The Shortcut.

Shortcut, T. n.d. *The Shortcut*. <https://theshortcut.org/>.

Tutorial, R.M. n.d. *CASE STUDY METHOD IN RESEARCH METHODOLOGY - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY*. <https://www.wisdomjobs.com/e-university/research-methodology-tutorial-355/case-study-method-11496.html>.

Wikipedia n.d. *Startup Accelerator - History*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Startup_accelerator.

Yate, M. 2015. *Knock Em Dead—Social Networking : For Job Search & Professional Success*. Jumpingdude Media.

Yin, R.K. 2012. *A (VERY) BRIEF REFRESHER ON THE CASE STUDY METHOD*. Yin case study 2012.

APPENDICE

Appendix 1 : The Shortcut Job match-making events

the shortcut

SLUSH WEEK SIDE EVENT
18.-22.11.2019

TALENT HEIST

SEIZE YOUR SPOT!

Our **biggest** international talent matchmaking event yet

In partnership with

BUSINESS FINLAND | **Helsinki** | **hub** | Powered by **DEAL ROOM**



Appendix 2. The Shortcut Training Course



the shortcut Microsoft Azure

Get started with Azure

Free training & Certification

Application period opens on October 11
Program starts on November 5
@The Shortcut Lab

#HybridCloud
#DataAnalysis
#CloudComputing



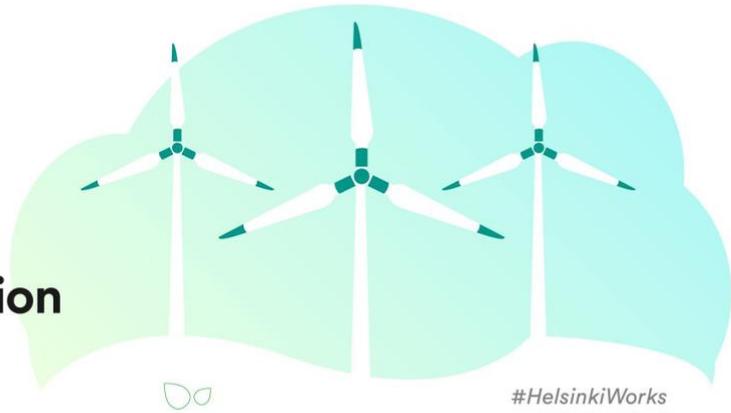
Appendix 3. The Shortcut Inspired Event



My Startup Debut

Greentech edition

1.11.2019, 17:00-19:00
@The Shortcut Lab



#HelsinkiWorks
#GetInspired
#Activation



Appendix 4. Interview questions

1. Sampled group 1

- How long have you been seeking for jobs? Have you worked yet?
- What are/ were difficulties in job search that you faced/have faced?
- How did you know about The Shortcut? How many times have you been there?
- Have you ever been in The Shortcut activities?
- Do you like them? Why do you join The Shortcut?
- What are the benefits of participating at The Shortcut activities? In terms of skills, networking, job opportunities, or anything else?
- What did you learn most?
- What do you think The Shortcut could improve in the future? About training content, events, workshops?

2. Sampled group 2

- What is the necessary competence that international students need for job search in Finland? (qualification, skills, etc)
- Do you think international students get high chance of getting professional jobs?
- What are difficulties that they might face?
- Have you ever heard about The Shortcut – talent accelerator? Have you been there?
- Do you think talent accelerator is an effective organisation? In terms of what?
- For long time, what do you think talent accelerator should improve?