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Supporting the Well-being of Immigrants in Espoo

A Case Study of the Information Point for Immigrants

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<p>The goal of this study was to learn about clients' experiences at the Information Point for Immigrants in Espoo. Five participants of various ages and origins were contacted, and the interviews took place in person in the spring of 2022.</p> <p>The data was gathered using semi-structured questions in this qualitative study. The findings were subjected to thematic analysis. The PERMA model was used as a framework to explore the aspects that support the well-being of the Information Point clients in order to assess the data. Positive feelings, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishments were among the themes.</p> <p>The findings revealed that the five PERMA model features are critical components of pleasure and well-being of the clients of Information Point for Immigrants. Every participant had a different experience, but they all agreed that the support they received made them happier, helped them form positive relationships, felt involved, gave them life significance, and made them feel accomplished. Furthermore, the clients were overly reliant on the information point's services.</p> <p>The study's findings highlight the need of providing help to immigrants in order for them to retain their well-being and better integrate into Finnish society. This thesis aims to provide the City of Espoo with helpful information on clients' experiences and wants so that current and future services may be better planned and evaluated.</p>	
Key Words	Immigrants, Espoo, integration, well-being, PERMA

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<p>Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli saada tietoa asiakkaiden kokemuksista maahanmuuttajien palvelupisteessä. Yhteyttä otettiin viiteen eri-ikäiseen ja -taustaiseen osallistajaan, ja haastattelut tehtiin henkilökohtaisina keväällä 2022.</p> <p>Tässä kvalitatiivisessa tutkimuksessa aineisto kerättiin puolistrukturoiduilla kysymyksillä. Löydöksistä tehtiin temaattinen analyysi. Tietopisteen asiakkaiden hyvinvointia tukevien aspektien kartoituksessa viitekehyksenä käytettiin PERMA-mallia aineiston arviointiin. Teemoihin kuuluivat myönteiset tunteet, sitoutuminen, positiiviset ihmissuhteet, merkittävyys ja onnistumiset.</p> <p>Tulokset paljastivat, että PERMA-mallin viisi ominaisuutta ovat ratkaisevia osatekijöitä maahanmuuttajien palvelupisteen asiakkaan mielihyvän ja hyvinvoinnin kannalta. Jokaisen osallistujan kokemukset olivat erilaisia, mutta kaikki olivat yhtä mieltä siitä, että heidän saamansa tuki teki heistä onnellisempia, auttoi heitä muodostamaan myönteisiä ihmissuhteita, sai tuntemaan osallisuutta, toi merkitystä elämään ja antoi onnistumisen tunteen. Lisäksi asiakkaat luottivat liikaakin palvelupisteen palveluihin.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulokset korostavat tarvetta auttaa maahanmuuttajia, jotta he voivat ylläpitää hyvinvointiaan ja integroitua paremmin suomalaiseen yhteiskuntaan. Tämän opinnäytetyön tavoitteena on tarjota Espoon kaupungille hyödyllistä tietoa asiakkaiden kokemuksista ja toiveista, jotta nykyisiä ja tulevia palveluita voidaan suunnitella ja arvioida paremmin.</p>	

Avainsanat	Maahanmuuttajat, Espoo, kotouttaminen, hyvinvointi, PERMA
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1 Introduction

Moving to a new nation is a significant life adjustment. Immigrants must adjust to a new language and culture in order to integrate into a new society. Childhood experiences, age, gender, education, ethnic and religious background, culture in the home country, as well as the presence or absence of social support in the host nation, all influence how immigrants deal with transition (Mieli, 2021).

One of the most significant barriers to gaining access to resources and integrating into a new country is the language barrier. In fact, language difficulties can make routine tasks in everyday life harder, and social interaction satisfaction might be harmed as a result. According to a survey on work and well-being among individuals of foreign origin (UTH), 40 percent of immigrants aged 25 to 54 had an academic degree. On the other side, 25% of those surveyed had not completed high school (Finnish institute for health and welfare, 2022).

Language abilities in Finnish or Swedish make it easier to use services, find work, study, and adapt to new situations. Only around a third of immigrants can communicate fluently in Finnish or Swedish. At the same time, more than a third of the population speaks neither language above a beginner's level (Finnish institute for health and welfare, 2022). The city of Espoo opened an Information Point for Immigrants in Iso Omena in December 2020 to make it easier for immigrants to receive information and services that would support their wellbeing and help them better adapt into Finnish society (Espoo, n.d).

The author of this study has spent the last nine months working at the information point dedicated to serving clients with immigrant backgrounds. Due to the lengthy lines that formed every day during that timeframe, there was no opportunity to speak with clients regarding their opinions. The Information Point for Immigrants services are available to inhabitants of Espoo who speak a language other than Finnish at the Information point for Immigrants. On the other hand, there were a significant number of clients who came from other cities, such as Helsinki, Hämeenlinna, Vantaa, and Kerava. This has made it quite clear how important these kinds of services are crucial in immigrants' lives. This is how the concept for this thesis, as well as the research question for it, came to be. The goal is to learn more about the clients' experiences and how the services they receive help them maintain their well-being. Semi-structured interviews were utilized as research

tools. The empirical research included 5 interviews with clients of all ages and origins. The responses to the interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically. To maintain anonymity, the participants' names and countries of origin were not disclosed.

2 The Information Point of Immigrants

The Information Point for Immigrants is a trial project supported by the Ministry of Employment and Economy and set to open at the Iso Omena Service Centre in December 2020. The project is a service provided by the city of Espoo (Espoo,2021)

The purpose of the immigrant information point initiative is to increase immigrants' chances of achieving equal standing in society and to help their assimilation into Finnish society. Telephone interpreting is used to provide assistance in Finnish, Swedish, English, Arabic, and other languages. The project's goal is to help clients with immigrant backgrounds with everyday challenges that they can't handle on their own because of language barriers. They can help with a variety of difficulties, including early childhood education, study, work, housing, social support, health and wellness, residence permits and citizenship applications, and dealing with authorities (Espoo, 2020).

The project's goal is to establish a new cross-administrative counseling and assistance system for immigrants in the city that is easy to use and relevant to its customers' daily lives. The project extends beyond the current general advice for advisory and guidance needs and connects the content and customer operations of future substance result units' services more strongly than general advice. The city of Espoo's effectiveness in integrating and employing immigrants is becoming increasingly important year after year, as the city's population of immigrants continues to expand rapidly. According to the city of Espoo, more than a third of Espoo's working-age population will be foreign-speaking in fifteen years. The project's goal is to supplement the e-service's guidance to immigrants by incorporating the unique knowledge of various outcome units alongside basic advice (Espoo, 2020).

The work makes use of the City of Espoo's service concepts as a service, as well as the city's various profit units' competence in immigrant services. The expansion of counseling and guiding is tied to the city's employment management experiment as well as the expansion of technological services and communications. The goal of the counselling and guiding services is to encourage and support immigrants to take care of themselves (City of Espoo, 2020).

3 The Espoo Story

The city's strategy is referred to as The Espoo Story. At the beginning of each new council term, The Espoo Story, together with the associated cross-administrative development programmes and the objectives that have been set for the period, are always brought up to date. The current term of council begins in 2021 and ends in 2025.

Today, Espoo is a city that prioritizes public safety and aesthetics by maintaining its exposure to natural areas. The city is an integral element of the capital area that is both multilingual and culturally diverse. The city of Espoo is known for its active participation in worldwide industry and innovative endeavors. The city of Espoo has evolved into a network city throughout the course of its history, with five metropolitan centers and two local centers. A wide range of services are offered to 300,000 inhabitants (City of Espoo, n.d).

Espoo continues to expand. The number of people living here increases by an average of 4,700 every single year. Particularly, the number of people who speak one or more foreign languages is expanding at a rapid rate. There are now more than 58,000 inhabitants who speak a language other than Finnish, and it is anticipated that this figure would increase by 35,000 by the year 2030. One of Espoo's values is to make it "Finland's best city for integration" (City of Espoo, n.d).

3.1 Espoo is the best place for integration

By luring talented persons and their families to Espoo, enhancing immigrant integration, and hastening the job search process, skilled individuals and their families will assure the city's vitality, the availability of labour, and socially sustainable growth. An early-stage integration programme will be efficiently implemented in Espoo with the goal of ensuring that newcomers learn Finnish or Swedish and find a study place or work that is appropriate for their abilities. As a result of improvements made to learning outcomes, the gap that now exists between the learning outcomes of children and young people who originate from immigrant backgrounds and those who come from Finnish backgrounds will be cut in half over the time of this council. There will be a rise in the number of women from immigrant backgrounds who are employed, bringing it closer to the level seen in the Nordic countries. The Skills Centre for Immigrants' primary mission is to facilitate job placement for those seeking work in the private sector (City of Espoo, n.d).

4 Immigration in Finland

Immigration, according to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, is defined as moving to Finland, living in the country permanently or temporarily with a license for non-touristic purposes, and whose right of residence has been recorded or for which a residence card has been issued, whereas integration is defined as a process in which immigrants and society as a whole joint effort to equip immigrants with the knowledge and training required in society and the workplace (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2010). Migration legislation is drafted by the Ministry of the Interior. It also directs and develops immigration policy, as well as overseeing the Finnish Immigration Service's performance management. The goal is to make Finland a safe and open country where everyone can contribute (Ministry of Interior, n.d).

Finland has been more cosmopolitan in recent years, with a higher rate of immigration (yle, 2017). A total of 32,900 immigrants arrived in Finland in 2020. Between 2010 and 2020, the annual number of immigrants ranged between roughly 26,000 and nearly 35,000. (Statista, 2021). Immigrants are dispersed throughout Finland, although, as in many other nations, the regional capital is the most preferred destination for newcomers. In 2018, the capital city of Finland was home to 26% of all immigrants in the country. (Heino&Jauhiainen, 2021). It is normal in Finland's biggest cities for citizens to come from more than 100 different nations. Aside from having a higher concentration of immigrants, the capital is also more prepared for immigration, having developed its own strategies and forecasts. (Heino&Jauhiainen, 2021).

4.1 The Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration

According to Finland's Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, considering the needs of immigrants when designing public services is vital, as it ensures that they have exposure to activities and programs that will assist them in integrating (Ministry of economic affairs and employment, 2010).

On September 1, 2011, the Act to Promote Immigrant Integration went into force. The purpose of this Act is to assist immigrants in integrating into Finnish society and facilitating their active participation. The Act also strives to promote gender equality, non-discrimination, and positive interactions amongst various demographic groups (Ministry of economic affairs and employment, n.d).

According to the act, integration is defined as "interactive development including immigrants" with the goal of providing immigrants with the knowledge and skills needed in society and the workplace, as well as support so that they can keep their culture and language. Immigrants should be informed about their rights and responsibilities in Finnish society, as well as the service system, according to Chapter 2 of the act. As part of fundamental municipal services, measures and services that promote integration are available. Municipalities, employment and economic development offices, and other authorities must also provide suitable assistance and counseling to immigrants on measures and services that promote integration and work life (Ministry of Employment and the Economy, 2010).

Immigrants also have a right to an integration plan, according to the act. If an immigrant is jobless as defined by the Act on Public Employment and Business Service, or if he or she is getting non-temporary welfare benefits under the Act on Social Assistance, the immigrant has the right to an integration plan. Other immigrants may also be given an integration plan if their needs are determined during the initial assessment (Ministry of Employment and the Economy, 2010)

An integration plan is a personalized plan created for an immigrant that includes measures and services aimed at assisting them in acquiring a sufficient command of the Finnish or Swedish language as well as other skills and knowledge needed in society and the workplace, as well as promoting their opportunities to participate actively in society as an equal member (Ministry of Employment and the Economy, 2010).

The length of an immigrant's integration plan is defined by his or her own goals, work and training background, as well as the measures planned and given for him or her. However, the immigrant has three years from the date of signing the first integration plan to be eligible for an integration plan. When drafting an integration plan, the immigrant's own goals for achieving integration are taken into account (Ministry of Employment and the Economy, 2010).

The immigrant's integration plan and any other related plans must be coordinated. If necessary, multi-sectoral collaboration is used to carry out steps that are in conformity with the integration plan (Ministry of Employment and the Economy, 2010).

4.2 Immigrants in Espoo

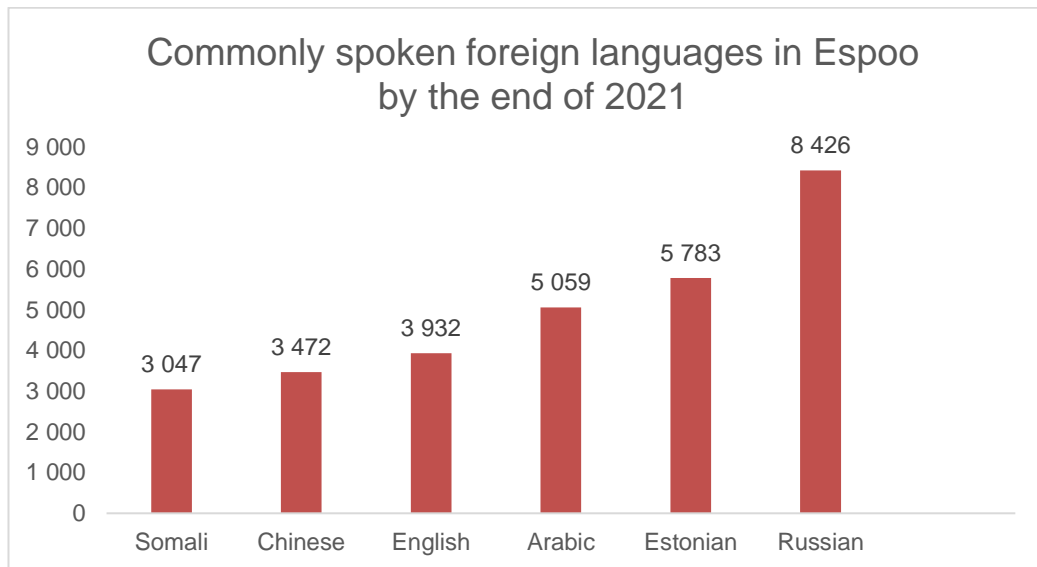
Espoo has around 52,000 foreign-language-speaking city residents at the start of 2020, accounting for almost 13% of all foreign-language speakers in Finland. Foreign-language speakers make up about 18 percent of Espoo residents, and their population share grows by about one percentage point per year. Because of its growing foreign-born population, Espoo was the first municipality in Finland to declare English as an official language in 2017(Yle,2017).

The number of foreign-language-speaking urban dwellers has increased by more than 3,000 people every year in recent years. Espoo is expected to have 105,000 foreign-language-speaking city dwellers by 2035, with foreign-language speakers accounting for 30% of the population. The city has a long history of offering services to local residents who come from immigrant backgrounds(Espoo, 2020).

According to data from a 2014 poll on foreigners' job and well-being in Finland, as many as 47% of foreign-language-speaking city inhabitants in Espoo finished university education in 2014(Espoo, 2020). In 2018, 592 residents of the city who spoke a foreign language replied to a preliminary study poll conducted in the city as part of a service language project, with 95 percent having finished at least a bachelor's degree and 84 percent employed or self-employed. Eighty-five percent of those polled had spent at least a year in Espoo. Only 19.6 percent of respondents recognized the city's services well or very well, and 32.2 percent knew where to find information about the city's services well (Espoo, 2020).

At the end of the year 2021, Espoo had 297,132 residents. Its population increased by 4336 people (1.50%) in the year 2021. 1,271 more people were added to the population than in the year 2020. This growth in Espoo's population was the greatest among the Finnish municipalities preceding Tampere, Oulu, and Vantaa. 59,610 residents (20.10%) of Espoo spoke a language other than Finnish. Swedish was spoken by 20,034 people (6.70%) and 217,488 (73.2%) people spoke Sámi or Finnish. 3,986 new residents moved to Espoo in the year 2021 who spoke a foreign language, making up 91.90% of the city's growth in population. Espoo had 35,557 foreign residents (13.0%). By the end of 2021, the most commonly spoken foreign languages in Espoo were Somali (3,047), Chinese (3,472), English (3,932), Arabic (5,059), Estonian (5,783), and Russian (8,426). Espoo is home to speakers of 118 different languages, 52 of which have populations greater

than 100. Russian speakers experienced the largest increase in the year 2021, with 587 individuals (City of Espoo,n.d).



Immigrants who live in the city take advantage of all of the city's services, including social and health services, as well as education. As a result of the municipal employment control experiment, the city has been in charge of organizing employment care services for all foreign-language-speaking city residents since 2021, as well as encouraging integration previously handled by the Employment Office Administration. Although the city's multiple service regions have established their own practices for guiding and advising foreign-language clients, individual and time assets are insufficient for knowledge exchange between different sectors in addition to guidance and counselling (Espoo, 2020).

5 Similar Projects

Information centers for immigrants all have the same purpose in mind: to help immigrants integrate by providing information, guidance, and counseling. Through continuous learning, the work aims to improve quality, improve the well-being of immigrants, and increase their competence level. Clients have the right to receive information and guidance in their own language.

Greater efforts are made at the information centers to make communication between counselors and clients simple and fruitful. Services are available in a variety of

languages, with telephone interpreters also accessible. The ability to communicate in a variety of languages is critical to the integration process. It has the potential to improve the well-being of immigrants by assisting them in overcoming the language barrier and its consequences. Nowadays, different Information Centers for Immigrants exist in different parts of the world.

5.1 Information Center for Immigrants in Latvia

In 2016, the Latvian government established an information center for immigrants. It provides information and help to people of various nationalities who have come to Latvia from countries outside the European Union (EU) on topics such as daily life, residence permits, work, and other legal and social affairs. 2514 immigrants have benefited from support and assistance for 20 months. (patverums, 2017).

For almost a year, the Information Centre for Immigrants (ICI) has been operating in Riga and the four Latvian regions of Liepaja, Jelgava, Daugavpils, and Cesis. It assists individuals of diverse nationalities who have arrived in Latvia from outside the European Union, as well as providing information and help to specialists who work with immigrants. (Patverums, 2017).

Foreign citizens were primarily interested in Latvian migration, job, economic opportunities, and family matters, as well as learning chances. Customers have had 121 consultations with a psychologist. People from 81 nations received free consultations, the majority of whom were citizens of Russia, Syria, Ukraine, China, India, Belarus, Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan. (Patverums, 2017).

5.2 Information Center for Immigrants in Iceland

New in Iceland is an information center for immigrants that was formed as a consequence of a legislative vote in 2019. Laugavegur 116, 101 Reykjavik is where the center is located. The Information Center's role, according to the legislative resolution, is to provide immigrants with accessible advice, assistance, and information on relevant services, rights, and obligations (Government of Iceland, n.d).

The information center also serves as a hub for collaboration between state agencies, local governments, and other organizations. All services are offered at no cost and in strict confidence. English, Polish, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Lithuanian, Russian, and Icelandic are the languages offered in the center. Other languages can benefit from telephone interpretation. Immigrants in Iceland can seek help to feel comfortable, informed, and supported while living there. The client has the option of calling, sending emails, chatting online, or scheduling an appointment (Government of Iceland, n.d).

6 Well-being

The term "wellbeing" is a term used to define a person's or a group's status in relation to economic, social, spiritual, psychological, or medical care. In a sense, a high degree of wellbeing refers to one's or a group's positive experiences. Similar to this, a low degree is related to bad experiences. Inquiring about people's perceptions of their own wellbeing is a key component of the subjective approach to wellbeing. So, we can either use an index based on questions about eight major aspects of life and how wellbeing affects health, or we can ask questions about life satisfaction. As a result, we may gather information on how many aspects of life affect our wellbeing. In the case of long-term evaluation, the subjective perception of the level of wellbeing varies depending on the particular conditions that are present at some point (Sfeatcu et al, 2014).

However, it is difficult to define wellbeing, and the question of how it should be defined remains unsolved (Dodge et al. 2012). Also, because well-being is a subjective notion influenced by a variety of ideas and factors, it is difficult to quantify. The difficulties in measuring wellbeing, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), arise because there is no single measure of wellbeing that satisfies all parties engaged in helping individuals improve their lives. Rather, academics, policymakers, welfare providers, and other community groups and members should have access to a variety of measurements from which to choose to enlighten their own specific topics of interest (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001).

While some indicators are essential for measuring happiness (for example, mortality rates, inequality measurements, and unemployment rates), the ABS's range of social indicators is always a subset of all possible happiness indicators, shaped by contemporary culture's preoccupations and concerns. What social conditions can be adequately

altered by policy and intervention will also be a focus of social statistics (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001).

Physical vitality, mental activity, social support and happiness, and self-realization in both personal and professional settings are frequently related with well-being. It is regarded as a viable alternative to a negative mindset, destructive defensive mechanisms, and an inappropriate way of life. As a significant component of well-being, social well-being is linked to our interpersonal relationships and our sense of security in relation to our surroundings (Dunaeva, 2018).

Psychologists have been developing theories to understand what contributes to a happy existence and testing their validity for years, but they often disagree on what defines happiness. These initiatives have resulted in the emergence of a slew of new well-being definitions, models, and metrics (Fallon et al.2017).

Bradburn's (1969) landmark research on psychological wellness was an early attempt to define well-being. His work signaled a shift away from psychiatric diagnosis and toward the study of ordinary people's psychological reactions in their daily lives. His interest in how people dealt with the challenges they faced on a daily basis sparked his discussion. Bradburn emphasized the importance of psychological well-being, sometimes known as happiness. He connected this to Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia, or well-being. This, according to Aristotle, is the underlying objective of all human endeavors. The majority of Bradburn's research centered on the distinction between positive and negative affect. An individual's psychological well-being will be high if positive affect outnumbered negative affect, and low if negative affect outnumbered positive affect (Dodge et al. 2012).

Ryff(1989)criticized Bradburn's work for failing to define the basic structure of psychological well-being (Dodge et al. 2012). He claims that psychological well-being (PWB) studies are primarily concerned with individuals' personal development, their style of dealing with life challenges, and their efforts and desires to complete tasks and feel satisfied. This refers to a feeling of achievement and personal satisfaction, as well as the absence of unpleasant sentiments and conditions (Ryff, 1989). Self-acceptance, purpose in life, environmental mastery, healthy relationships, personal progress, and autonomy were some of the basic characteristics of psychological wellbeing (PWB) developed by Ryff and Singer (2008). (Dodge et al.2012).

Well-being, according to Shah and Marks (2004), is more than just happiness. Well-being entails growing as a person, being fulfilled, and contributing to the community, in addition to feeling satisfied and joyful. Rogers (1969) talks about happiness in terms of "the excellent life". He considers that everyone aspires to be a fully functioning person who is open to new experiences, trusts their own bodies, and lives an increasingly existential existence.

6.1 Supporting the well-being of immigrants in Finland

Many factors influence immigrants' health and well-being, including their place of origin, age at the time of immigration, purpose for migration, and duration of stay in Finland. People from all origins face unique challenges when it comes to their health and well-being. These factors could have a favorable or negative impact. Those who arrived in Finland as refugees or asylum seekers, as well as their families, are frequently in a more precarious position in terms of their well-being (Finnish institute for health and welfare, 2021).

Variables that enhance health and wellbeing, according to the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, include a positive self-perceived performance of life in the new home country and satisfaction with living conditions, support from families and communities, trust in the Finnish service system, and certain lifestyle choices. Difficulties related with integration, such as access to a language course, obtaining a job, or inclusion in diverse societies, as well as adverse experiences in Finland, such as prejudice and a lack of social networks, have a detrimental impact on their wellbeing (Finnish institute for health and welfare, 2021).

In Finland, it is critical to promote health and well-being. Every citizen has the right to health and happiness, according to the Constitution. "Adequate social, health, and medical services shall be given for everyone, as stipulated in more detail by an Act, and the population's health shall be promoted," it states. (1999, Section 19) "Municipalities shall try to promote the welfare of their citizens," according to the local government legislation (Section 1, 2015).

According to a poll conducted by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, immigrants' health and well-being can be enhanced by providing support, a decent quality of life, and assisting them in developing confidence in the Finnish service system. On the other hand, the poll found that variables such as integration difficulties, cultural barriers, a low social support, and lack of information and service availability can all contribute to

a client's lack of well-being. The concerns listed in the article must also be addressed, and immigrants must be given the assistance and support they require, according to the article (Finnish institute for health and welfare,2021).

6.2 PERMA Model

The well-being theory, developed by Martin Seligman, an American psychologist and founder of positive psychology, emphasizes the objective of achieving happiness. He explains his new dynamic idea of well-being, which departs from strictly happiness-based beliefs (Dodge et al. 2012). Instead, his new theory of happiness focuses on elements of happiness, which he sees as a set of building blocks for a "flourishing life. "Positive emotion, engagement, connections, meaning and purpose, and accomplishment are the five aspects he specifies as factors of well-being (PERMA model) (Seligman, 2011). Positive emotion entails feeling happy and good, as well as accepting the past, no matter how bad it was, and looking forward to the future with optimism. Positive emotion supports and enhances a person's positive functioning (Seligman, 2011).

Bradburn (1969) believes that everyone's dream is to experience good feelings since they protect against mental illnesses such as anxiety, sadness, and mental disorder. The PERMA model's second component is engagement, which is defined as being completely immersed in a task. Happiness comes from doing something that engages an individual (Seligman, 2011).

The third component of happiness and well-being is relationships. Humans have an inherent need to connect and be a part of a community. It is for this reason that people need to form relationships with their family, coworkers, friends, and peers, because it is from this group that we can obtain emotional support when circumstances go tough (Seligman, 2011). Individuals who socialize frequently and have strong social relationships are generally happier than those who do not (Seligman 2011).

The fourth PERMA model element, Meaning, refers to a meaningful existence, while Achievement, the fifth, refers to a sense of accomplishment and success (Seligman, 2011). The PERMA model proposed by Seligman (2011) was utilized as a framework in this study to examine the factors that support the well-being of the information point clients.

Perma theory provides a platform for exploring the psychological needs of immigrants. The majority of immigrants are confused about what they should expect in a foreign

country. The model was designed to understand how people are affected mentally by circumstances in life and measures that can be undertaken to reduce suffering (Seligman, 2011).

The theory of well-being is related to human experiences and measures usually adopted to facilitate their flourishing. According to Perma's theory, it is vital to look into people's emotions and support their struggles. Immigrants constitute people of different backgrounds, and the reasons for migrating vary. Some individuals migrate due to internal conflicts, war, or other negative aspects. Other people may migrate in search of a better future, including working or advancing education (Giuntella et al, 2018).

Perma theory supports such an endeavor by emphasizing the need to facilitate positivity by facilitating communication and interaction with immigrants. The success of such a dream can only be achieved if immigrants are engaged and embraced to become part of the new society. The language barrier may be a problem. However, Perma theory provides a measure of observing engagement as a vital aspect of supporting immigrants' well-being by making them feel wanted and appreciated. Relationships affect people's emotions and can contribute to depression if not well managed. Immigrants are mostly detached from their loved ones and seek new relationships that can help them cope with the past. Interacting with such individuals and providing a friendly environment is a measure for supporting their psychological well-being. The sense of meaning is vital when exploring what immigrants experience in life. Therefore, it is vital to allow immigrants to find a sense of meaning by allowing access to what they value most, including religion, education, recreation, and social cause, among others (Beretta et al, 2018).

The final focus of Perma theory is an accomplishment. Providing immigrants with an environment that allows them to achieve their dreams contribute to their well-being. Opportunities such as a peaceful environment, education, and better jobs are likely to contribute to improved life (Seligman,2011).

7 Research Question

The major goal of this study is to use semi-structured interviews to reflect on the clients' experiences at the information point and their impressions of the effects of the services they receive on their everyday lives. The study's goal is to answer the following question: What kind of experiences did the clients have at the information point?

8 Methods

8.1 Target group

During the spring of 2022, five volunteers of various ages and backgrounds were individually interviewed. The conversations took place at Espoo's Iso Omena Library. The language used was Arabic and then the answers were translated into English. All participants have consented that after the thesis is published, all recorded interviews will be deleted. The research database contains voice recordings of every interview that was conducted. The contributors were asked for their consent to be recorded. A disclaimer about the right to stop and not respond as well as the right to take a break was given while the live audio was being recorded. All participants consented to the audio material's anonymity up until the thesis's publication. After the publication of the thesis, all voice recordings will be erased.

8.2 Qualitative research

A qualitative research's goal is to examine anything holistically and comprehensively, to study it in all of its complexities, and to comprehend it in its context. As a result, qualitative research is more adaptable, multifaceted, and informal than quantitative research (Mack et al. 2005). Qualitative research is useful for gathering culturally relevant information on a population's values, opinions, behaviors, and social circumstances. Data is analyzed in their natural settings, and phenomena is evaluated according to the interpretations people assign to them. (Mack et al. 2005).

Also, qualitative approaches allow participants to react in their own words rather than forcing them to choose from predetermined responses, as quantitative methods do. Open-ended questions can elicit replies that are relevant and culturally significant to the participant, unexpected by the researcher, and rich and explanatory in character. Another benefit of qualitative approaches is that they allow the researcher to explore initial participant replies – that is, to question why or how they responded. (Mack et al. 2005).

The data for this study was collected using a semi-structured interview style and observation. Semi-structured interviews are distinguished by a significant degree of freedom in terms of the type and design of the interview questions. The goal is to gain a clear understanding of the participants' experiences with the subject at hand (Edward&Holland, 2013). The open-ended questions allowed the client to express their thoughts in

their own terms. Additional precise and focused questions were asked after general inquiries to obtain critical details that weren't addressed in the prior queries. The different ideas and themes gained from the data collected were generated using thematic analysis.

The 90-minute interviews were conducted in Arabic. The use of open-ended questions promoted collaborative dialogue and allowed participants to openly express their thoughts. Because open-ended responses allow respondents to provide more options and perspectives than would be feasible with a closed-question or forced-choice survey measure, open-ended questions allow researchers to take a holistic and thorough look at the subjects being examined.

8.3 Ethical Considerations

Belmont's three basic principles, which form the internationally acknowledged framework for research ethics, were followed in this qualitative research (Mack et al. 2005).

The well-being of research participants must be a key consideration whenever a study involving people is done. Respect for individuals necessitates a commitment to guaranteeing study participants' autonomy and protecting people from being exploited because of their vulnerability. All research participants' dignity should be respected (Mack et al. 2005).

Beneficence necessitates a dedication to minimizing the hazards of research, including psychological and social concerns, while also maximizing the benefits to study participants. Justice necessitates a commitment to ensuring a fair distribution of the risks and benefits associated with the outcomes. Those who shoulder the difficulties of research involvement should profit from the knowledge obtained as well. Alternatively, the people who are expected to profit from the knowledge should be the ones requested to participate. (Mack et al. 2005).

Study participants have been informed about the study purpose, and research data collection methods; they were guaranteed the right to be undamaged, and without any personal questions that could harm them. All study participants were asked if they wish to voluntarily participate in research; they were informed that participation in research and the data will not be used against them in the future. To ensure the participants' privacy, their names were encoded with a letter.

8.4 Thematic coding and content analysis

The practice of discovering patterns or themes in qualitative data is known as thematic analysis. It is the first qualitative method to learn since it teaches essential abilities that can be used to many other types of analysis (Braun Clarke, 2006). The purpose of a thematic analysis is to find relevant or intriguing themes and patterns in data and utilize them to address the research or make a point about a problem. A strong thematic analysis does more than simply summarize the data; it analyzes and makes meaning of it. Using the major interview questions as the themes is a common blunder (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

Braun and Clarke's six-step approach was used in this study: familiarize yourself with the data, develop initial codes, search for themes, review themes, define themes, and write up the findings (Clarke Braun, 2013). Reading and re-reading the transcripts is the first stage in every qualitative study. The five written interview files were reread, and the author of this thesis was familiar with the complete body of data.

The data was organized in a meaningful and methodical manner in phase two. Each segment of data that was related to the research issue and captured something interesting about it was coded. This was done by hand with highlighters and pens. Each interview was categorized by theme. The major aim for coding was to give different pieces of the data meaning. To make it easier to distinguish between categories and save time during the coding process, the codes were highlighted in different colors.

The hunt for topics was the third phase. A theme is a pattern that captures something fascinating or meaningful about the data or research subject (Braun&Clarke, 2006). The codes were evaluated, and some were combined to form a theme. Positive feeling, engagement, relationships, significance, and accomplishment, for example, were all codes related to the PERMA model's viewpoint (Seligman, 2011). The codes were organized into bigger themes that seemed to suggest something specific about this research issue and to help the themes that would be presented in the results emerge. The semi-structured interview ensured that the participants were not under any duress. When analyzing the data, the responses were categorized, making the results obvious and simple to understand.

Step 4 was to go over the themes and see if the preliminary themes were correct. This was accomplished by examining the data linked with each topic and determining

whether the data supported it, as well as whether the themes fit within the overall data set. It's critical that the topics are connected and different from one another.

Step 5 is the ultimate refinement of the themes, with the goal of determining the essence of each subject (Braun & Clarke, 2006). What is the message of the theme? How do sub-themes connect and relate to the main theme if there are any? What is the relationship between the themes? The final stage was to write out the findings. The findings give all relevant information about the PERMA model and link it to past theoretical studies.

9 Results

9.1 Positive Emotions

Positive emotions, according to Seligman (2011), are the first and most important component of the road to well-being. When questioned about their encounters at the immigrant information center, all participants mentioned one essential component that aided their well-being: pleasant emotions.

« The immigrant information center is the ideal location for people who are frustrated by a language barrier. It is the location where I am content, cheerful, and encouraged. Workers are patient and professional, and they assist us with all concerns that arise on a daily basis. They support us and believe in us » A participant

« It's the only place where I feel like I'm being heard. I go there frequently because it makes me happy. I hope I'm not upsetting them with my personal problems. I can't imagine living without the Information Center » B participant

“Getting the job done can sometimes take more than two hours. I'm never bored. With the social counsellor, I speak my original language, we discuss the obstacles of integrating into Finnish society, and we occasionally laugh a lot. She gently explains everything. I'm overjoyed that the City of Espoo considered our welfare and established this fantastic project for us” C Participant

« I bring all of my troubles to the Immigrant Information Center. It's incredible how quickly my problems can be fixed in an hour and a half. I leave the location with great feelings and a sense of relief. » D Participant

“I used to ask my pals to assist me in filling out social benefits applications. They seemed to know more than I did. Unfortunately, they were too preoccupied. I was constantly worried and could not sleep. I couldn't handle things on my own. Since the Information Center opened, this has altered. Now I know there are nice and professional people there to assist me anytime I require assistance. I'm overflowing with good feelings!” E participant.

The emotional perspective of immigrants differs depending on the cause of their movement. Most immigrants felt that the information point played a vital role in uplifting their spirits. As established by Piipponen and Virkkunen (2020), immigrants usually undergo challenges due to mistreatment. Such occurrences can contribute to adverse mental outcomes leading to emotional breakdown.

Communication plays a vital role, and the clients were positive about how personnel treated them at the information center. Boredom contributed to adverse emotional outcomes. However, the personnel assisting the clients were welcoming and helped them remain positive about the process. Some immigrants felt that there was a need to hurry the process by ensuring faster services. However, the majority were satisfied that the personnel did their best possible to serve them.

9.2 Engagement

At the Information Point, clients felt engaged and had positive, meaningful experiences. According to Seligman (2011), engagement can be profound states in which people intentionally create an extended length of time that includes a commitment to perform. Engagement does not have to be focused on an activity that requires a skill or inventiveness. It might be as simple as concentrating on what you're doing and why you like it.

« I never fail to keep my appointments. I feel engaged in the sense that it inspires me to want to master a new skill and integrate better into Finnish society». A participant

« It's a project aimed at assisting immigrants in Espoo. I should be grateful, and I believe I have a responsibility to follow the instructions and advice given to me at the Information Point. Day by day, I feel more engaged, which gives me positive sensations»
B participant

The participants felt that engagement was well managed at the information point. People were eager to go for their appointments and get briefed regarding what was expected of them. According to Johnston and Taylor (2018), people can engage effectively if they listen to one another. For instance, it is vital to understand what is bothering the clients to develop measures that meet their needs. The results showed that the information point professionals were aware of interaction techniques that allowed the immigrants to feel welcomed. The language barrier was one of the challenges identified during the engagement.

9.3 Positive Relationships

Participants formed positive bonds with their social advisors. They believed that positive interactions had a positive impact on their well-being: « The personnel at the Immigrant Information Center are warm-hearted and empathic; I go there four times a week, and they always smile and welcome me » B participant

« I'm really proud of the wonderful and pleasant relationships I have with the personnel at the immigrant information center. They support and guide me. I'm feeling energized and cheerful » D (participant)

« Nowadays, everyone is preoccupied with their own problems. I no longer have excellent relationships. Thank you for the helpful information, staff. They are my acquaintances. They respect me, assist me, and make every effort to improve my life » E participant

Relationships are created through interaction and communication. The participants felt that the professionals of the information point were cheerful, engaging them and helping them to facilitate effective interaction. Some of the participants pointed out how they appreciated the efforts the personnel at the center put into helping them realize that the place was good for them to progress.

9.4 Meaning

Meaning is a crucial component of happiness. Every person needs to believe that their lives have purpose, that their acts are important, and that they are striving toward something worthwhile (Seligman, 2011). The participants mentioned meaning on

several occasions. Finding purpose enabled them to perceive their current lives and future paths more clearly.

«Being unemployed is difficult. It's even worse when you can't apply for a job. I didn't think the information center could help me when I initially went there. The choices presented to me for finding a job in the future intrigued me. The social advisor assisted me in locating an intense Finnish course. I immediately began studying Finnish, and my proficiency has improved to the point that I will soon be able to apply for a job. That makes me happy » C participant

« It's tedious to live without a plan. Making plans in Finland necessitates fluency in the Finnish language, which I lack. But everything changes when you're given someone whose job is to help you find meaning in your life. A participant

"I believe the integration strategy did not assist me in integrating into Finnish society. I agree that I am reliant on the information point's assistance, but at the very least, my existence has meaning. I've finally figured out what I want. Thanks to the assistance of a social worker who spoke my own language and was sensitive to cultural differences." B participant

"I've been in Espoo for a year. I have five children as a single mother. I just know a few words of Finnish and am unable to manage on my own. When I learned about the Information Point, my life changed. I receive assistance in many aspects of daily life. The fact that the social counsellor speaks Arabic is quite essential. In my own tongue, I can speak and express myself. She understands me and does her hardest to help me." E participant

I am given advice and assistance, which makes me feel really joyful and empowered. I'm not embarrassed to seek for assistance. I feel heard, and the social counselor guides and advises me on how to improve my life. I want to finish my studies, and I've received all the help I need to do so! Now I feel as though my life has a meaning, and the language barrier will not deter me. I'm working hard to learn Finnish and will apply to trade school and, why not, university later." E participant

The participants felt confused about being in a new country. However, it was observed that they received help that supported their aspirations to find a meaning for leaving their countries. One of the participants felt empty due to a lack of employment.

However, she said that the social counsellor at the information point offered her support and took her through the usually followed process to gain employment. The clients of the immigration point were encouraged to continue making plans for their future. Such a strategy left the immigrants hopeful about the future.

9.5 Accomplishment

The PERMA model's final component is achievement (Seligman, 2011). Participants stated that it took them several months of sessions before they realized they had accomplished something positive.

“Professionals are very patient at the information point because they not only assisted me, but they also taught me simple things that have had a beneficial impact on my life. I can now do things on my own, such as apply for social benefits or read and write emails, something I could never accomplish before”B participant

“I truly feel self-sufficient. I learned how to research information and apply for social assistance. My life has transformed, and I no longer feel embarrassed in front of my family, particularly my children”A participant

« The information point provided me with a great deal of assistance. It's a wonder that I obtained a job. I applied for jobs approximately two years ago but was unsuccessful. I learned how to be patient, work hard, and be active till my goal came true at the information point » E participant

The participants felt that the information point was instrumental in helping them realize they would achieve their goals in life. For instance, individuals aspiring to advance their education and career were encouraged visionary because their new home offered such opportunities. The majority of people felt satisfied with how they were treated, and the measures undertaken to solve challenging aspects in their lives. They felt they had started achieving their goals of having a better and a more meaningful life.

10 Summary of the results

The participants' profiles varied, but the results revealed that they had comparable experiences at the immigration information point. We were able to investigate the clients' experiences using the five parts of the PERMA positive psychology model.

Furthermore, the findings of the empirical data collected revealed that parts of the PERMA model are key components of life happiness and satisfaction, as well as playing a critical role in maintaining well-being.

The participants were able to feel pleased, create positive relationships, feel engaged, have significance in their life, and feel a feeling of accomplishment as a result of the support they received at the information point. Everyone had a different experience, but they all agreed that the love and guidance they received made them feel good. This encouraged them to consider the future in a positive light. They were more involved and set goals for the future because of their happiness and contentment. Finding meaning in their lives, they believed, provided them a feeling of purpose and connected them to Finnish culture.

These findings are backed up by a study by Samarasinghe and Arvidsson (2002), which highlighted the detrimental impacts of a lack of assistance and guidance on newcomers and found that immigrants who felt alienated, unwelcomed, and marginalized suffered from mental health problems and instability.

The attendees expressed anxiety about whether the information point would be open indefinitely. They stated that they feel reliant on others and that they are not prepared to go it alone. For them, the information center is a safe haven where they can maintain their well-being and get help when they need it. This raised the question of whether happiness is sufficient for immigrants to feel independent and capable of solving their daily problems on their own in the future.

The Act on Immigrant Integration's goal is to assist immigrants in adjusting to Finnish society and culture so that they can participate equally in society's operations. Participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the integration strategy when it was implemented. They couldn't learn Finnish and couldn't find a job where they could study and practice it. Espoo must assess the achievement of its integration plan and work diligently to improve its integration into Finnish society.

11 Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to learn more about the clients' experiences at the immigrant information center. To allow participants to express themselves more freely, a semi-structured qualitative study conducted through interviews was required. Because

discussing personal experiences is such a sensitive subject, the interviews were conducted one at a time.

The participants were able to discuss their experiences and offer their opinions about the information point's service. Positive emotions, positive relationships, involvement, significance, and successes, according to the data collected, were the primary aspects that increased the participants' wellbeing. The five elements were noted in all five interviews. However, it is crucial to note that obtaining all of the factors that enhance the well-being of immigrants is frequently difficult (Prilleltensky 2008).

Even though participants expressed pleasure with their experiences at the information point, further initiatives and projects supporting the dependency of immigrants of all ages and origins should be considered. Maintaining a communication between immigrants and the city of Espoo is critical. The results of this study came from interviews with five information point clients. As a result, the findings cannot be taken to reflect the experiences of all information point clients. Further research is needed to better understand the needs of Espoo's immigrants.

The research involved exploring experiences that immigrants go through in other countries. The analysis showed that countries have different immigration policies. However, there are common aspects that affect immigrants in all regions. Immigrants experience challenges living in a new country and interacting with foreigners. The language barrier is a significant challenge limiting immigrants from interacting well in new countries. However, the increased development has facilitated interpreters who can help people communicate effectively. Immigration information centers play a vital role in helping immigrants remain positive. The application of the Perma model has facilitated exploring how immigrants' well-being can be promoted. However, further research is necessary to observe a larger sample and understand measures that can be embraced to support immigrants.

12 Discussion

Immigrants' well-being is a vital attribute that should be observed in every nation. People migrate for various reasons, and Espoo has received a significant number of immigrants of all manners yearly. As established by Stenberg and Airas (2021), the information point for immigrants facilitates a framework for streamlining operations for immigrants by ensuring their well-being.

The Perma model has been used on various occasions to explore the psychological needs of people. The approach applied is to understand the positive emotions, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment. The results of this research show that it is possible to improve the well-being of immigrants by considering their needs and facilitating a suitable environment for transitioning. Emotional imbalance can contribute to difficulties in settling in a new environment.

Mental problems can create more challenges when trying to help immigrants settle. The majority of immigrants felt that there was a need to ensure interaction with the locals to facilitate positive emotional outcomes. Immigrants are usually worried about the uncertainties of being in a new country. Interaction can be delayed by the language barrier, which is vital for expressing oneself when seeking help. The problems facing immigrants differ globally. However, it is vital to note that most of the challenges are the same due to the human nature of adaptation. Applying this research can help develop a global theoretical framework for immigrants' well-being.

The research has met the major goal by applying semi-structured interviews to understand the experiences of immigrants and the services they receive at the hands of the immigration center. The volunteers were confident that the immigration information center played a significant role in facilitating their well-being. The application of the qualitative approach provided a platform for exploring a cultural phenomenon that can be solved by embracing humanity to help immigrants overcome psychological challenges.

The research can be relied upon because it embraced ethical standards and explored different aspects affecting immigrants' psychological well-being. However, the research is limited because it did not cover many regions globally. Therefore, a holistic approach to supporting the psychological aspects of immigrants can be achieved after expanding the sample and including quantitative analysis for valuable statistical data for planning in the future. When adjusting to a new culture, immigrants have a great need to feel competent, but they require a lot of knowledge to comprehend and get over these gaps because of variations in culture, language, and social precepts. The fulfilment of these informational demands aids in the immigrant's integration into their new environment and society (Shoham & Strauss, 2007, 2008). They need both a feeling of competence and a sense of belonging. They could adjust to their new life more easily if they integrate into the community. For persons adjusting to a new environment, access to information and the capacity to analyse and use it in everyday life are essential. Information service providers should comprehend the demands of the clients in order to offer services more successfully.

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Interview Questions translated from Arabic into English

Interview Questions translated from Arabic into English

1-Positive Emotions

How would you describe your feelings towards the services offered in the Information point?

2-Engagement

How would you describe your engagement at the information point?

3-Positive Relationships

How would you describe your relationship with the personnel of the Information point?

4-Meaning

Does your visit to the Information point give different meanings to your life?

5-Accomplishment

Did you achieve any positive results after your visit at the Information point?

6-Do you want to say anything else?