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Exploring Strategies to Facilitate Employment of Foreign Talents in Kainuu Region

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Abstract

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The projected municipal workforce in the Kainuu region indicates a future shortage of workers, and this shortage is already being observed in various industries across the region. This can potentially impact economic productivity and growth; therefore, proactive measures to address workforce challenges, attract talent, and ensure sustainable economic and social development are required.

Focusing on the foreign talents already in the region, specifically international students, this study investigates the approaches employed by employers in the Kainuu region who have recruited foreign talents and identifies areas where support is needed. In-depth interviews were conducted to gather data, focusing on the experiences of companies in recruiting foreigners and the role of government administrative bodies and higher institutions in facilitating their employment. The findings were developed in a workshop, resulting in further recommendations.

The study reveals that employers predominantly source foreign talents from the higher institution in the region, which has a considerable number of international students. In doing this, the employers prioritize positive attitudes towards work and interest in the company.

It identifies perceptions, attitudes, and work-related difficulties as key barriers preventing some employers from exploring foreign hires. However, a change in attitude, effective job planning, and orientation programs can help alleviate these challenges.

According to the employers, the students exhibited good working morale and were able to integrate, allowing the employers to build a workforce familiar with the company's culture and practices, and facilitating language learning on both sides.

The research underscores the importance of partnerships with KAMK and continued support from the ELY Center and contributes to addressing the employment challenges in the region, offering valuable insights for improving the recruitment of foreign talents. As its development outcome, it provides a handbook that serves as an employer's guide to hiring foreign talents.

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List of Symbols

ELY- Centre for Economic Development, Transport, and the Environment (ELY Center)
Elinkeino, Liikenne ja Ympäristökeskus, (ELY-keskus)

KAMK- Kajaani Ammattikorkeakoulu (Kajaani University of Applied Sciences)

HCT- Human capital Theory

HRM-Human Resource Management

TM-Talent Management

EEO- Equal Employment Opportunities

NAF- Newness, Appeal, and Feasibility

1 Introduction

Fueled by the emerging megatrends, drive for globalization and internationalization of businesses along with trends such as increased labor mobility and its accompanying benefits of diverse experiences and skills, the future of work is evolving and change in organizational practices is imminent. (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2023a, p. 7) There is, however, stiff competition for skilled labor among developed nations as notable labor shortage exists due to reasons ranging from workers preferences for better pay and working conditions, to diminishing participation of aging members of labor force, and non-equal entry into the labor market (Causa et al., 2022 pp. 15–26; OECD, 2023a, pp. 36–37). In addition to governments measures for creating favorable immigration policies and programs, organizations and companies must adapt their hiring practices to meet the changing demands.

Finland faces a decline in its population growth rate with dependency ratio expected to increase to 67.3% by 2040, over its 2021 figure of 62.5% (Clausnitzer, 2022*),* placing it in line with other developed nations in the race for talent. However, in the latest OECD's Talent Attractiveness report (2023b), Finland ranked 15th of the thirty-eight countries reviewed in terms of its attractiveness to highly educated individuals and 18th among university students. The position has been similar across reports from previous years. (Tuccio, 2019, pp. 9–12) This poses a significant threat to the sustainability of business operations and public services.

In a bid to mitigate the adverse effects of labor shortages and create an attractive national brand, the Finnish government as part of its sustainability roadmap has implemented a multi-faceted approach involving the enhancement of labor market matching mechanisms, investing in education and training initiatives, attracting highly skilled international talent, as well as integration and employment of foreign professionals already in Finland. The Ministries of Economic Affairs and Employment, and Education and Culture are coordinating activities towards achieving these objectives of the government. In June 2020, the ministries set up the 'Talent Boost' program to address labor shortages and attract talents to drive the growth and internationalization of Finnish companies and promote research and development in key growth sectors. Other key measures of the program include creating an international recruitment model, prevention of exploitation of foreign labor, and promoting acceptance and diversity in the workplace (Talent Boost, 2022, pp.2–8).

As part of its development plan, the Talent Boost program proposed a roadmap designed to attract skilled immigrants to Finland.(Talent Boost, 2022, p. 10) This roadmap published in 2021, aims to strengthen Finland's reputation as a globally attractive destination for skilled immigrants and their families with specific targets of raising the volume of work-based immigration by the year 2030 towards an overall increase of 50,000 work-based immi-

grants with subsequent annual increase of 10,000 new entrants. The roadmap also aims at a 15,000 increase in education-based immigration by 2030, tripling the existing number of foreign students with an expected employment and stay back retention rate of 75% (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021, pp. 3–21).

Regional participation is essential to ensure the success of this drive for internationalization and labor development as the regional administration has the duty to implement the development tasks of the government (ELY Keskus, 2022a). To key into the national drive, the Kainuu arm of the Centre for Economic Development, Transport, and the Environment, charged with the responsibility of developing regional competitiveness, has participated in several projects and partnered with organizations. Some of the collaborations have been with the TE employment office through its recruitment forum, Rekrykainuu, and Business Finland through programs such as the 'Talent Explorer' funding. This funding provided grants to businesses to ease the risk and cost of internationalization. CSE Simulation Oy, a digital fitness game developer based out of Kajaani, was one of the beneficiaries from Business Finland's Talent Explorer Program. (Business Finland, 2022). The program, however, ended in 2022. The center also collaborates with Kajaani University of Applied sciences (KAMK) as part of its measures for developing regional employment.

However, if employers are unable to identify and absorb foreign talents who are in the region, it draws away from the performance of the plans put in place for development of the foreign workforce.
This study aims at investigate the employers approaches to hiring foreign talents in Kainuu region and identify area of support from data gathered through in-depth interviews.
The research questions (RQ) are designed to answer:

- RQ1: How have companies in the region recruited foreign talent?
- RQ2: What have been the experiences of companies in recruiting foreigners?
- RQ2: How can the government administrative body (ELY Center) and Higher Institution (KAMK) facilitate the employment of foreign talents?

The objective of the study is to provide a guide to hiring foreign talents in the region based on the experiences and suggestions of the employers. These ideas will be brainstormed in a workshop to check the feasibility of the suggestions and further generate ideas.

A review of the workforce projection of the region reveals an impending workforce crisis. In the municipal sector, it is expected that over 3,000 individuals would retire by 2030. However, the number of young individuals enter-

ing the labor market is 500 fewer than the number of retirees. The situation is projected to worsen as it is estimated that the working population would decline by 20% by the year 2040 (Kainuun Liitto, 2022). This demographic shift has already led to a shortage of workers in various professions within the region, resulting in more job openings than available job seekers. (EURES, 2023; Työllisyyskatsaus, 2023).

This forecast underscores the urgency of the situation and signals a need for proactive intervention. Additionally, the researcher's job-seeking experience in the region has motivated the application of learning acquired during the study program to explore the situation through a user-centric approach, with a focus on employers as the user group.

2 Navigating the Employment of Foreign Talents

The employment of foreign talents holds economic importance due to their diverse skills and knowledge, which can address shortages in the local workforce and create opportunities for businesses (Belkhodja 2011, p. 7). This subject has garnered interest from government, project groups, and academic researchers across regions and in the national context.

In line with this, the Uusimaa ELY Center conducted a survey as part of its national project on integration services and immigration processes, collecting information on employers' recruitment experiences. (Taloustutkimus Oy, 2020). The findings revealed that four out of five companies experienced difficulty finding workers, largely due to a lack of workers in the sector. The research also reviewed employers' experiences with the use of immigrants as a solution to the labor sourcing problem. Challenges in recruitment included language skills, culture adaptation, work experience, and competencies. Notably, some employers expressed willingness to provide on-the-job training to address these challenges.

At the regional level, the Kainuu ELY Center conducted its own research, which revealed a severe labor shortage situation in the region and emphasized the need for foreign workers to meet the demand (Spring House, 2023). Companies in the region showed a willingness to recruit foreign workers but had a preference for those already in the region, such as international students and individuals who had moved for humanitarian reasons. Similar to the results from the national survey, language skills were identified as a challenge; however, employers are actively seeking solutions to address this issue. A more pressing challenge is the lack of familiarity with the process and uncertainty about where to find support.

Several studies have been conducted by academic researchers, approaching the issue from different perspectives. One such study is the thesis work conducted by Onwutalobi (2019), which examines how the employment situation can be improved, focusing on international graduates from Finland. Language barriers, lack of a host country network, and discrimination were identified as challenges in the process. The study provides improvement suggestions for international graduates, employers, Finnish higher education institutions, and the government. Recommendations include building networks and acquiring problem-solving skills for students, providing internships, mentoring, and language training for employers, and improving career services and networking opportunities for higher education institutions. The government is also encouraged to provide pathways to ensure the hiring of international graduates.

In a separate study conducted by Vehreävesa (2021), the focus was on the challenges and opportunities of recruiting foreigners from abroad to sparsely populated areas. The study underscores the importance of providing support to foreign professionals and their families in order to attract and retain them. Language skills were identified as a critical requirement for effective interactions, and employers have shown their support by offering language study opportunities. The study also provides practical recommendations for support in areas such as housing, immigration processing, language learning, and promoting the value of international talents to enhance cross-cultural interaction. It further recommends that companies recognize different needs and provide opportunities for supporting the professional development of foreign workers. It also emphasizes the government's responsibility in defining the framework for international recruitment through immigration policies and support for businesses. Although the research focus was on recruitment from abroad, employers communicated interest in hiring foreign talents, with a specific interest in international students.

Zafar and Ahola (2022, pp. 78–80) conducted a study examining employers' willingness to cooperate with academic institutions and projects to aid employment. The findings showed that only a few firms were willing to cooperate, primarily when they could receive clear advantages. The results also indicated that language skills were highly valued by employers, along with concerns about occupational safety, work culture, and responsibility.

However, only a few studies have attempted to bridge the gap between job-seeking immigrants and employers. One approach to address this is through practical projects that cater to the needs of employers. KAMK, through the KOTKA project, assists employers who aim to internationalize their business by offering a system to explore market opportunities. The project identifies challenges such as financial and human resources, international experiences, cultural differences, and regulatory barriers, and provides support to overcome some of these obstacles. For example, by leveraging the institution's international connections and the networks of its international students, they can manage the challenges of international experience and cultural differences. This fosters a collaborative relationship between companies in the region, international students, and the institution. For companies, it offers limited risks, a safe learning environment, research opportunities, and the chance to contribute to the professional development of students who can subsequently transit to full time roles. The project has achieved success in providing fresh perspectives on challenges and also creates opportunities to develop new recruitment methods (Widerman & Komulainen, 2022, pp. 23–32).

Viljamaa et al. (2022) submitted a report on the Open Life Project, which aimed to improve job seekers' employment opportunities and suggested measures for employers to enhance workplace inclusiveness. The project offered practical methods and tools to identify competence across different literacy groups and individual cases.

Some of these included interpretation of interviews conducted, where respondents communicated their skills verbally. Tools such as EU skills profile tool, skillLab, preference card (Mieltymysmittari), and competence cards (Bertelsmann Stiftung competence cards, Baana project 54 picture cards), helped identify users' skills on various levels, regardless of their experience and education. This facilitated the identification of hard skills based on education, transferable skills suitable for different sectors, and soft skills related to character traits. Some of the tools also provided additional features, allowing applicants to self-access their skills and generate a CV based on the skills identified. These tools proved valuable for the project team in career guidance, as they identified areas requiring training and aided in skill mapping. Through this process, migrants became aware of their skills and learned to value them. The project also provided a service map that outlined relevant services for immigrants, recognizing that they may lack social networks and job search resources. For employers, the project offered practical tools to identify talent's skills and plan for orientation. Although the research focused on refugees, the suggestions are applicable to all immigrant groups.

Despite these efforts, there is little research that shows evidence of solutions that starts from the view point of the employers. To address this gap and contribute to the existing knowledge, this research prioritizes the employers' perspectives as the starting point for addressing the employment of foreign talents.

The next section of this chapter provides an overview of foreign talent by examining various definitions associated with the term, and clarifies its specific focus within the context of this research. It then presents a situational analysis of foreign national employment in the country, drawing on previous research conducted in this area. Additionally, the chapter introduces the Human Capital Theory (HCT), which highlights the economic significance of individuals, and establishes a connection to human resource management (HRM) as the framework for recognizing, harnessing, and effectively managing talents. The discussion explores how HRM practices can be adapted to the recruitment process of skilled immigrants, creating a framework that addresses the research question of improving hiring practices for foreign talents and providing guidance for companies aiming to enhance their recruitment strategies. Furthermore, the chapter examines the Triple Helix model as an application of HCT, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and knowledge-sharing among governments, educational institutions, and businesses as crucial drivers of regional development. This justification leads to an investigation of the supportive role of government and higher institutions in the research. The framework is visually represented in Figure 1.

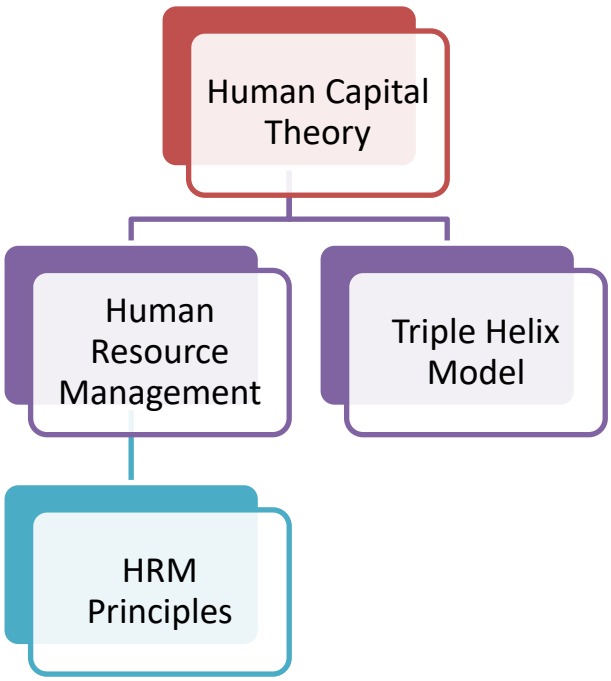

Figure 1 Research Framework

2.1 Who is a foreign talent?

The term 'Talent' is subject to several assumptions which have influenced its meaning depending on the dimension from which it is being addressed. Dries, (2013, p. 276) defined talent along the lines of value and uniqueness where value is the potential contribution to an organization's core competence, while uniqueness refers to how easily a resource can be replaced or replicated. Talent can also be linked to level of expertise but with a focus on the subject; describing who the talent is, in which case talent according to Al Ariss (2014) refers to 'individuals with high levels of human or social capital' (p. 238).

The scope of the definition of talent has been considered to either encompass all employees of a company where it is implied that every employee is talented, or to have a limited focus where the term describes a select few with high potential (Al-Ariss 2014, pp. 177). This conforms with the categorization of talents based on two assumptions, the first being that talent is exclusive which suggests that only a few people are talented while the inclusive assumption considers talent to be either innate or learnable (Meyers et al, 2019, p. 2). The exclusive ap-

proach is contextual insinuating that what is considered as talent at one point may not be considered as talent in another case. (Crowley &Al-Ariss, 2018, p. 2066)

In Finland, the approach to talent is more inclusive approach, as is evident in its education system. Learning is customized to meet individual needs, employing differentiation to accommodate students' requirements and promoting independent decision-making. The instructor plays a significant role in coordinating the design of this process, while the individuals themselves are responsible for their activities. This approach may also extend to the workplace, where employers consider and nurture talents in a similar manner (Tirri, 2021, p. 3).

The ambiguity in defining talent has also been extended to the definition of foreign talent, making it difficult to identify a specific definition. The label has been used interchangeably with international talent and global talent when referring to nationals from other countries. However, understanding the term clearly is essential to defining who the target audience is in recruiting this talent group. While literature on international recruitment is largely focused on process and management practices without specifically defining the term, considering the contextual meaning may aid in clarifying the meaning of foreign talent as it often comes up in discussions on international recruitment.

In the Finnish context, international recruitment is described in the government's publications and guides such as the International Recruitment Guide. In the guide, Korhonen & Malo (2021) described the concept as 'the recruitment of foreign nationals who arrive in Finland from abroad or are already living in Finland' (p. 5). A foreign talent can thus be inferred to mean a skilled national from other countries who will move to or have moved to Finland. To build on the discussion of foreign talent, it is important to discuss the related concepts of migrant workers.

A Migrant has been described as a person with a foreign citizenship or who is foreign born (United Nations [UN] 2023, p. 1), while a migrant worker refers to 'all international migrants who are currently employed or are unemployed and seeking employment in their present country of residence' (International Labour Migration [ILO], 2015, xi & p. 28). Migrants' skills have been ranked in three groups according to their levels of education. Those with a primary education are considered to be low-skill migrants, having three to six years of secondary education places them at 'intermediary skill-level', and those with university degrees are considered 'high-skill'. The definition of high skill may be further extended to include vocational, technical, or professional qualifications. Another approach to defining this may be according to level of wages, with high skilled migrants ranking in top tier (Chaloff & Lemaitre 2009, pp. 4 &11). Contributing to the definition, skilled migrants or qualified migrants as described by Cerdin, Diné & Brewster (2013, p. 151), are university educated people who have moved abroad to

work on a permanent basis. This definition separates skilled migrants from self-initiated expatriates with a major difference being their intended duration of stay abroad.

For the scope of this research, the term foreign talent is used in reference to skilled migrants or foreign nationals who are already in the region with a focus on international students. International students have increasingly been recognised as a valuable group for nations seeking to attract and retain skilled workers. Through study migration, they are admitted to study and may subsequently transit to reside permanently, providing a flexible skilled migration pathway to attract foreign talents. Hawthorne (2018) makes a case has for their human capital competencies naming them an 'adjunct workforce in waiting' (p. 2). They are perceived as having the potential to contribute to economic competiveness and foster creativity within host community as they bring with them intercultural skills and networks, and their decision to study abroad as an indicator of their drive and capability for social and economic integration (Belkhodja 2011, p. 7; Mayer et al., 2012, p. 12–14).

This research focuses on international students as foreign talents as they are included in the scope of Finland's attraction model (Talent Boost 2022, p. 2), as they are more likely to integrate into the labour market, and are seen as part of the solution to aging population problems and can be used to address the gap created by regional outward workforce migration (Belkhodja 2011, p. 7).

However, going by the exclusive approach considered earlier in the definition of talent, internationally qualified migrants who have not had the opportunity to acquire certain skill sets in their host countries may not be considered as talent, this has been argued to be unfavorable to skilled migrants (Crowley &Al-Ariss, 2018, p. 2066). It becomes pertinent to consider how to manage these resources, showing employers how to derive value from them. This is explored in the talent management subsection.

2.2 Employment of Foreigners in Finland

Securing employment is often viewed as a crucial aspect of immigrants' integration into the society (Nshom, Sadaf, & Khalimzoda 2022,). At the same time, firms benefit from the economic viability and diversity that comes with hiring immigrants. Despite these advantages, many immigrants face challenges in finding suitable employment.

The Official statistics of Finland (2023) report presents the current employment situation of foreigners in Finland (see Table 1) where it shows that the employment rate of foreigners declined by 16.7% while unemployment rate increased by 18.7% despite the overall decrease in the country's unemployment rates.

FOREIGNERS' EMPLOYMENT SITUATION AT THE END OF 2023 FEBRUARY (I) AND
ACTIVITIES OF EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICES DURING FEBRUARY (II)
WHOLE COUNTRY

I EMPLOYMENT SITUATION AT THE END OF MONTH	Feb-23	Feb-22	CHANGE NUMBER	CHANGE %
A. JOBSEEKERS				
1. Unemployed jobseekers	35 548	29 947	5 601	18,7
of whom fully laid off	3 155	3 177	-22	-0,7
2. On reduced working week	443	582	-139	-23,9
3. Those who have work	16 263	19 515	-3 252	-16,7
of which in full-time work	10 220	17 686	-7 466	-42,2
of which in part-time work	4 069	0	4 069	0,0
of whom employed through employment services	1 974	1 829	145	7,9
4. Persons outside the labour force	31 865	29 143	2 722	9,3
of whom in services promoting employment	2 807	2 602	205	7,9
of whom in training	27 022	24 287	2 735	11,3
1-4 Total of jobseekers	**84 119**	**79 187**	**4 932**	**6,2**

Table 1 OSF Employment Bulletin 2023, Foreigner's Summary Table

The employment challenges of foreigners have been attributed to integration barriers such as lack of knowledge of the labour market operations, networks, familiarity with public service, country of birth, quality of education received, and host country language. In addition to these commonly cited factors, an often-neglected element that may explain the challenges experienced by immigrants involves the reasons for migration as it plays a crucial role in labour market outcome. Migrants who relocate as expatriates are perceived as skilled and already have a job on arrival, positively impacting the employment outlook of foreigners in the country. However, the case may differ for other categories such as students, those who have relocated for family reunification, and especially for humanitarian refugees (Forsander 2003, p. 57; OECD, 2015, p. 53–57). Reviewing the labour market outcome of countries that operate a structured immigration selection system like the United States and Canada against those with a policy of admitting a substantial proportion of humanitarian migrants such as Sweden, demonstrates the level of impact migration process may have on employment situation of foreigners. In addition, the labor market outcomes of immigrants are shaped by the economic conditions and industrial organization prevailing in their host countries. Thus, it is apparent that the employment or unemployment of immigrants is closely linked to the broader macroeconomic and labor market contexts of their respective countries of residence (Saukkonen, 2017).

Figure 2 is the outcome of UTH's (2014) survey showing main reasons for immigration to Finland among working population with foreign background based on immigrants' own reasons for coming to Finland. The report shows that those who moved to work make up only 24% of the population of foreigners in Finland with those who

moved for family reasons taking up the largest share of 42%. This may account for the large numbers of unemployed foreigners in the country (Forsander, 2003, pp. 56–57).

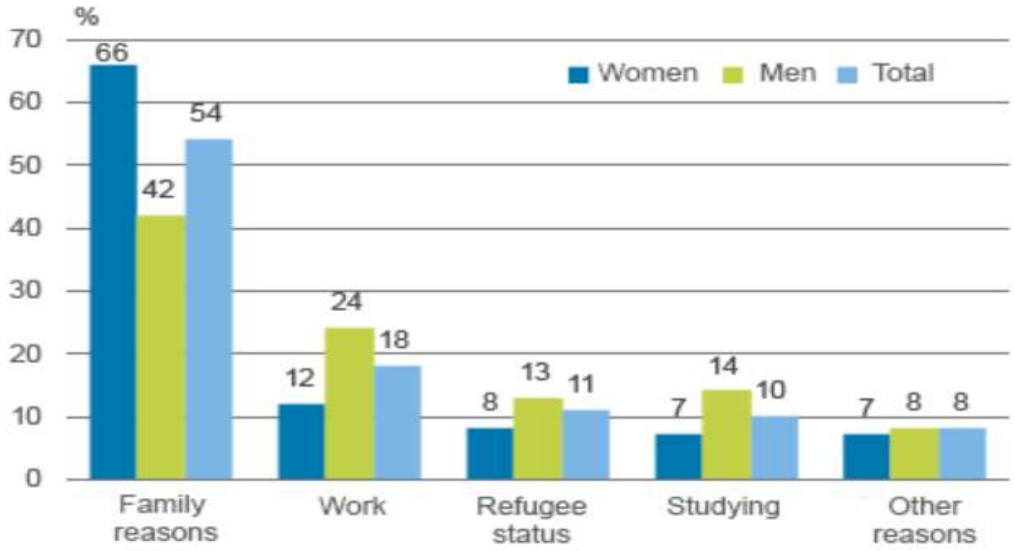

Figure 2 UTH Survey, 2014

The Finnish labor market presents other challenges, particularly for immigrants with non-European names. Bruun (2021) identifies recruitment discrimination as a significant factor that affects employment prospects. Recruitment discrimination involves unfair treatment of individuals in the recruitment process based on their ethnicity, nationality, race, age, gender, or other differentiating factors. This observation is supported by Ahmad's (2020, 468–496) study, which provided quantitative evidence of recruitment discrimination where callback rates of job seekers from four different nationalities were measured in comparison to their Finnish counterparts, all with equivalent qualifications. The findings indicate that Finnish job seekers have a greater likelihood of securing employment, and within foreign groups, European applicants are more likely to secure a job while non-European job seekers face comparatively reduced opportunities.

While the government seeks to develop measures to address the issues, it is important to examine the viewpoints of the individuals who hold decision-making power in the recruitment process, the employers, to gain insight into the dynamics that influence the recruitment of foreign talent. Adopting this approach enables a more thorough exploration of the factors that impact the hiring practices and facilitates the development of effective strategies to enhance the recruitment of skilled immigrants as employers play a major role in the occupational

diversification of Finland and can promote the receptiveness of the society and influence the future of employment.

2.3 Human Capital Theory

The human capital theory (HCT) views individuals as invaluable assets that can provide long term competitive advantage with proper management. (Simarmata, 2020, pp. 192–196) It is essential to examine the tenets of the theory and demonstrate its contribution to human resource management.

The description of human capital as the economic benefits of education to the individual who attains it and society at large was developed by Gary Becker in 1964, and laid the ground for research in the area (Teixeira, 2014, pp. 2–5). Individuals' talents, knowledge, abilities, training, experiences, and other intangible assets are referred to as human capital. These individual assets collectively make up an organization's human capital, which can be a crucial resource for differentiating future performance (King, 2015 p. 273). Human resources on the other hand describe the human factors responsible for these skills, that is, the individuals who possess them. (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014, p. 4).

Human capital theory (HCT) forms the basis of major organizational approaches to talent management (Crowley-Henry & Al Ariss, 2018, 2071). Covering broad aspects of recruitment and employee engagement, human capital theory suggests that investment in human capital is essential to individual's productivity and organizations competitive advantage. It also demonstrates the importance of identifying candidates with relevant education and promotes professional learning (Pasban & Hosseinzadeh 2016, pp. 250 –251).

The theory is founded on two core assumptions; first that individual's human capital comprising of educational and professional experience determines their place in the labor market thus, translating to high earning power and professional prospects such as choice of career paths for individuals with high human capital levels. Likely drawing on the theory of rational choice, it further assumes that individuals engage in actions based on a rational assessment of potential benefits and costs, and that all social behavior can be explained through an economic lens. The second assumption is that organizations productivity and competitiveness is enhanced by hiring people with high levels of human capital (Waxin, Ariss, & Zhao 2019, p. 7). This implies that when all has been done, a resource should be employed based on merit.

While HCT highlights the value of individual talents, its assumptions have come under criticism for being generic and non-encompassing as it fails to consider other factors such as social and cultural influence, especially in relation to skilled migrants that affect the individual's potential position in the labor market and motivations for action, as well as the relative importance of capital based on the extent to which employers value human capital (Waxin, Ariss, & Zhao, 2019, pp. 7–8). HCT perceives talents as ready to go resources and this influences organizations expectations for immediate outcome. In comparison to locals, skilled migrants may be perceived as requiring additional investment due to factors such as language proficiency, professional experience, and cultural differences. As a result, their human capital may have a slower return on investment compared to local employees. Skilled migrants may experience vulnerability, underemployment, and difficulty accessing local networks and cultural adaptation, which could stifle their career progress and contribute to reduced human capital outcomes for their organizations in the short term (Crowley-Henry & Al Ariss, 2018, p. 2058). These factors may explain why skilled migrants' human capital potential is often neglected.

Despite these criticisms, HCT has been widely used in literature discussing the employment of skilled migrants (Almeida et al, 2015 p. 3). This may be due to the insights it provides in understanding the value of individual talents as it addresses critical questions related to organizational performance and productivity. The theory emphasizes that an organization's human capital is a crucial resource that can significantly impact its success. It also highlights the importance for organizations to attract, develop, and retain employees with the necessary skills and knowledge, which can be achieved through effective talent management strategies. This involves investing in recruitment and training programs, promoting professional development, and creating a positive work culture that fosters learning and growth. Applying the principles of human capital theory provides a direction for human resource management as organizations can better understand the value of their human resources and develop effective strategies for attracting, retaining, and developing skilled employees. This, in turn, can lead to improved organizational performance, increased productivity, and a more positive workplace culture (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014, p. 70).

2.4 Human Resource Management

Human Resource Management (HRM) is an organizational function which deals with recruitment, management, and direction of its people (Mensah, 2020, p. 2), it extends beyond administrative practices and contributes to achieving organization's strategic objectives, serving as the framework through which organizations and firms manage and engage their people (Collings et al., 2019 p. 3).

Differing perspectives on how HRM should be approached have emerged. Beer et al., (2015, pp. 427–438) outline two models originally discussed in the foundational literature published in 1984 by Beer and Spector: the Harvard model and Michigan model. The models discuss new insights in employee management, turning away from personnel management which emphasized administrative processes appraised based on short term value and minimal cost, to human resource management which highlights the role of employees as human and social capital with a long-term focus on value creation.

These models, however, differ in their outlook and serve as the major approaches to HRM. The Harvard model, developed by Michael Beer and his co-authors, also termed the soft approach, emphasizes the importance of aligning HR policies with organizational strategy while treating employees as valuable assets who contribute to organizational success through their commitment, adaptability, and quality. It also takes into account the existence of other stakeholders such as trade unions, government, community, and management. It has been argued that this model minimizes the impact of pay on productivity and motivation, and any benefits that might flow from giving employees a genuine say in the running of the enterprise (Collings et al., 2019 p. 2; Aloumedjo, 2018. p. 76). In contrast, the Michigan model, developed by Fombrun, Tichy, and Devanna (1984) also referred to as the hard model, sides with the needs of shareholders, focusing on the selection and deployment of human resources to achieve organizational objectives. This model stresses the importance of job analysis and design, training, and development, and performance management and sees employees as a means to an end. Critics argue that the Michigan model is overly mechanical and ignores the human dimension of managing people (Collings et al., 2019 pp. 2-4 secondary citation; Beer et al., 2015. p. 429).

The models are further differentiated by factors that can impact an organizations HR policy with the Harvard model considering external factors which may comprise laws, societal values, and business condition; internal factors such as previous management decisions and history, like the characteristics of the workforce and task technology; and factors related to the overall business strategy and management philosophy while the Michigan model examines the organizations structure, mission and strategy as internal factors with cultural, economic, and political factors serving as external influences (Beer et al., 2015, p. 430).

Considering these factors results in several adjoining concepts which fall under the scope of HRM and further impacts its practices. These concepts include equal opportunity and diversity management which fall under the scope of legal requirements, occupational practice, environmental or organizational impacts.

Equal employment opportunity (EEO) is an ethical requirement in HRM which refers to the fair or non-discriminatory treatment of individuals in all employment related activities (Mensah, 2020, p. 61). It requires that

selection decisions are not biased on the grounds of sexual orientation, race age, or disability. (Armstrong 2006, p. 150) These definitions align with the standard set by the International labour organization (The Discrimination [Employment and Occupation] Convention, 1958: Article 1 & 3) which prohibits employment or occupational discrimination based on factors such as race, color, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, or social origin. The convention requires member nations to take appropriate measures to promote and enforce the outlined policies within their countries. These measures include seeking cooperation from employers' and workers' organizations, enacting relevant legislation and educational programs, and modifying administrative instructions. To emphasize the importance, member countries are expected to report annually on the actions taken and the outcomes achieved in implementing the policy. It is thus important that employers pay heed to this in their recruitment practices.

Diversity management is a concept that works together with EEO as it works towards eliminating bias in recruitment and managing employees. It is described by Armstrong (2006, p. 151) as a concept that recognizes the benefits to be gained from differences. However, while equal opportunity aims to legislate against discrimination, diversity management seeks to ensure that people are assimilated into the organization, by acknowledging their differences and demonstrating how the organizations value these differences.

These factors and concepts that influence of HRM practices as well as the companies needs for human capital has resulted in the need for a unique approach to manage talents. In this regard, Collings & Mellahi (2010, p. 304) proposed the adoption of a specialized human resource management approach to attract, engage, develop, and retain talent involving a methodical identification of roles and talents, as well as the development of potentials.

2.4.1 Best HRM Practices for Foreign Talent Acquisition

Although the human capital theory may be limited in its conceptualization, its principles which identify humans as assets provide relevant grounds for human resource management, a concept concerned with how people are employed and managed in organizations (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014).

HRM involves different strategies and practices such as recruitment, selection, and training which have been considered to impact upon the respective skills and human capital of their employees. Companies can thus enhance their performance and key into the benefits of a diverse workforce by reviewing their HRM strategies and practices in relation to skilled migrants (Crowley &Al-Ariss, 2018, p. 2063).

Waxin, Al Ariss, & Zhao (2019, p. 9) agree on the impact of organizational practices in identifying and retaining talents and suggested the following four HRM practices to aid the employment of skilled migrants. These practices are regular HR practices which can be adapted to suit the needs of the foreign workforce.

1. Development of an inclusive culture

The authors suggest that organizations may be able to improve their attractiveness to skilled migrants by demonstrating their willingness to recruit from this group. This can be made evident in the organization's HR goals, culture, and effective communication of its diversity commitment to its employees, partners, and other key stakeholders, and management accountability. This means that the organization must have a plan in place for recruiting, retaining, and developing employees from diverse backgrounds. This could include setting targets for the recruitment of specific minority groups, providing training and development opportunities for designated employees, creating a supportive environment that encourages diversity and inclusion, and developing an employee value proposition.

2. Proactive and differentiated staffing practices.

Organizations tend to design competency frameworks to reflect familiar experiences and expectations without giving consideration to the diverse pool of applicants. (Almeida et al, 2015, pp. 3–5) Conscious efforts is required in designing job criteria to focus on the key requirements impacting the performance of the job as against emphasis on requirements such as host country experience which may prevent qualified foreigner from being employed. Internal and external recruitment strategies also come in handy where internal career sites, databases and referral are developed and encouraged to create awareness for job openings and give staff opportunity to suggest qualified candidates who may normally not have access to the roles. Publication of job openings in foreign languages or directly targeting this group of job seekers by reaching out to them has also been recommended (Waxin, Al Ariss, & Zhao, 2019, p. 10).

3. Facilitating the integration of skilled Migrants

Developing organizational integration policies can ease the integration process. The scope of these policies can cover the employee's organizational adaptation needs as well as administrative issues such as applying for residency or work permits, obtaining a driver's license, insurance, and finding accommodation. Adapting to the job requires an orientation program, a mentoring system, and a supportive system of supervisor and colleagues (Waxin, Al Ariss, & Zhao, 2019, pp. 10–11).

4. Training, development, and career support

Furthermore, the social and psychological contract between employer and employee is often more important than financial rewards in retaining and engaging highly mobile employees. Thus, investing in training, development, career advising, and fair treatment can help improve retention and engagement of skilled migrants and other diverse employees (Waxin, Al Ariss, & Zhao F. 2019, p. 11).

2.4.2 Talent Management of Skilled Migrants

The McKinsey Company (1998), coined the phrase 'war of talent' explaining the challenges companies face in attracting and retaining talents and emphasized the need for talent management to surmount these challenges (Chambers et al, 1998, pp. 47–57).

Several approaches have since been developed by practitioners in the management of talents. (Pfeffer, 2001, pp. 248–259) This may be because of varying conceptualizations of the topic as it is often defined in terms of user's own objectives such as recruitment, workforce planning, succession, strategy, or leadership development with talent management often used as a substitute term for human resource management (Lewis & Heckman, 2006, pp. 139–141).

Understanding these approaches to talent management calls for a review of how human resource practitioners and organizational decision makers view talent and how their talent mindset affects or may influence their selection and management. One common approach to talent management addresses the distribution of talents as either exclusive which involves identifying key roles and finding suitably high performers to fill those roles (Al Ariss, 2014, pp 15–20) versus the inclusive approach which promotes the development of employees work related skills based on their individual talents. (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013, pp. 294–295)

Due to initial adaptation issues, the human capital outcomes of skilled migrants may not be immediately obvious and may explain why they are yet to be recognized as talents in the talent management (TM) process of organizations, but it is important to look at these talents with a long-term approach. In the long run, they are able to adapt and become useful resources and impact positively on the overall employer brand of the business, demonstrating the company's values and ability to adapt, also by creating new opportunities abroad such as in their country of origin or other locations based on their networks. It is to this end that Crowley-Henry & Al Ariss (2018, p. 2063) posits that 'organizations willing to invest over the long term in TM strategies to attract, identify, select,

recruit, develop, and retain skilled migrants are more likely to receive long-term HRM benefits from their efforts resulting from the inherently cross-cultural flexibility and adaptability competences of this workforce grouping'. They go on to propose that in determining their talent pools, organizations should explore the tenets of career capital to understand the motivations of skilled migrants and utilize their competencies. The theory highlights three competencies: knowing-why, knowing-how, and knowing-whom. Knowing-how relates to specific technical or managerial skills, knowing-why relates to understanding personal motivations for career development, and knowing-who refers to networks and social contacts that support careers. (Inkson & Arthur 2001, pp. 51–52) also buttress the need to consider other forms of capital in the management of talents citing cultural and social capital as forms of capital which skilled migrants can bring on.

2.5 Exploring the Triple Helix Model

The triple helix model was first proposed by Henry Etzkowitz and Loet Leydesdorff in the 1990s as a theoretical framework for understanding the changing relationships between universities and industry. Since then, the model has been expanded to include government as a third actor, and has been widely applied in various fields, including science and technology policy, innovation studies, and regional development.

Kinnunen et al., (2018) studied the triple helix collaboration to support regional innovation. They explain the triple helix as a model for analyzing university-industry-government collaborations which studies the dynamics of the relationship and helps to identify barriers and core areas of support. (Kinnunen et al., 2018, Chap. 2) Described the essential ingredients to sustainable development, stating knowledge creation, innovation, vibrant industry, and a functional government as the requirements while the responsible institutions; industry, university and government serve as the key drivers. This highlights the importance of proper coordination and partnership within the helix and consequently proposes that universities be more active in driving innovation and economic development through partnerships with companies and government to generate new methods of producing, transferring, and applying knowledge, suggesting that when the expertise of these three institutions are brought together, it creates potential for economic growth and development (Ranga & Etzkowitz, 2013, p. 238). The triple helix is usually described according to activities between the three participants are conducted, outlining who the driver of the process is as seen in Figure 3.

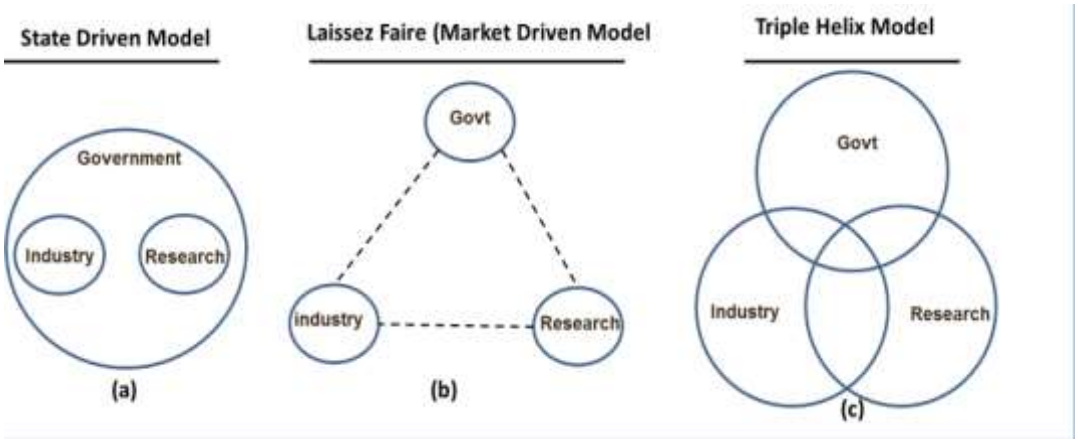

Figure 3 Triple Helix Model (Gatune et al., 2018)

The first structure represents a model focused on central planning, showing a situation where the government sets the pace for university and industry. The drive for collaboration is minimal here as it comes from only one arm. The second structure known as a laissez-faire describes a case where the parties' function independently with minimal coordination. The necessary activities for development may occur, but there is no collaboration as the model focuses on industry as the driver for innovation. While universities provide research, the outcome of is usually not commercialized, and the skills developed may not be relevant to industry's needs. The final structure describes a case of close collaboration between the three actors where the relationships constantly evolve based on the needs and has been named a balanced configuration. As described in the first two structures, the functions were largely independent or heavily reliant on a single institution, but there is now a shift to the third structure which recognizes the interaction among the three actors (Ranga & Etzkowitz, 2013, pp. 238–239).

While discussions on the triple helix model largely center on the importance of collaboration with respect to innovation, its relevance can be applied towards human capital development, identifying the attraction of foreign talent as key focus (Gatune, Deboer, & Mudde, 2018, p. 11). Like the human capital theory which recognizes the contribution of education and training, triple helix promotes knowledge development and recognizes the role of universities and other institutions of higher education in the development of human capital through education and training. It goes on to suggest that with the development of human capital, innovation and economic growth can be enhanced. The model thus recognizes the importance of human capital as a key driver of economic development (Ranga & Etzkowitz, 2013, pp. 238–254).

Extending the relevance of the model, Etzkowitz (2003, p. 299) describe a process termed 'innovation in innovation', which views collaboration in itself as innovative as participants bring different perspectives, resources, competencies, and collaboration which can generate new ideas and solutions to complex problems. This supports

the cooperation of players towards other benefits such as the research focus on solving regional issues around talent sourcing.

As part of the efforts to foster collaboration, Pertuze et al., (2010) conducted a research which evaluated the impact of industry-university collaboration on products, processes, or people. This resulted in best practices which provide guidance for companies on how to maximize the impact of their collaborations with universities. Universities can also draw valuable lessons from these best practices. The strategies include: defining the projects strategic contexts, focusing on in-depth knowledge of technology needed in the field, sharing how the vision can help the companies, investing in long term relationships, establishing strong communication linkage with the university, building broad awareness of the project within the company, and supporting the work internally.

These best practices focus on improving collaboration between academia and industry, which is one of the key components of the Triple Helix Model. By following these best practices, companies can establish more effective partnerships with universities, and improve their processes.

While the focus is on projects, it can also be related to other relationships like employment. The best practices also agree with some of the suggestions raised in the HRM discussion such as investing in long term relationships, thus contributing to the human capital development discussion.

3 The commisioner- ELY Center Kainuu

The Centre for Economic Development, Transport, and the Environment, also known as the ELY Center or ELY Keskus, is a crucial aspect of the government's reformatory project. Established on the 1st of January 2010, it took on the responsibilities of various centers and departments catering to employment and the economy, environment, road and transportation, education, and culture, and merged them into one entity, thus achieving a more streamlined and effective regional administration as the center plays a significant role in overseeing and managing the economic development of its region, promoting sustainable transportation practices, protecting the environment, and ensuring that the population has access to quality education and cultural opportunities while working closely with regional administrative agencies (ELY Keskus, 2010).

Operating across 15 regions, the centers are responsible for coordinating and implementing central government policies within the region. These responsibilities are categorized under three areas: business and industry, labour force competence and cultural activities; transport and infrastructure, and environment and natural resources. However, not all centers handle the three responsibilities as they can rely on other centers to jointly manage some of their activities. Overall, each center promotes competitiveness of its region in trade and industry; they also promote well-being and sustainable development, as well as mitigating climate change (ELY Keskus, 2022a).

The center oversees the activities of the employment offices while its own operations come under the administration of the Ministry of Employment and the economy. It also collaborates with other Ministries serving within the boundaries of its activities, and governmental organizations to implement their objectives (ELY Keskus, 2010; ELY Keskus, 2022a).

The scope of operations of the ELY center Kainuu covers development of business life, employment, rural and environmental issues, and the center actively carries out projects, trainings, and research in these areas to ensure that its objective of enhancing competitiveness and well-being are being met. (ELY Keskus, 2022b).

One of its strategic foci in the 2019 to 2023 period is ensuring that the workforce in the region is quantitatively and qualitatively sufficient (ELY Keskus, 2022c), and steps have been taken to ensure this. The measures are presented in figure 6 and discussed thereafter.

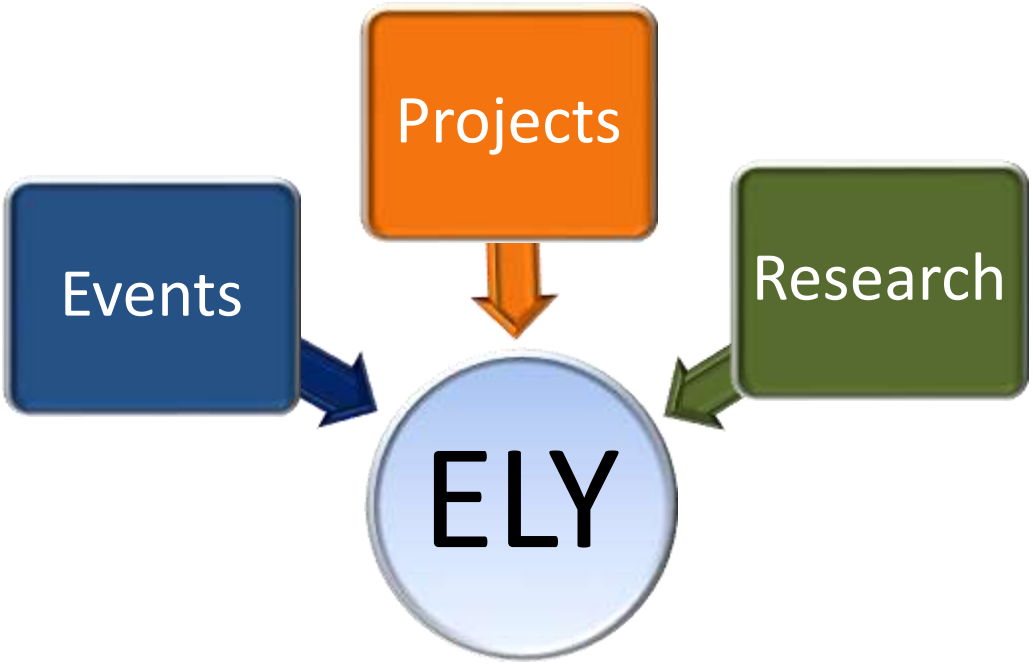

Figure 4 Steps to Achieving ELY's Strategic Focus

1. Events

The center organizes events geared towards improving the availability of skilled labor such as the 'Miten osaavaa työvoimaa sosiaali- ja terveydenhuoltoalalle Kainuuseen.' (How to get a competent workforce for the social and healthcare sector in Kainuu) held in November 2022 in partnership with higher institutions in Kajaani, TE office and other project bodies, and the 'Paikkoja auki, etsitään tekijät! –tilaisuus' held in February which invited representatives across businesses, educational institutions, cities, municipalities, and government administration to brainstorm strategies for attracting skilled workers to the region. (ELY Keskus, n.d). There have also been recruitment fairs such as the 'Töihin Kainuusen' (Work in Kainuu) virtual recruitment event organized by the TE office in February 2023 (TE-Live, 2022).

2. Projects

With funding from the European Social Fund (ESF), Kainuu's ELY Center has been overseeing a project titled Tulevaisuuden taidot - Kainuu ennakoi ('Future Skills-Kainuu anticipates') from January 2021 to August 2023 which addresses the labour market gap in the region and aims at improving availability of skilled workers and employment rate (ELY Keskus, 2023). There is also 'The RekryKainuuLive Project' (March 2020 – March 2022) aimed at

enhancing job search opportunities for job seekers while improving recruitment skills of companies and creating awareness of the services available to the employers to enable the development of employment relationships (ELY Keskus, 2022d). These are a few of the projects concerning employment development that the center has embarked on during the strategic period.

3. Research

Spring House (2023), conducted a research on behalf of the ELY center titled 'Kansainvälisen rekrytoinnin alueellisten toimien kehittäminen Kainuussa osana Talent Boost -toimenpideohjelmaa' (Developing regional actions for international recruitment In Kainuu as part of the Talent Boost Operational Program) aimed at developing a recruitment service pathway with a more user-friendly approach.

As part of continued efforts to investigate the situation, the ELY center has also commissioned this research work to investigate how employment of skilled migrants, particularly international students already in the region, can be facilitated by consulting key stakeholders and actors. This research is geared towards further development of practical solutions and builds on some of the issues identified in Spring House's research, specifically attempting to produce an outcome that addresses the challenge of the employers not knowing where to start by providing a guide that helps employers start with foreign talents already in the region. This is one of several collaborations with Kajaani University of Applied Sciences in a bid to develop regional employment. The center has previously collaborated with the institution on the 'Talents for Kainuu' project and the development of inventory of international students profile as part of the KOTKA project amongst many others.

Kajaani University of Applied Sciences has also participated in the campaign for foreign talent in Kainuu. In the last five years, the institution has increasingly attracted experienced international talents through its English taught programs and keeps expanding its offers to highly skilled international students, for instance, as part of its entry requirements for master's program in Global Business Management, a minimum of two years previous professional background is required thus bringing in experienced hands who receive practical education tailored to working life and can fit in across different fields. The institution also embarks on internal projects, partnerships with other organizations, and organizes events to aid recruitment. Some of these include the Tilma project, KAMK Kaura, Visit KAMK, Talents for Kainuu, and a host of vital information shared regarding job search, career opportunities, and adaptation tips for its international students and migrants such as those found in its ''Guide for starting your career in Kainuu' and on its website from time to time.

This study also explores measures by which the ELY Center and KAMK can support companies based on the findings of the research.

4 Research Design

The purpose of this research is to investigate employers' approaches to hiring foreign talents and identify areas where support can be provided. It aims to explore the topic of employing foreigners from a different perspective, seeking to understand how employers navigate the process by collecting data on their practices and experiences.

The direction of the research was subject to change as it progressed because the researcher initially did not have a complete understanding of the issue. However, it was expected that the situation would become more evident as data was collected, insights were developed, and the focus narrowed. Therefore, a flexible research plan was necessary to allow ongoing assessment of the situation as it evolved. These attributes of the research are consistent with an exploratory study as outlined by Saunders et al. (2009, pp. 136-140), and define the direction the research design accordingly.

4.1 Research Strategy

The research uses a case study strategy with justification hinged on the purpose and nature of the study as it seeks a proper exploration of the context. Yin (2009, 25–40) outline factors that rationalize the use of this strategy, highlighting the nature of research questions where they seek to provide in-depth analysis of current social phenomenon and investigator’s level of control amongst others as justification. The questions for this research have been designed to provide contextual understanding of the issue under investigation making the case study strategy suitable as it seeks to evaluate the qualitative relationships and lead to more comprehensive understanding. (Morris & Wood (1991) as cited in, Saunders et al, 2009, pp. 146; Brester et al, 1996, p. 570). Although the research sample covers several companies across different industries, they are treated as one case where the region of study (Kainuu), defines the context under which the research is being conducted. This gives the advantage of understanding the unique circumstances of businesses and identifying common themes that may be peculiar to the region and can be used in a comparative study between regions as one of the aims of a case study is to explore the peculiarity of a case and the focus can range from individuals, institution, program, policy, or system (Hamel et al. 1993).

Furthermore, the case-study approach allows for the triangulation of data where multiple sources of data, such as interviews, observations, and document are collected to provide a more complete picture of what is being

studied, uncover the underlying drivers of complex relationships, and provide valuable insight (Saunders et all, 2009). This study integrates other sources of data, collecting secondary data from government publications, previously conducted research and policy documents, presentations, organizations websites and the workshop used in development which are all weighed against the data collected from the interviews.

4.2 Research Approach and Development

The research uses a qualitative method to data collection and analysis. Data was collected through qualitative interviews and analyzed through content analysis using an inductive approach. The study aims to provide an understanding of the employer's perspectives, which requires understanding the intricacies of the subject such as attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, and actions which is best researched using an approach with a human touch (Saunders, 2009 pp. 126–127). Qualitative interview is often considered useful in collecting such detailed insights into issues and has a flexible design which allows the interviewer dig deeper to gather extensive information from respondents (Mwita, 2022, pp. 313–314). The nature of the research topic further influenced the choice of methodology as the research approaches the topic differently and availability of literature is a constraint (Saunders, p. 135).

The interviewer relies on what the interviewee has to say and has no set measures to quantify but can only qualify the process using contextual interpretations and not a quantitative measure as the core issues is expressed in non-numerical term (Hamel et al. 1993). In addition, there is no predetermined structure instead, the structure is driven by the data collected, and this further rationalizes the use of the inductive approach to qualitative data analysis (Burnard et al., 2008, p. 429). This approach involves comprehensive reading of the raw data collected from which similar ideas are collected to form concepts or themes which are used in interpreting the data. (Thomas, 2006, p. 238)

To further strengthen the outcome of the research, a workshop was selected as development method. A workshop has been described as an arrangement where a group of people learn, acquire new knowledge, perform creative problem, solving or innovate in relation to a domain specific issue (Merriam-Webster, 2016 as cited in Ørngreen & Levinsen, 2017, p. 71), also as a 'usually brief intensive educational program for a relatively small group of people that focuses especially on techniques and skills in a particular field (Merriam-Webster, 2023). A workshop allows the researcher collect and review further data, allowing the researcher refine and enhance the

outcome. It is designed to generate dependable and credible data as well as recommendations that meet the needs of what is being studied (Darsø, 2001, p. 27).

A workshop was chosen for this research to test the viability of suggestions and further improve the development task. The NAF (New, Appeal, and Feasibility) tool, a service design tool used to evaluate the practicality of ideas and review suggestions to improve the chances of success was adapted to the needs of the workshop.

The NAF tool starts with identifying the design question, generating a 'How Might We Statement,' identifying participants based on the challenge to be addressed, setting out the expectations for the workshop and preparing the list of ideas to be reviewed, conducting the assessment using a NAF canvas which gives points to ideas according to newness, appeal, and feasibility, calculating the scores and then discussing the results (Science Experience Lab, n.d). This was implemented in the workshop design.

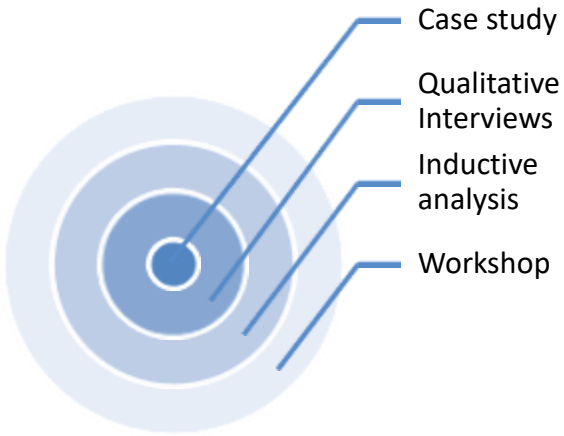

Figure 5 Research Design

4.3 Data Collection

As described in the introduction to the research design, this study is exploratory and utilizes a case study approach. Both exploratory research and the case study strategy involve data collection through interviews (Saunders et al., 2009, pp. 140 & 146).

To gain valuable insights and practical support for businesses, virtual interviews were conducted with two distinct groups of participants. The first group comprised project team members who had direct involvement in research

pertaining to the employment of foreigners and played a crucial intermediary role between companies. The decision to interview this group was made based on their strong recommendations, recognizing the significant impact of the projects they had previously worked on.

Two interviews were conducted with these project team members, aiming to gather valuable insights and practical guidance to support businesses. These individuals, referred to as experts going forward, were carefully selected based on their extensive experiences working closely with employers and their active involvement in facilitating the employment process. By engaging with these experts, the research aimed to tap into their firsthand knowledge and expertise to provide meaningful recommendations and support for businesses in relation to the employment of foreign talents. Initially, the researcher had prepared a set of questions focusing on the hiring methods and the experts' awareness of available support for employers. However, upon gaining a clearer understanding of their role as intermediaries rather than recruiters, the direction of the questions shifted. This approach allowed for a more fluid exchange of information, with occasional prompts to understand the workings of the process and clarify specific points. Notes were taken during the discussion, describing key points on what had been for the job seekers and the employers.

The second group of interviewees consisted of employers. A list of potential companies was compiled based on previous research where employers had expressed interest in hiring foreign students as trainees or employees. This list was discussed with the commissioner and further referrals were made, resulting in 16 contacts. Invitations were sent out to employers and HR personnel via mail and phone, resulting in six responses.

One respondent declined the request as their business did not have recruitment as part of its immediate priorities, and another was unable to participate due to other commitments. This left a total of four participants who took part in the interviews, all of whom had prior experience in hiring foreign talents including international students across various industries. Table 2 shows the description of the two groups of participants and duration of the interviews.

Interviewee	Participant Group	Industry/Description	Duration
Interviewee 1	Employer	Hotel and Tourism, Mininig, Forestry	50mins, 37 secs
Interviewee 2	Employer	Hotel and Tourism, Metal	59mins, 40 secs
Interviewee 3	Employer	Industrial heating	26mins, 9 secs
Interviewee 4	Employer	Pulp, paper and Energy,	33mins, 59 secs
Interviewee 5	Expert	Project Team	47mins, 3 secs
Interviewee 6	Expert	Project Team	49mins, 53 secs

Table 2 Description of interview participants

The questions were semi-structured, comprising a set of leading questions prepared in advance to steer the interview, while allowing room for follow-up questions based on the respondents' feedback (Mwita, 2022, p. 313). These questions covered various aspects such as the respondents' understanding of foreign talents, their approaches to employing and facilitating the adaptation of new foreign hires, their awareness of government support for recruiting foreign talent, challenges encountered, and suggestions based on their experiences. The questions were sent out beforehand, with the clarification that they served as a guide rather than a strict structure for the discussion. This encouraged feedback from the respondents, which played a crucial role in the overall conduct of the interviews.

The interviews had an average duration of 45 minutes, and respondents were given room to express their thoughts, and further questions were developed based on their comments. The discussions covered a wide range of topics and delved into various aspects related to the employment of foreign talents. For instance, it often extended to hiring talents directly from abroad, discussing the challenges and potential benefits.

Despite the limited number of responses, the data collected from these interviews is relevant and provides indicative insights due to the diverse experiences shared by the participants across different industries within the Kainuu region.

Deciding the number of interviews to be conducted depends on the research question, topic, logistical constraints, and available resources. Qualitative interviewing seeks to identify recurring patterns and themes rather than obtaining a specific number of responses. When interviewing a group of individuals, it is unlikely to encounter a vast number of unique opinions. Instead, a subset of interviews can adequately represent the range of opinions, especially the most common ones. Therefore, the interviews can be discontinued once it has reached a point where no new insights are encountered (Cobern & Adams, 2020, p. 75–77).

In this research, interviewing was discontinued when the number of respondents had been exhausted. Despite this, patterns which generated sufficient insights emerged early on in the first few interviews.

4.4 Data Evaluation Technique

The content analysis method was used in analysing the data analysis. According to Thomas (2006, pp. 240–241), the analysis process consists of five key steps. These include the initial reading of the text, identification of relevant text segments, labeling to create categories, reducing to manage overlap and redundancy, and finally,

creating a main theme that represents the categories. It is important to note that the category labels (sub-themes) may not encompass all the features of their contents but serve to organize the related texts. The findings are then presented using the main theme and relevant sub-themes.

The analysis followed these established steps. First, the raw data was thoroughly read and immersed in to gain a comprehensive understanding. Relevant texts were then identified, and categories were created through labeling to group similar concepts. A main theme or model was subsequently developed, representing the categories and providing a framework for analysis. (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, pp. 1277–1282; Thomas, 2006, p. 238; Burnard et al., 2008, p. 431).

5 Data Analysis and Research Findings

This section discusses practically how the data analysis was conducted, interpreting the categories and establishing connections between themes.

5.1 Content Analysis

The analysis process began with multiple readings of the interview transcripts. These transcripts were auto-generated from the Teams platform, which was used for the interviews. The researcher made an effort to read each transcript at least once within a day of the interview. In cases where immediate reading was not feasible, the researcher listened to the audio recordings while performing other tasks, ensuring that the key points remained fresh in mind. These steps were taken to fully immerse the researcher in the content.

This allowed for the identification of relevant statements from the interview with the employers related to the research questions, including methods of recruitment, recruitment requirements, opinions on practical trainings, and barriers faced by employers. Additionally, insights pertaining to students or job seekers emerged during the second review, even though they were not originally part of the research questions. These new perspectives were considered valuable in generating ideas and understanding the phenomenon more comprehensively.

Key statements or phrases were collected and color-coded during the initial stage to aid the researcher in referencing and organizing them. This color coding preserved the original meaning of the statements without simplifying or reducing their content. Through multiple data reviews, these statements were further reduced to form key concepts. At this stage, the data diverged and formed subcategories, with some statements initially color-coded together falling into different subcategories within the same context. Other statements were moved to entirely new categories, as the coding process was flexible and based on the context of the data. The colors were then erased as they had served their purpose.

For the interviews with the experts, a similar process of conducting an in-depth review was carried out. The analysis process immediately as the researcher took notes during the interview, documenting the steps that had been taken to support job seekers and employers. Patterns and recurring themes were already becoming evident at this early stage. The transcript was thoroughly read multiple times, and additional points were highlighted to ad-

equately describe the activities discussed. In addition, insights were gained on other areas, including the outcome of the initiatives, barriers to employment, and suggestions for improvement.

The contents of the analysis are presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. Appendix 1 contains excerpts from the interviews with the employers, while Appendix 2 focuses on the experts' interviews, showing how the themes were formed.

5.2 Results

Drawing upon the insights from the interviews, this chapter sheds light on the patterns that emerged from analyzing the data. The interview with employers resulted in seven themes, while five themes were derived from the interviews with the experts. Figure 6 has been included to provide a visual representation of these themes. Following this is a discussion of the two categories of interviews, exploring the themes that emerged and analyzing their implications within each category.

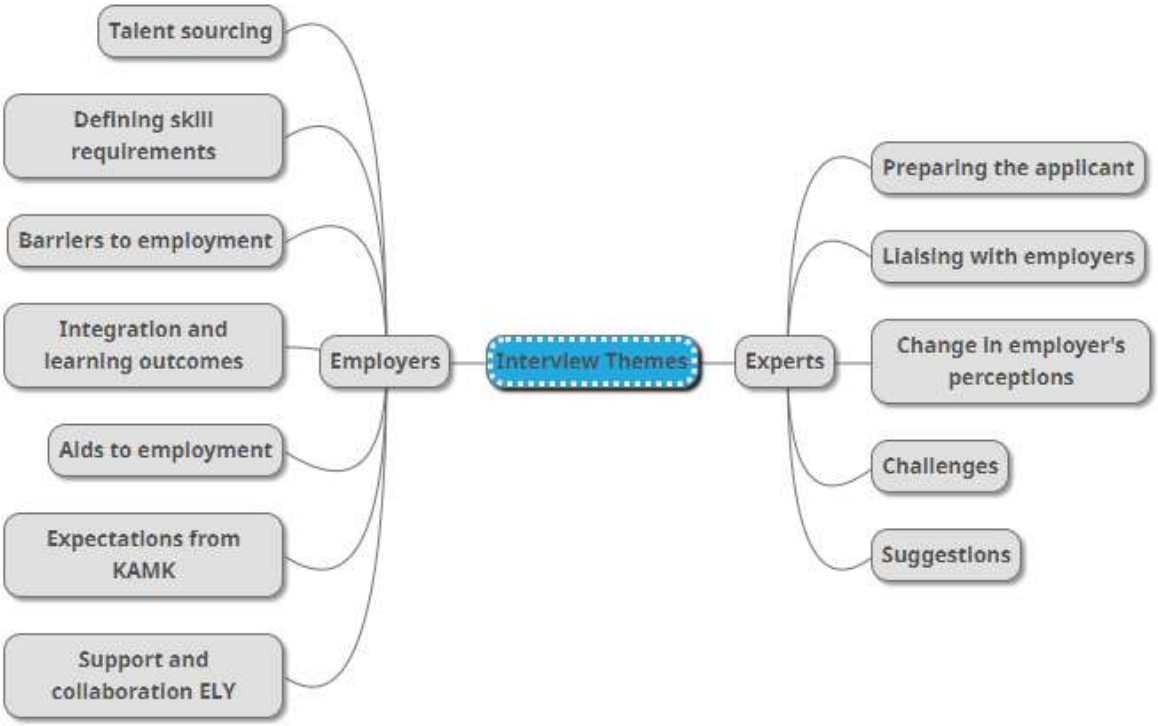

Figure 6 Themes from the interview

5.2.1 Interviews with the Employers

The respondents took on different lenses to examine the situation. They discussed from various perspectives, examining the roles of employers, the institution (KAMK), the ELY Center, and even the students or job seekers themselves. The role of the student emerged as a recurring theme in all the discussions, with respondents discussing practical expectations from students. Another important aspect was the exploration of the employer's role in finding solutions, including the measures they have taken, challenges faced, and outcomes observed. The interviews also discussed expectations and suggestions for KAMK and the ELY Center. This resulted in seven themes of: talent sourcing, defining skill requirements, barriers to employment, employment outcomes, aids to employment, expectations from KAMK, and support and collaboration from the ELY Center which are discussed in detail.

- **Talent sourcing** was largely done through direct contacts to KAMK with all respondents confirming that they had reached out to KAMK when they had a vacancy to fill. For some, this contact was made based on relationships they have with personnel from the school, while other respondents made inquiries to know who they could contact. This was represented in the data with expressions such as '*I knew the lecturer from KAMK and I was contacting her for suitable persons,' 'I was checking who is in charge of this MBA students and I called to this person', and 'I called that hey! I need students, do you have?*'

Still on sourcing of talents from school, few responses communicated that they had been reached out to by staff from KAMK. Explaining this, respondents stated *'The teachers know us, they pitch students to us' and also ''xxx is one good example, she has been contacting us.'* KAMK's student union KAMO was also mentioned as a contact for talent sourcing.

In addition to placing job advertisements where human resource personnel directly sourced staff, other measures employed to source talents included advertising job openings through social network channels such as LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook. The regional employment services provided by the TE office were also utilized in this process. A respondent reported using the service stating, *'I had this open vacancy in the TE office service… it's just this web page which shows the open workplaces and people who are looking for a job'.*

- **Defining skill requirements**: in discussing what they look out for when hiring, the employers' responses unanimously addressed the job seekers attitude and drive, with the data showing strong preference for candidates who are motivated and have a positive attitude. Respondents said, '*the person who would be suitable has to be really interested about the things we are doing', 'just try to prove that you are really in-*

terested in this company, and you are going to work hard', also*, 'willingness to learn and then commitment, that's the most important thing'.* This led to addressing how the applicants can improve their chances of getting hired. One employer said *'some students have made their mind up, I'm going to get that job, I'm going to get the skills, I want to go to this company. They are very motivated and ambitious, and they will get through'.* This is in contrast with some who are not sure of their career, *'they are just floating, just studying, they don't know what they want to do'*, and those *'who have not recognized those requirements for the position'.* This implies that candidates who take out time to familiarize themselves with the description of the role and are willing to demonstrate their drive are more likely to get hired.

Employers' feedback showed that they value applicants' motivation and are willing to train. Addressing job specific skills, an employer said. '*There is quite a lot of people, they don't have the skills, but I do not see it as a big problem', 'we provide training for the specific tasks that they need to do here'.* Job specific skills were only necessary for cases which required a measure of expertise, but interest and motivation still played an important role even in such cases as an employer said, '*I would like to pick the best of them, so if a student does xxx on his or her free time, it tells me that this individual is very skilled, interested, and motivated*.'

These points were further corroborated when employers spoke about some of the foreign staff they had hired saying; *'xxx was selected as any other candidates but was just perfect for this position as xxx was really willing to work and improve.'* The employer's statement about being selected as any other candidates also goes to show that no special considerations were made because the applicant is a foreigner; instead the demonstrated drive and interests set candidates apart.

- **Barriers to employment:** Drawing on four subthemes, the factors hindering development of employment relationships with KAMK, students, and foreign talents were analyzed. The subthemes are employers' knowledge and perception, employers' attitude, communication gap, and time constraint.

The research revealed that although employers recognize that they need foreign talents to make up for workforce shortage, many are yet to recognize the opportunities that come with collaborating with the higher institutions. A respondent stated that '*not many entrepreneurs even understand the potential of cooperation with KAMK'* and '*many companies don't have an idea that they could leverage trainees or master's theses.'* One measure that has proven beneficial for employers, as discussed previously on recruitment methods, is their willingness to proactively reach out and establish contact with schools and utilize support services such as TE services. However, it was observed that many businesses do not appear to be utilizing these resources effectively as '*they think it is difficult and hard'* and '*the business owners sometimes they are so shy'* because *'they aren't used to working*

with foreigners'. These points reveal that preconceived ideas, inexperience, and uncertainty have a role in the employer's recruitment habits or decisions.

Although these points may appear to be self-imposed limitations, it is important to recognize that the process of building employment partnerships is not without its challenges. In fact, one can rationalize the employer's reluctance based on these very challenges. In particular, two key issues were identified and reviewed: the communication gap and time constraints.

In many companies, language is a barrier given that many of the students do not understand or speak Finnish language while some of the employers do not consider their English language skills to be sufficient. This is true even in companies with English as official language as the practicality of using English in regular everyday communication does not come so easily. This creates a possibility of miscommunication which makes it difficult to get things done.

Time constraint was also cited as an issue for the employers as trainees require orientation and the employers are busy. The comment *'interns need so much assistance and they actually take away productive time from our own work'* affirms this concern.

- **Aids to employment**: Attitude is a crucial factor in this process and not limited to the applicant as it also came up as a suggestion to help employers build partnerships. Employers who may be hesitant because of uncertainty are advised to believe that they can achieve it; they should also be willing to embrace mistakes as they are bound to happen, but be ready to learn and correct the mistakes as they go on. To source talents, they are encouraged to start with practical training and master's thesis, or with summer workers, starting small and gradually gaining ground. Also, the services of the employment office (TE) were recommended through the mol.fi website which provides an opportunity to connect to candidates directly or through recruiters. Contacting the school was also strongly recommended; a respondent said *'I think for the Finnish companies, it is easier to do cooperation with schools and students. The school I think is the best way to get good staff for your company; my experience is that this works, this is the easiest way I can find people here.'*

In handling the challenge of language barrier, the respondents suggested practical solutions that may help. This can include learning key business terminologies and how they are used. One interviewee stated that '*all fields have their own professional language and it's really important to study that and try to know the basics of the language.'* Another response leaned in the direction of a change in attitude mentioning that they took hiring a non-Finnish speaker as an opportunity to improve their language skills. The need for employers to recognize that eve-

ry employee would not understand the language at the beginning, but their skills would likely improve along the line was emphasized.

- **Employment outcome:** The employers highlighted several learning and integration outcomes derived from their hiring journey, outlining the benefits for both the employer and the worker. These benefits encompassed various aspects, including the advantages of having a dynamic workforce, such as establishing international connections and gaining access to new markets. Additionally, the employers emphasized that students demonstrated a remarkable ability to learn, which facilitated their career development and contributed to building a workforce that is well-acquainted with the company's culture and practices. Another significant benefit mentioned was the positive impact on attitude and perception, along with improved language learning. One respondent recalled that *'people who were afraid of speaking English found out that it's something which is doable.'* The students also benefited by acquiring language and job-related skills and gained stability. The employers described them as having *good working morale, hardworking and paying taxes, integrated quickly, and open minded.*
- **Expectations from KAMK**: this data set was grouped according to respondents' feedback on suggestions for KAMK's with three sub-categories of creating awareness, partnerships, skill mapping, and support emerging. Each category had excerpts which expanded the insights. These suggestions were basically a call to action and offered ideas on how to improve.

On creating awareness, respondent feedback showed there is a need for KAMK to educate businesses in the region about the potential of collaborating with the institution. Phrases such as *be active, more active, be proactive,* and *proactive measures* were used in the description. It was mentioned that *'very key persons in terms of sharing the know how about what kinds of skills you have should be active'.* Discussing KAMK's need to improve awareness, a participant mentioned that '*ELY have improved their marketing…, and so should KAMK also'.* Some practical ways highlighted were identifying students' experiences and interests and mapping them to potential companies, pitching students to companies for internship and employment placements and discussing the potential benefits, this may be done in recruitment fairs or smaller match making events.

The theme of partnerships garnered high interest as all respondents were very particular about this and commented freely even without prompting. The suggestions revolved around building relationships and maintaining contacts not only with business owners, but with other staff in the businesses as this will foster adaptation when with foreign hires. There was an emphasis on KAMK lecturers also being part of the partnership as it is believed that they know the students better and would play a key role in the process. Also, in-person contacts were sug-

gested involving study visits to the companies which would further impress the availability of these skills on the minds of the employees. Some quotes highlighting the request for partnerships are mentioned below.

> *'KAMK should be visiting the companies more and I mean not the students, but the teachers also and make some kind of package telling who we are. Yes, if we go to the KAMK web page, we can find a lot of useful things. But you know who goes to the web page when have we are so fully booked? If we are following all web pages which are useful, what else can we do during the daytime?''*

> *''I really recommend schools to contact companies, organize some visits to the companies with the students also.''*

> *'I recommend the schools to do more cooperation with the companies.'*

The respondents also recommended routine contacts and staying in touch stating *'xxx is an excellent example, she has been contacting us.'*

Concluding their suggestions for KAMK, respondents welcomed the idea of a one-stop-shop to provide support, this would ease the process for those who are not aware of the possibilities of collaboration and may feel overwhelmed by having to contact several offices to get information. When asked about a central contact for employer's needs, the respondent replied '*that would be great, like a one-stop-shop, that's good service'* and further stated that the problems employers have with lack of awareness and perception of difficulty would be easier to address if there is a one-stop-shop, in the respondents words*, 'that one point of contact will serve all beautifully'.* Another respondent said, *'I think that is quite important, maybe some kind of center for that'.*

'They have the problem that businesses do not know what kind of services they have available for them'

Support and Collaboration- ELY Center: The information for ELY center is grouped according to perception of support and suggestions for improvement. Respondents stated that many businesses are not aware of the services available to them. One respondent put it this way: '*if you ask from the authorities' different areas same question, you can have quite many different answers'* and '*many times, the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing.*' Some respondents shared that they had benefited from salary subsidies like *'Palkkatuki'* and that, the ELY Center has improved its marketing with arrangements such as '*information Tuesday'* which tells about the services they have. There are still challenges as respondents reported, *'it doesn't matter that you sent mails that we have this kind of webinar,' 'we companies are small, we don't have the time actually because quite often, it takes time.*' It seems to be the case that the methods are not suita-

ble for the users as it was said that *'they think that they work quite closely with the companies, but actually there is a big gap'* which can be addressed if *'ELY center should start to make more frequent brainstorming sessions focused on international point of view..., set tasks, committed groups for execution including local companies, and every now and then, coordinate wrap up of the status'.*

The employers' believe that ELY Center can improve provision of support by working more closely with the businesses and providing a single contact unit where all inquiries and concerns can be catered to.

Despite employers having diverse industry backgrounds, their feedback consistently highlighted similar challenges such as attitude, communication, and training difficulties. They also proffered solutions that were in agreement including improved partnerships and support.

5.2.2 Interviews with Experts

Of the five themes from this data, the primary focus is on the first three themes as they relate to the objectives of the data collection. The aim of which was to gain an understanding of the steps taken by the experts in their projects and research, examining how they turned out. However, key points from the other themes are also discussed.

The theme on preparing the applicants describes what measures are taken to equip the job seekers for employment. The team start off by identifying applicants' skills, they do this by conducting checks and interviews to understand what type of experience the applicants have. When this has been done, they map them with companies where their skills and experiences are relevant. The statement *'we do small interviews to understand what kind of background they have, skills, experiences and everything'* explains this. They also organize training and courses for jobs that require a permit such as the hygiene pass to improve the job seekers' chances of employment.

The respondents also mentioned that they had to put in effort to convince employers to try out these foreign workers seeking employment. They stated, *'we contact the companies and try to convince them, letting them know that we know there are a lot of issues at the beginning like challenges with the language, but we have some resources, we will help you'.* They also suggest the idea of companies taking on applicants for free practical training for a few months just to try them out. Recognizing the challenges faced by the companies and providing practical solutions that help the employers have been useful strategies to get the employers onboard with the re-

spondents reporting that the employers *'come back and they are happy about it, they find solutions like using Google translate'.*

Orientation emerged as a common focus as members of the team sensitized not only the applicants, but also the employers. They suggested the use of pictures in orientation, a sort of work buddy, '*someone who will answer all the practical questions.'* The orientation contained tips to aid communication '*such as speak slowly' and 'make sure that they understand you'.*

These efforts have helped to improve employers' perception of recruiting foreign talents and build willingness to change the practice. They are mostly satisfied, describing the hires as '*amazing'*. They have also been proactive in finding solutions to challenges by themselves, using google translate for translations.

The discussions also uncover the barriers that hinder participation in the hiring process which are a lack of know-how and employers' perceptions. These challenges align with some of those outlined in the interview with the employers such as how the employer's perceptions of their language skills play a role, their not knowing what to do or anyone who anyone who has done it despite the *'success stories that have been shared by ELY Keskus, TE office, and public sector*,' this indicates that there is a '*missing connection between companies and the government'*. Some of the comments provide added insights with statements such as '*it is not their reality'* and *'they are family businesses with low education*' explaining that a lack of know-how may stem from a lack exposure to diverse backgrounds making the concept unfamiliar, and may also be hinged on preconceptions and unspoken biases.

To address the situation, several suggestions were made to enhance the employment prospects of students. Firstly, it was recommended that the importance of language skills in securing a job should be clearly communicated to students from the early stages of their studies. This would provide them with a realistic understanding of the job market and encourage them to actively seek opportunities in the region. Additionally, it was proposed that efforts should be made to identify individuals who are willing to stay in the region long-term and match them with suitable employment opportunities. This would involve painting a clear picture of the benefits and possibilities available in the region to attract and retain talented individuals.

To support students in developing the necessary skills, it was advised that language and culture training should be integrated into their curriculum right from the beginning. Furthermore, students should be introduced to companies and provided with practical training opportunities, particularly for master's degree students.

In order to facilitate collaboration between companies and foreign talents, employers should be made aware of the advantages and potential benefits of hiring international individuals. Additionally, fostering a more open and friendly attitude among employers was encouraged to create a welcoming and inclusive environment. These suggestions were discussed in four subthemes: improved language and practical training, the benefits of collaboration, talent matching, and a change in attitude. These sums up the information collected from the experts.

In summary, the analysis and interpretation of the data provide valuable insight into various aspects related to the employment of foreign talents. The result sheds light on the recruitment measures the employers have used, how the experts have facilitated connections between employers and applicants, it reviews the challenges employers face, and addresses how the employers can be supported.

The results highlight common ground between the two interview groups, revealing similarities in the factors they perceive to be hindering employment and the suggestions for improvement. Both groups of participants identify attitude, knowledge, and perception as factors that may influence employers hiring decisions. Although specific solutions may differ, the data shows that both groups suggest a change of attitude and adequate support as possible solutions.

5.3 Research Findings

The research result reveals that the employers generally face the same challenges, and have similar needs for support irrespective of the industry of operation. It underscores the importance of addressing attitudes, fostering collaboration, and implementing talent matching strategies to optimize the employment of foreign talents.

In the talent sourcing and defining skills themes, it became evident that employers primarily rely on KAMK as a source for foreign talents, with employers often taking the initiative in seeking out these individuals. Employers value a positive attitude towards work and are willing to train and absorb an applicant that demonstrates drive and interest in the company. In few cases, specialized skills are necessary but attitude still plays a crucial role.

The theme on barriers to employment shed light on various factors impeding employers from considering foreign hires, including perceptions, attitudes, and work-related difficulties. However, the fourth theme highlighted that employers can overcome these challenges through a change in attitude, effective job planning, and proper orientation. This emphasizes the importance of addressing these barriers to facilitate successful outcomes.

The findings from the expert interviews further demonstrated how these challenges can be overcome. It emphasized the significance of identifying applicants' skills and aligning them with suitable roles. The experts' role in preparing job seekers for employment was instrumental in facilitating this process. The theme of liaising with employers and the resulting outcomes demonstrated that practical support and persistent efforts can effectively prompt employers to take action, leading to satisfactory outcomes.

In order to improve the employment situation, it is crucial to foster partnerships between KAMK and employers and receive support from regional administration. These collaborative efforts can enhance the overall recruitment process and address the challenges faced by employers in hiring foreign talents.

5.4 Development and collaboration

In line with the objective of the study which seeks to provide a guide to hiring foreign talents, the development task involved creating a hiring handbook for employers. A 2 hour workshop where ideas were brainstormed with participants from KAMK and EURES was held to access the feasibility of the ideas generated during the research. The participant from ELY center who was unavoidably absent subsequently shared contributions and comments via mail.

Based on the guidelines for using the NAF canvas, invites were sent to participants after analyzing the data and highlighting the findings. The invites were sent out to representatives of KAMK and the ELY center being key players in the research; additional participants were also contacted based on the relationship of their job to the research area. The objective of the workshop was to check if the suggestions from the research could be implemented and explore new ideas which would help the researcher filter the suggestions and create ideas for the development task. The researcher mapped suggestions from the research pertaining to each stakeholder; employer, KAMK, ELY Center and asked for participants to review the suggestions using questions like ‘how can we improve…’ and ‘what suggestions can you give on…’ ‘What are your thoughts on…?’ ‘What can be done?’ The major focus was on KAMK and ELY Center as most development suggestions for the employers had already been considered during the interviews with the employers.

The NAF canvas which involved rating suggestions was not used, but the principles of measuring the three foci of newness, appeal, and feasibility were embedded in discussing the ideas. This helped to bring on new perspectives and clarified the issues, uncovering measures that have been taken or are underway. It showed that some of the suggestions made by the employers were already in place like the one-stop shop for central support. All authori-

ties involved in the hiring of foreign talents, both abroad and in Finland, have implemented a centralized support system provided on the Work in Finland website. Additionally, KAMK has its own career service website, which includes a dedicated page catering to the needs of employers. This information influenced the recommendations by emphasizing the importance of raising awareness about these services.

The discussion also showed why some of the suggested measures had not been previously taken, either due to laws guiding the operations or challenges encountered. For instance, the challenges hindering in-person contact of employers were addressed and recommendations were made to tackle them.

With the new insights gathered from the workshop, a handbook was designed as the outcome of the research process. The content of the handbook includes applicable recommendations collected from employers, practical steps provided by experts, as well as information on available support. It serves as a valuable resource for employers, offering support and guidance throughout the recruitment process. The handbook simplifies the steps involved, provides valuable tips to navigate potential hurdles, and offers a centralized directory of support materials and offices. This includes resources at the national and regional level, as well as from the university. Its purpose is to assist employers in making informed decisions and implementing successful strategies throughout the hiring process.

The cover page of the handbook is shown below, while the complete pages are presented in Appendix 3. The title in appendix 3 links to the interactive version of the document.

Figure 7 Coverpage of the handbook

Overall, the objective of the workshop was met, allowing the researcher to generate a set of recommendations and a document to improve the employers' experience.

6 Discussion

HRM activities may differ in practice from academic literature, as companies often tailor their practices to their specific needs (Beer et al., 2015; Waxin, Al Ariss, & Zhao, 2019). However, adhering to the basic principles of HRM serves as a guide in decision-making. The results of the research show a connection between the employers' practices and the best practices highlighted in the literature.

For example, the employers in the study considered drive and willingness to learn as more important than experience or language skills when determining hiring criteria. They recognized that candidates, whether students or experienced hires, need training and integration support. The employers focused on key requirements rather than unrealistic expectations and proactively reached out to higher institutions to source potential candidates.

In terms of orientation practices, employers implemented various approaches such as teaching professional languages, encouraging English language use, and providing support and clarification to employees. Some employers even offered assistance with documentation, permits, and integration training. These training and orientation practices proved beneficial, as some employers retained staff for longer periods due to the benefits of diverse backgrounds, international networks, commitment, experience, and familiarity demonstrated by the employees or trainees.

These findings highlight the role of professional development in human capital development and support the idea that talent management should have a long-term focus to maximize the benefits of investing in employee development (Crowley-Henry & Al Ariss, 2018; Simarmata, 2020, pp. 192–196). Adequate human resource management contributes to positive outcomes and emphasizes the importance of ongoing employee development for long-term success.

The benefits of effective talent management extend beyond individual companies and have a broader impact on society. Therefore, employers should not be expected to work alone. In this research, employers call for action from KAMK, ELY center, and other administrative bodies, highlighting the need for support. The study emphasizes the importance of providing training, development opportunities, and employment services to assist companies. These actions align with the principles of the triple helix model, which promotes collaboration, knowledge creation, and problem-solving. (Kinnunen et al., 2018, Chap. 2).

This research extends the value of Triple Helix model to regional development by examining the employment aspect and advocating for the Triple Helix model. The model emphasizes collaboration between government, uni-

versities, and the community for innovation and development. In this case, the involvement of KAMK, employers, and regional administration is crucial. By working together, they can address barriers and create a supportive ecosystem for employing foreign talents. This research highlights the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration and underscores the need for a holistic approach to regional development. By embracing the Triple Helix model, regions can leverage their human resources and drive sustainable growth. (Beer et al., 2015, p. 430).

Although these results contribute to the discussion on the benefits of human capital development and human resource management (HRM), it is essential to recognize that they are specific to the group that was reviewed. Since HRM activities can vary in practice, and therefore, it is crucial to gather empirical evidence and compare it across different groups, such as various regions and companies. Doing so can offer better understanding of HRM practices and processes and work towards further improving them.

Parallel findings can be drawn from national and regional research. These studies consistently highlight language as a barrier to hiring foreign talents and emphasize the need for proactive measures to address this challenge They also reveal that employers are more inclined to hire foreign talents already present in the country due to the simplified process (Vehreävesa, 2021; Spring House 2023). The current research aligns with these findings, emphasizing employers' willingness to hire and acknowledging language as a significant barrier. By incorporating insights from various studies, a comprehensive solution can be developed.

Despite generating findings that align with other research and are indicative of general results, the study is not without limitations. One of these limitations is the small sample size due to a lack of response from the proposed participants. As a result, the discussion was limited to only a few individuals who agreed to be interviewed. Although the data collected from these interviews was informative and revealed clear trends in the discussion, it would be beneficial to consider reviewing a larger group of participants, if possible. By including more participants, the study can potentially enhance the reliability and validity of the findings.

Also, while the study involves shared experiences, it may not address the views of those who are hesitant to the idea of recruiting foreigners as, these set of employers may have different perspectives and approaches. However, collecting the opinions of this group is difficult as it remains a sensitive topic which poses a barrier to reaching them. The expectation is that with the application of research recommendations, it facilitates reaching these employers and draws them to an established structure which offers shared experiences, guidance, and support, allowing for the identification and resolution of any challenges they have. Continued research is also recommended to allow for a full understanding of their perspectives if they become open to discussion.

Practical Implications of the Research

The research sheds light on the recruitment practices of companies in the region with respect to foreign talent, the experiences of these companies in utilizing such methods, and the potential areas where they need support in this process. This was demonstrated in the questions posed in the study which were considered using interviews with the employers who explained the process, and experts who offered practical suggestions on how they help companies. The outcomes of the interviews were later discussed at a workshop which gave further guidance to the research development.

Exploring Research Question 1 (RQ1) revealed a range of recruitment methods, which primarily involved employers contacting people known to them in KAMK to make inquiries and identify potential candidates. In a few cases, some lecturers took it upon themselves to reach out to companies and discuss the availability of students. Other methods included utilizing online channels, particularly the website created by the TE office. However, it was also revealed that companies need to actively express their recruitment interests to ensure a consistent flow of students to meet their needs.

RQ2 explored the experiences of companies in working with foreign hires and utilizing the methods identified in RQ1. Overall, the working relationship proved to be productive, and the employers were able to overcome challenges encountered initially. They were equally impressed by the commitment and drive of the students, as well as their ability to integrate into the company and society at large. It was found that, in many cases, attitude towards work was more important than specific skills, as training could be developed to meet learning needs. Only a few roles required specific skill sets, but even in those cases, candidates still needed to demonstrate drive and interest in carrying out the tasks.

The companies have successfully filled roles by reaching out to KAMK, recognizing the value of collaboration, as KAMK serves as a major source for recruiting foreign talent. However, the review of the recruitment process identified a need for more support and outreach from KAMK to promote its talents, which was further explored in RQ3. The TE website for recruitment was also mentioned as effective, as it eased the workload for employers since recruiters often reached out to companies after already identifying suitable matches for the roles they were seeking.

Lastly, when examining the potential role of government administrative bodies (ELY Center) and KAMK in RQ3, respondents called for joint collaboration, where the ELY Center could work more closely with companies in designing the support they provide. They also highlighted the need for creating awareness of the center's services

and establishing a single point of contact for recruitment needs. In-person contact, showcasing talents, and a central support system were among the improvement points raised for KAMK.

These outcomes, along with suggestions on how to manage the issues raised, were discussed in the workshop. Leading to the development of more ideas and, importantly, addressed existing measures in place or underway to aid the employment of foreign talent, emphasizing the need to raise awareness of available resources.

Recommendations

During the workshop, the findings were reviewed against existing support mechanisms. This revealed a gap between the employers' level of awareness of support services available to them, and the communication of what has been done to support the employers. Taking the perspectives of both companies and administrative offices can help identify opportunities for improvement, collaboration, and policy alignment. To this end, recommendations have been made for the employers and for how relevant institutions, administrations, and all stakeholders can work with the employers.

Employers' Action Steps

It is important that the employers' key into available resources, one of which is the international student of KAMK which provides a rich source of employees. Companies can harness these resources by developing practice or internship relationships and utilize the master's thesis as a resource for research for product or process development, for instance, developing orientation planning. This is also beneficial for companies who would like to internationalize their business as students can help understand new target markets, culture, practices, and networks. Through the Tiitus service, employers can advertise job openings, access the students' profiles, chat with applicants, and get a notification for a candidate matching their job openings. A central system for contacting the institution is the KAMK career service known as KAMK Kaura where employers can directly source for staff or contact the school for assistance.

Employers should also take advantage of the events organized by ELY center such as events discussing workforce challenges, which presented an opportunity for employers to partake in a brainstorming session on the issue of recruiting international talents. These events are valuable not only when employers need a particular service, but

are useful for creating awareness on the offers and services provided by the center and they also serve as an avenue for companies to communicate their needs and demonstrate their willingness to collaborate.

Given that the language and training time often stand as barriers, some modifications to the orientation process are also required. This requires the presence of someone with the language skills who also understands the business processes such as a current employee designated as a support person for the trainee, or taking on a trainee who has the Finnish language skill and would also have orientation as part of their job description. This fosters integration with other employees and can help with improving the language skills of both parties while allowing the employer time to focus on other productive tasks. Also, orientation materials can be built gradually through this process.

Where this is not possible to carry out, orientations should focus on the core issues the trainee needs to know. The suggestion from the research on teaching professional language comes to play here as businesses can focus on these recurring terms, what they mean, and how they are used. Focusing on these core terms helps to streamline the training to the important matters. Employers can also explore services that have been designed to support them such as the workplace Finnish training (TyöpaikkaSuomi) provided by ELY center as a service employers can pay for to train employees on work related tasks.

It is equally important that companies put up their vacancies in English so that applicants know that the jobs are not limited to Finnish speakers. Language translation apps which are important in orientation are also of benefit here. Employers can use this while checking for certain words when writing the vacancy, thus helping them to sharpen their use of English. Alternatively, the TE service offers another significant resource for finding new hires by providing a platform for job advertisements. Employers can reach out to the TE office if they need assistance with translating the job postings and other matters related to hiring a foreigner, this is important to allow the TE offices better develop their support for companies and lessen the challenges employers may face.

For the pioneer employers who have experienced the benefits of working with foreign talents, it is important to share these experiences with fellow entrepreneurs as it brings it closer home and creates a similarity effect. Businesses can choose to organize this on their own, by creating an entrepreneur get away time where they can discuss how they have benefited and what steps have been helpful to them. It can also feature in gatherings such as ‘social Friday’ or ‘Big Friday’, or in less formal conversations, in a relaxed and comfortable setting such as *a visit to the Sauna*. Board members who serve on the committee for some of these businesses can also do well to share the importance of recruiting foreign talents which may serve as a motivation and awaken the employers thoughts in that direction.

ELY Center’s Action Steps

The ELY center represents the regional administration and in the context of this research, it is the gateway to all other authorities. While a lot has been done in terms of providing support by the center and affiliated bodies, a major challenge is that employers are not fully aware of the centers offerings available to them. They also mentioned time constraint which may prevent them from keeping up to date with notices posted on the website or attending webinars. One way to address this may be to incorporate the use of offline channels. It is equally worth investigating the ideal channels for the employers so that marketing is focused on the best ways to reach them.

Where possible, promoting employment should be addressed as a regional project where different authorities and institutions in the region can work together. Given that each player has their goal, tasks and responsibilities, tasks can be assigned to suit those goals. This creates room for specialization, collective efforts, and idea sharing which is needed to tackle issues. It equally manages the situation where several offices knock on the doors of the same employers for different projects.

When organizing job fairs through the TE office, or other related services and projects, the center can incorporate the identification and mapping tools used in Viljamaa (2022, p. 25). The tools include the EU skills profile tools, skillLab, preference cards, and competence cards. This will help to enhance the quality of job fairs by effectively matching employers with potential hires whose skills have been carefully assessed and aligned with the employers' specific needs.

Another suggestion is to involve more entrepreneurs in designing the solutions for the entrepreneurs' needs and setting up implementation committees with local businesses as part of its members. This creates a user centered approach and creates more content for social sharing. The entrepreneurs involved in the process would likely have discussions about the projects they are working on with the center within their networks, thereby creating more awareness for the offerings.

An atmosphere of sharing should also be created which brings together all entrepreneurs whether pioneers or newbies. While seminars and formal discussions are important, a more relaxed, less formal gathering may also be beneficial where a relaxation trip or an entrepreneurs’ lunch meeting is organized for the entrepreneurs based on their timing and schedule, using a cooperating business such as a hotel in the region as host. This way, entrepreneurs get to relax and discuss in a less pressured environment.

One of the benefits of this study is regional comparison. The ELY center can liaise with its offices in other regions to check if there are regions with similar challenges. This way, they can identify strategies they have used to ad-

dress these issues. This sort of information sharing can generate more ideas and may lead to reforms where observed bottlenecks can be addressed on national level.

KAMK Action Steps

The suggestions for KAMK are mostly centered on creating awareness. It is important that KAMK promotes the availability of its international students. This requires building communication and proper information. Companies need to be aware that they can benefit from international recruitment not only when they hire directly from abroad, but also when they take advantage of international students who bring with them new networks and diverse experiences. This awareness campaign needs to be taken offline also and channeled through means that are most likely to reach the entrepreneurs such as in person visits, newspaper publication or popular news channels in the region and sharing information like how many new international students the institution welcomed in a session, how many have graduated, and a little background about current study programs.

There should also be coordinated planning where teachers and administration map out plans to visit prospective businesses that are yet to collaborate with the aim of discussing the potential benefits of cooperating, sharing useful suggestions, getting insight into what the companies do and what they need, and putting a face to the names both for the companies and the school. This may give the needed push to the employers, creating a sense of reality that these benefits are within their reach.

While KAMK's curriculum is limited by central regulation and language learning can only be a little part of the study, having a separate study path for its students to learn the language is worth considering as there is currently no language training programme designed for students outside what is being offered as a small part of the study program.

The current situation presents a plethora of opportunities for KAMK to leverage. The TILMA project under KAMK has been active in helping foreigners who have moved for humanitarian reasons find jobs. Their methods are practical and should be considered for implementation on a larger scale across other groups.

Also, the institution can extend the activities of its international office to provide orientation or on boarding services to help train new hires. The selected person for the onboarding role would have a proficiency in Finnish, English and other languages that may be considered necessary and they will serve as an intermediary to show the new hires what to do, thus minimizing the challenges the employers experience with language barrier. This office can be responsible for other services like designing orientation plans for companies or other needs like helping

companies source for talents from abroad, or finding students who are driven and motivated and want to apply to KAMK. This would offer a constant supply of highly motivated international students and also provide internship opportunities for both its Finnish students and international students.

Finally, KAMK should organize job fairs that are specifically geared towards companies looking to fill immediate job openings, connecting companies with job seekers and not only creating awareness about brands. To achieve this, the students' skills and employers need to be defined and calls for advance preparation. It is recommended to actively drive participation from employers through engagement efforts such as in person contacts and phone calls where insights are provided on their needs. The students skills can then be accessed using the tools in Viljamaa (2022, p. 25). Also, since attitude and drive is important to the employers, personality tests like the 16 personality test can serve as an additional useful tool to access work preferences and compatibility with company culture.

New Future Research

This research is one of few studies that approach the issue of foreign employment from the employer's perspective, bringing a new dimension to the research area. An interview respondent mentioned that this was the first time they had been engaged on a solution drive and hoped that there could be a change in the situation.

Although the study primarily examined foreign talents already in the region, some of the participants raised salient points on direct recruitment from abroad, stating some challenges and suggesting possible solutions. It is important to also consider these points to enhance the process for direct recruitment, to ensure the development of a comprehensive international recruitment strategy.

They proposed that multinational companies in the region conduct research on opportunities for staff exchange programs as a means of developing expertise in managing diverse workforces in preparation for international recruitment. For firms with a global footprint or presence across different nations, the possibility of implementing exchange programs where staff members are temporarily relocated to different countries to gain exposure to diverse cultures and working practices can potentially equip them with the requisite skills and knowledge for managing a multicultural workforce. Such an initiative would facilitate better understanding and appreciation of cultural differences, which could aid the process of international recruitment.

Regarding the challenges, a participant mentioned the difficulties concerning recruiting from abroad, such as documentation for permit application and lengthy processing time. Hence, it is relevant to study how the immigration process may affect employers' attitude to direct recruitment from abroad

On another note, the study sheds some light on the hiring criteria that employers use when recruiting employees and offers practical recommendations on how job seekers and students can enhance their chances of being hired. This topic could be further explored through research that examines job seekers' understanding of the Finnish job market and the competencies that employers require, their pre- and post-arrival expectations, their job search experiences, self-development efforts, and a comparison of the experiences of foreigners who have secured employment in the region.

Such research could be valuable in identifying the barriers that job seekers face when trying to secure employment and factors that contribute to their success or failure. It could also provide actionable insights to guide job seekers and employers towards better job matching and contribute to the development of policies aimed at attracting and retaining a highly skilled workforce in the region.

The recommendations provided by the employers are applicable across all industries. However, some very interesting suggestions relating to particular industries were also put forward and were included in the recommendation. This presents an opportunity for industry specific inquiry on the topic. Organizations can also individually review their strategy, researching and designing specific measures that suit their needs.

Like many other studies before this, the research focused on private sector employment of migrant workers. It may be worthwhile to investigate the development of employment of foreigners in public sector. The study could delve into various aspects such as policy frameworks, institutional practices, and the social and cultural implications involved.

Taking all the research suggestions into account and considering the ever-changing nature of this research area, continuous study and evaluation is necessary to stay abreast of the evolving demands and requirements within the field.

Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness

Maintaining the commitment to keep confidentiality of participants requires that their information remains undisclosed, this can be done using a pseudonym or code, and indicating specific characteristics only when relevant

(Blignault & Ritchie, 2009, p. 143). Given the number of participants in the research, there was no mention of specific municipalities from which the interviews were conducted to maintain anonymity as it may be easy to identify the companies if the municipalities are mentioned as the industries in which they operate were listed. The choice of listing industries over municipalities is to help employers understand that the results are generally applicable. Also, confidential information such as names or any hints towards the respondents are not included in the result.

The trustworthiness of the research is checked using the techniques set out by Lincoln & Guba (1985). It establishes credibility of the research using member checking and triangulation. During the interviews, the researcher ensured that understanding of points raised was clarified by relaying the points back to the interviewee using statements such as *from what you have said, I understand that you mean…. Is that correct? Can you please clarify?* The participants confirmed the points and, in some cases, corrected the researcher's understanding. Mails were also sent out to clarify some thoughts or missing pieces of information from the respondents.

After the data has been collected, there is still a need to enhance trustworthiness of the research when analyzing and presenting the data, consequently, it is important to present data in a way that enables readers draw connection to the findings since the content analysis process is largely subjective. (Anfara et al., 2002, pp. 28–31) One effective method to doing this is using tables which allow researchers organize, compress data, and present outcomes in a way that is easy for readers to understand. This aids confirmability as data collected is made transparent and links can be drawn to the results (Cloutier & Ravasi 2020, pp. 115–127). Trustworthiness is achieved in this research by presenting the data analysis in form of table containing participant's responses and showing the codes that develop from them, helping readers get clarity and confirm the findings. Also, the interpretation of the result captures the voice of the respondents through direct quotations from the interview.

Ensuring trustworthiness continues after the data has been analyzed and findings drawn and can be done in a number of ways. For this research, triangulation was used involving data collection from other stakeholders through the workshop. This was really useful as it clarified the understanding of some issues, especially correcting the impression on the availability of resources to support the employers which would have been reported as being absent going by initial data collection. It also aligned the focus of the research further emphasizing the need for awareness which agreed with the findings in the initial data collected.

Researcher's Reflection

Embarking on a research journey is not merely a quest for knowledge but an opportunity for personal growth and development. Throughout the process, I encountered various challenges, experienced moments of revelation, and acquired valuable skills that have shaped me as a researcher. In this reflective piece, I aim to share my insights and lessons learned, highlighting how my understanding of research methods, data presentation, information sourcing, and cultural sensitivity have evolved.

I often found myself interchanging the terms quantitative and qualitative methods, as well as inductive and deductive reasoning, which led to challenges when communicating my research plans. However, through practical application and hands-on experience, I have gained a deeper understanding of these concepts and can confidently explain the differences.

Another aspect of growth during this research journey was in the presentation of data. I initially defaulted to textual descriptions, however, during my period of study, I learnt the importance of utilizing different forms of data representation for enhanced readability. However, this research stretched me further, making efforts to create tables, pictures, and mind maps, despite the difficulties. This practice proved to be invaluable when designing the research handbook, as it improved my creativity.

I encountered challenges with finding relevant materials, but with the help of platforms such as ResearchGate and Google Schorlar, I was able find to some academic references.

language also posed a challenge to sourcing information. While translation services and auto-translation features assisted in accessing Finnish documents, my reliance on English searches limited the depth of information I could access. Some websites which were available in English did not contain some important information like detailed reports. I was able to resolve this by changing the page to Finnish where information was detailed, and using the auto-translate feature. However, when translated, the graphs, pictures, and other presentation formats were often not translated.

Navigating cultural barriers presented its own set of challenges. Some recommendations I considered feasible did not conform with cultural norms, while existing laws restricted the implementation of certain improvements. However, this research journey granted me invaluable insights into the culture and exposed me to existing services, improving my cultural awareness and understanding.

I also had to redefine my study methods and this was challenging as the methods kept changing at different stages. In the end, I infused listening to audio versions of the documents which had always been a reliable method for me, with studying in the library. This method enhanced my focus and information collection, as I could switch locations when I got tired or distracted. Additionally, I found that editing at home was more productive for me. This realization significantly improved my concentration and overall productivity. Looking back, I wish I had recognized this earlier, as it would have greatly benefited my research process.

Among the highlights of this journey were the interview sessions conducted. These interactions not only enriched my research but also honed my communication skills. Through the use of semi-structured questions, I developed active listening techniques, improved my ability to ask insightful questions, and effectively managed the limited time allocated by participants.

From the initial challenges of understanding research methods and data presentation to overcoming language and cultural barriers, I have acquired valuable skills that have significantly enhanced my analytical abilities, research expertise, cultural awareness, and interpersonal skills. This shows the transformative power of research and its capacity to shape individuals as they strive for knowledge and personal growth.

Conclusion

This research has examined the intricacies of enhancing employment of Kainuu's foreign talents and presents an analysis of stakeholder's perspectives on the subject. While the findings demonstrate a need for support, with the employers suggesting that more effort is geared toward that direction, the development of the research reveals that the issue leans more on creating awareness. Thus the research emphasizes a need for improved cooperation among all parties involved in the process, as proposed in the triple helix model. This collaboration is crucial for resolving regional employment issues and enhancing the professional development of the region's foreign talent, which is necessary if the region is to gain competitive advantage. Continued research is also emphasized to monitor emerging issues as the study area is dynamic and continues to change.

Beyond identifying areas for improvement and urging employers to recruit foreign talents, the research is taken a step further by providing a handbook as the outcome of the research development. The handbook is built around the objective outlined in the introduction, serving as an aid to help in the recruitment process. The employers can find tips adapted from the research and a directory on support available to them in the handbook.

Overall, the research contributes to the regional effort on employment by providing insight into the perspectives of the employers, identifying gaps, offering recommendations, and providing a tool to help employers in their process.

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Data Analysis

Interviews with Employers		
Themes	Sub themes	Key Concepts
Talent sourcing	Employers contacting school	- Called the contact person for MBA students
		- Relationship with KAMK lecturers
		- Trainees from school
		- Contacts at international study program
		- Contacted the school
		- Contacting lecturer from KAMK
		- Study Guild (KAMO)
	Lecturers contacting Employers	- Teachers pitch students to us
		- Lecturers contacting company
	Recruiters	- Contacted companies renting migrants
		- Companies who will pay the people working for them
		- TE services
	Job adverts	- TE employment services
		- Applications
		- Skillful persons in our HR
	Channels	- TE office
		- Linkedin
		- Facebook / Instagram
		- Direct contacts
		- Personal networks
Defining skill Requirements	Job seekers attitude	- Motivated and skillful
		- Ready to learn
		- Skilled and motivated and ambitious
		- Willingness to learn and commitment
		- Willing to improve
		- Interest and hard work
		- Uninformed applicants
		- Indecisive
	Job related skills	- Lack of skills is not a problem
		- Depends on the case

		- Training for specific tasks
Barriers to Employment	Limited knowledge on benefits of collaboration	- Not many entrepreneurs even understand the potential of cooperation with KAMK
		- Many companies don't have an idea that they could leverage trainees or master's thesis
		- Businesses here in Kainuu, they don't do this practice
		- They think it is difficult and it's hard
	Employers attitude	- Sometimes they are so shy
		- Sometimes it's the problem in the business owners' mind
		- We speak quite a lot but we don't do much
		- They aren't used to work with foreigners
		- Old-fashioned
		- They are shy of speaking English
		- People are afraid of speaking English
		- Their language skills are not enough
		- I couldn't be sure if this student understood what I tried to explain
	Communication gap	- You really have to speak and understand English so the communication works
		- Sometimes I met some situation where we talking two different things
		- Company's language is English but practically, there is kind of a mental barrier
		- They don't understand or speak Finnish at all so English is the key
		- Finnish is a second language in the best case
		- There are staffs working here who do not speak so fluent English
		- In many companies, language is a barrier
		- Typically, Finnish skills are not available
		- It's really difficult to do anything if you cannot communicate
	Support is time consuming	- They actually take away productive time from our own work
		- Companies are small, we don't have time
		- Interns need so much assistance
		- It's also a question of money

Integration and learning Outcomes	Worked despite challenges	- They are doable
		- People who were afraid of speaking English found out that it's something which is doable
		- People around me feel that it's possible
	Successful integration to work and society	- They learn quite quickly the Finnish language
		- Working morale is good; they are on time to the workplace
		- He was good actually at work
		- They are hardworking and pay taxes
		- They know our company, what they need to do, we don't need to start from Zero with new people
		- They started to understand more about these working methods
		- The project was only 6months, but I did hire her to work longer
		- It gave a lot to me…she learned so much about the business
		- Nice to see how quickly they integrated into the Finnish society
		- They had done great also economically
	Opportunity for growth	- The students can bring a lot of richness to the company; they know different languages and have good language skills
		- This works, this is the easiest way I can find people
		- It's safe for me… you know that the student is open minded
		- You have ability to influence how the person is growing to this professional
		- At least one person who speaks Finnish

Aids to Employment	Managing language barrier	- Learn professional language and terms
		- You cannot expect that student already knows everything
		- Now we are going to learn
	Leverage practical trainings	- Training from practicing
		- Practical training
		- Build trainings system together
		- Have this constant flow of trainees

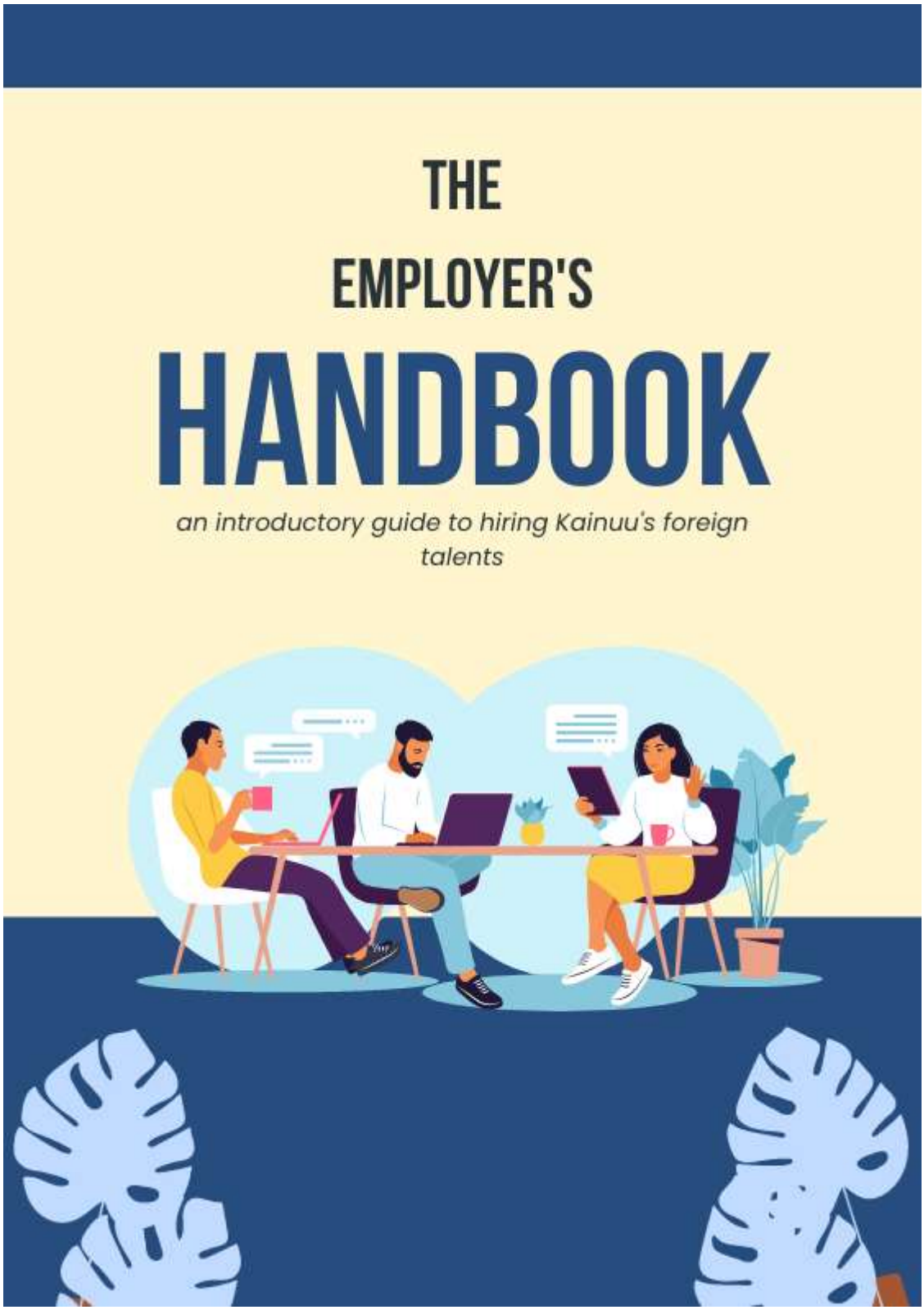
		- Oppisopimuskoulutus
	How to start	- One person first…it's the big step
		- Summer time workers
		- Work with these companies who want to rent staff
		- start cooperation with the schools and students
		- The schools might be the best way to get good staff
		- Local networking
	Orientation and support system	- They all have my phone number so I can help them explain
		- There are some steps that first need to be fulfilled
		- I explained this and this manufacturing process
		- We walked through production and I explained
		- We never let the students work with the machine because it's risky, it's dangerous, But they really need to know about it
		- We provide training for specific tasks
	Positive attitude	- Believe in yourself
		- Learn from mistakes
		- You cannot expect that student already knows everything
		- Even experienced people need assistance
		- We like to be active
Expectations from KAMK	Creating awareness	- Direct marketing from KAMK
		- Selling their services
		- Be proactive from KAMK
		- Make kind of package that what we are, who we are
		- Know what they have done, what they can do
	Cooperation through in person contact and communication	- Connection between companies and KAMK should be better
		- Frequent contact to the companies
		- Meeting face to face
		- KAMK should visit companies more
		- Teachers or lecturers meeting face to face
		- Active contact
		- Schools to do more cooperation with the companies
		- Organize some visits to the school with students
		- More active and work more with companies

		- Talk to business owners
		- Teachers meeting with the business owners
		- Teachers should time to time go to the field
		- If they talk to the teachers first, it's easier
		- Keep in touch with the companies
		- I recommend the schools to contact companies

	Matching skills with companies	- Fair or events with local companies
		- Recruitment events for businesses
		- Basically pitch students to us
		- Smaller marketing events
	Central support	- A one stop shop
		- Have one point of contact
		- Some kind of center inside KAMK
Support and collaboration-ELY	Perception of support	- Ely have improved their marketing a lot
		- The business finland service was suitable for us
		- Information Tuesday
		- Palkkatuki
		- How do they know what i need
		- Easiness of the service
	Creating awareness	- Businesses don't know what type of services they have
		- Talk with the businesses
		- Information Tuesday
		- Marketing and ease of the service
	One point of contact	- One point of contact
		- Many different answers
		- Better integrating plans
		- Quicker permits
		- Helping center
	Co-creation	- Brain storming events
		- Make local networking more effective
		- Get together events that people are informing each other
		- Partnerships between different institutions
		- Work closely with companies

Interview with experts		
Content	Sub Theme	Main Theme
Small interviews		
Mapping Skills		
we organizes coures to help	Development	
orientation with pictures		Preparing the applicants
someone to show practical things	Orientation	
Convince them to try		
we have employers looking for people	persuading the employers	
Practical trainining free of charge		
very important to have good orientation		
Orientation for both parties	orientation	Liaising with employers
we know there are challenges		
use our resources to help	finding solutions	
They are happy about it		
they try and they are satisfied	employers are satisfied	
they say call and say these people are amazing		Shift in employers perception
They find solutions, they use google	change of attitutde	
Building willingness to change the practices		
they don't know what to do, it is not their reality, there are some		
they don't know how to reach students, where to put applications	lack of know how	
they are family businesses with low education		
they think they do not have enough language skills		Challenges
maybe they are lacking self-confidence, they don’t know		
anyone who has done it	perception	
missing connection between companies and government		
Language & culture training from the first day		
organize more language courses	improved language & practical training	
trainings for the companies		
practical training for masters studies		
speak openly on the need for Finnish		
possibility of working with students		
use networks of international students		
small steps where students and companies come together	tell the benefits of collaboratiion	Suggestions
strengthen the connection between companies and students		
connect students and companies from the beginning on		
find the right kind of people, it's not for everybody	talent matching	
we have to be friendly and open	change of attitude	
we have to change our attitude		

Development Outcome-Employer's Handbook



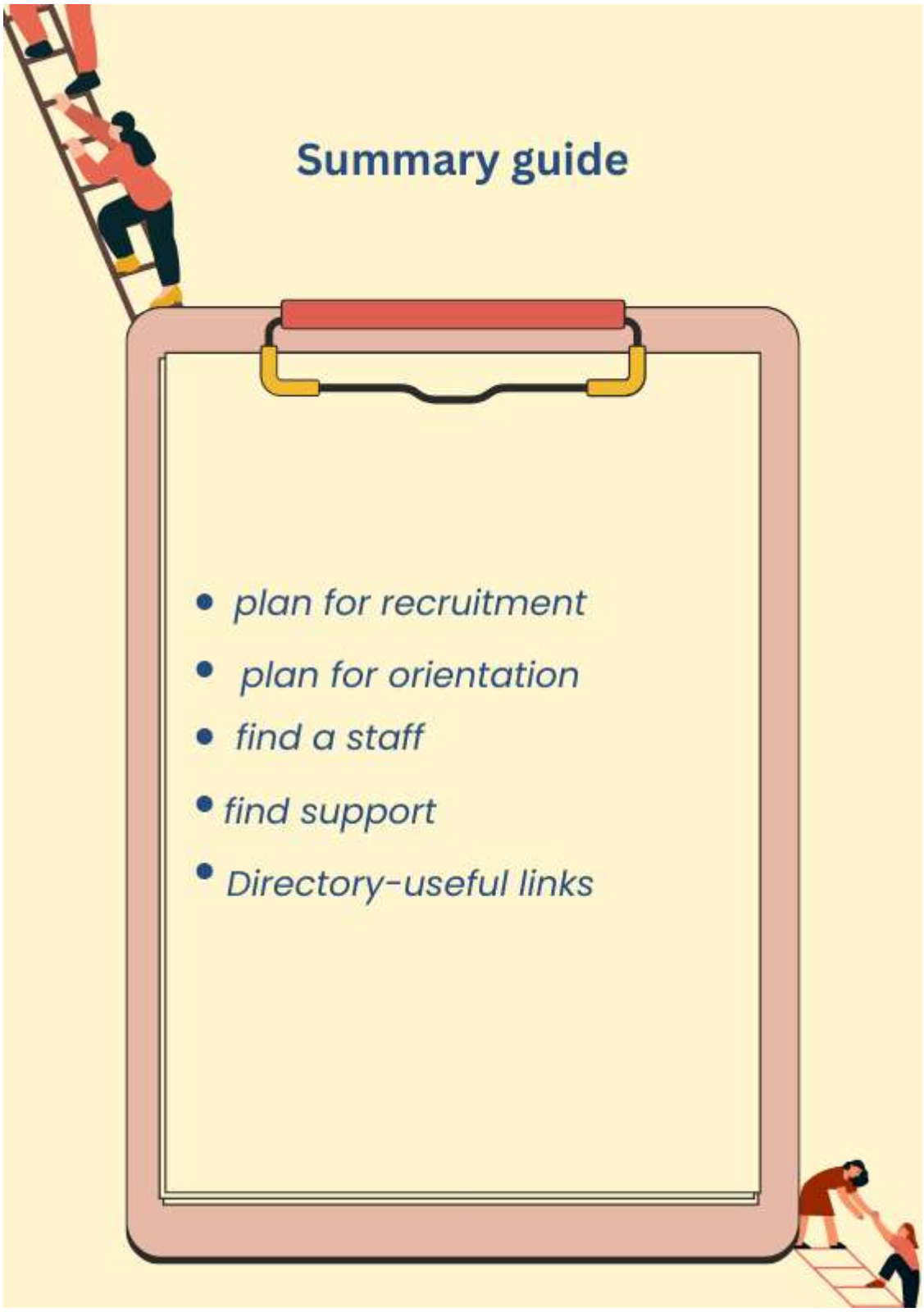
Objectives

To simplify the process, showing the employer how and where to start

Provides a directory to serve as a quick point of reference for employers to access central support

While companies needs differ, these steps have been drawn from experiences of Kainuu entrepreneurs like you who have walked the path across different industries. It provides a simplified process to hiring an international student and can also be applied to hiring from other foreign groups. It also contains tips and links for ease of access.

An entrepreneur said 'my experience is that this works, this is the easiest way I can find people here. The same fits to every industries and service company.'
It is the hope that this handbook which leverages the experience of other entrepreneurs will ease your hiring journey and open the doors for you to experience the benefits that come with hiring a foreign talent.


Summary guide
plan for recruitment
plan for orientation
find a staff
find support
Directory-useful links

plan for recruitment

identify the roles to be filled

determine the urgency of the position

identify the skills required: job-specific-skills vs attitude to work

prepare job description and advert

translate job adverts

Contact TE office for help with translating job adverts

plan for orientation

Identify what new employees need to learn

Select support persons and trainers from employees

Create a handbook of professional terminologies

Create lessons with visual aids (pictures or videos)

Build a training schedule

Use language translation tools

Contact the TILMA Project team for help with orientation planning

Find a staff

1

KAMK has a rich supply of international students who are eager to learn, find a job, and integrate into the Finnish system.

Contact KAMK for interns, practical trainings, Master's thesis for research and development through Tiitus.

2

Tyomarkkinatori is a platform provided by the TE office where employers advertise job openings and find suitable guidance and advisory services.'

At regional level, RekryKainuu is the recruitment and support channel.

Find the service here:

kaura

Find the service here:

JobMarket Finland

Find support

1

The Work In Finland website provides a central system for accessing all relevant information for the employer in hiring foreign employees from abroad or those already in Finland. With just one site, you can access necessary authorities involved in the process such as the ELY center, TE office, KELA, and Migri.

Employers can get up to date information about processes and answers to FAQ's such as where to get help to hire a foreign empoyee, pay subsidies, language training, or referals for specific details.

2

KAMK, through its career services 'KAURA', offers a platform for employers and job seekers(thesis, practice, projects, and internships) to search each other out and form a partnership using the Tiitus service as its recruitment channel. the Kaura service also serves as a contact point for employers who want to reach out to the institution for more specific details.

3

Business Kainuu also offers support, providing information on services, events and contact persons for the Kainuu entrepreneur.

Directory

Work in Finland- Employer's page

International Recruitment Guide- Southwest ELY Center

TE Services

Business Finland International Recruitment Materials

support services for international recruitment in Kainuu

Services for employers in Kainuu

Business Kainuu-Help for entrepreneurs

KAMK Tiitus- Employer's registeration page

Tiitus user guide

Visit KAMK - Employer's page

KAMK Kaura - Employer's page