

The Employability of Highly Educated Foreigners in Finland: Experiences of the Foreign Degree Students of the Aalto University School of Business

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Abstract

National labour markets are becoming increasingly diverse in cultural terms. As such, the employment of foreigners is a current and interesting topic. However, this increasing diversity has received limited interest within certain areas of research. For instance, in the field of International Human Resource Management, the fact that recruiting employees even within the home country labour markets includes an international aspect has remained relatively unrecognised. Similarly, in the literature covering employability the way in which employment has been examined has largely been general in nature, reflecting a traditional domestic setting. In relation to the Finnish context, there has been research concerning the employment of immigrants. However, the focus in these studies has been on the largest immigrant groups, and there have been few studies concerning the employment of foreigners with higher education. As a result it has remained unclear whether the situation of highly educated foreigners concerning job search in Finland resembles that of immigrants in general.

This study aims to fill the gaps found in the literature by shedding light on the experiences of highly educated foreigners regarding finding initial employment in Finland. The study was conducted by using a mixed-methods approach, utilising both quantitative and qualitative research methods. First, a web-based survey was conducted by targeting the 190 foreign Master's Degree students of the Aalto University School of Business. A total of 67 responses were obtained. The survey was followed by conducting six semi-structured interviews with six respondents of the survey. The quantitative data of the study was analysed mainly through descriptive statistics and the comparison of the obtained results to the findings of previous studies. The qualitative data was analysed by classifying the transcribed interview data, investigating the connections between different classes, and comparing the findings with existing literature.

The results of this study indicate that highly educated foreigners have different experiences in finding initial employment in Finland, but there are certain common factors that influence whether or not job search is participated in, how this is done, and what the outcomes of the search are. This study actually provides a framework of the process of employment acquisition in this specific context and identifies the factors influencing the process. The results also indicate at least in terms of the highly educated foreigners studying in the Aalto University School of Business that they participate to a large extent in job search and the shares of those who have been successful and those who have not yet been successful seem to be quite even. In addition, they largely seem to consider being in a disadvantageous position in job search, in comparison to Finns. Overall, the findings do suggest that highly educated foreigners face challenges in the Finnish labour markets and their employability is not necessarily that high, at least in relation to the natives.

Keywords Employability, employment, job search

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Tiivistelmä

Kansallisista työmarkkinoista on tulossa enenevässä määrin kulttuurillisesti monimuotoisia. Näin ollen ulkomaalaisten työllistyminen on ajankohtainen ja mielenkiintoinen aihe. Tämä lisääntyvä monimuotoisuus on kuitenkin jäänyt tietyillä tutkimusaloilla vähälle huomiolle. Esimerkiksi kansainvälisen henkilöstöjohtamisen alueella on jäänyt aika lailla huomioimatta se seikka, että työntekijöiden rekrytoiminen, jopa kotimaan työmarkkinoilla, sisältää kansainvälisen aspektin. Samoin työllistyvyyttä käsittelevässä kirjallisuudessa tapa, jolla työllistymistä on tarkasteltu, on ollut hyvin yleisluontoista, heijastellen perinteistä kansallista asetelmaa. Mitä tulee Suomen kontekstiin, maahanmuuttajien työllistymistä on tutkittu, mutta näissä tutkimuksissa on kuitenkin keskitytty suurimpiin maahanmuuttajaryhmiin. Korkeasti koulutettujen ulkomaalaisten työllistymistä on taasen tutkittu kovin niukasti. Tästä johtuen onkin jäänyt epäselväksi miltä osin korkeasti koulutettujen ulkomaalaisten tilanne työnhaun suhteen Suomessa vastaa yleistä maahanmuuttajien tilannetta.

Tämä tutkimus pyrkii täyttämään kirjallisuudessa löytyneet aukot selvittämällä korkeasti koulutettujen ulkomaalaisten kokemuksia Suomessa ensimmäisen työn saamisen suhteen. Tutkimus toteutettiin käyttäen määrällisiä sekä laadullisia tutkimusmenetelmiä. Ensin suoritettiin Internet-pohjainen kysely, jonka kohderyhmänä oli Aalto-yliopiston kauppakorkeakoulun 190 ulkomaista maisteriopiskelijaa. Kyselyyn tuli vastauksia kaikkiaan 67 kappaletta. Kyselyn jälkeen suoritettiin kuusi teemahaastattelua, joissa haastateltiin kuutta kyselyyn osallistunutta. Tutkimuksen määrällisen aineiston analysointi suoritettiin pääasiallisesti kuvailevan tilastoanalyysin keinoin ja vertaamalla saatuja tuloksia aiempien tutkimusten tuloksiin. Laadullisen aineiston analyysi suoritettiin puolestaan luokittelemalla litteroitu haastatteluaineisto, tutkimalla luokkien välisiä yhteyksiä ja vertaamalla löydöksiä kirjallisuuteen.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että korkeasti koulutetuilla ulkomaalaisilla on erilaisia kokemuksia ensimmäisen työn saamisesta Suomessa. On kuitenkin olemassa tiettyjä yhteisiä tekijöitä, joilla on vaikutusta työnhakuun osallistumiseen, itse työnhakuun ja työnhaun tuloksiin. Tämä tutkimus itse asiassa tarjoaa mallin, joka kuvaa työnhankkimisen prosessia tämän tutkimuksen kontekstissa, ja osoittaa mitkä tekijät vaikuttavat kyseiseen prosessiin. Tulokset osoittavat myös, että ainakin Aalto-yliopiston kauppakorkeakoulussa opiskelevat korkeasti koulutetut ulkomaalaiset näyttävät laajalti osallistuvan työnhakuun. Vaikuttaisi myös siltä, että heidän joukossaan on suurin piirtein saman verran työtä löytäneitä kuin niitä, jotka eivät ole vielä onnistuneet. Lisäksi kyseiset opiskelijat laajalti kokevat olevansa heikommassa asemassa suomalaisiin nähden työnhaun suhteen. Kaiken kaikkiaan tämän tutkimuksen tulokset viittaavat siihen, että korkeasti koulutetut ulkomaalaiset kohtaavat haasteita suomalaisilla työmarkkinoilla, ja heidän työllistyvyytensä ei välttämättä ole kovin korkea ainakaan suomalaisiin nähden.

Avainsanat Työllistyvyys, työllistyminen, työnhaku

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this first chapter of the thesis the background of the study will be first presented. Then, the existing research gap is identified followed by the presentation of the research problem and the actual research questions. After this, the limitations of the thesis will be discussed and the central concepts of the thesis will be defined.

1.1 Background

Searching for employment can be a very challenging task. Finding a vacant position that is interesting and involves having the skills which one possesses is one thing but then to be chosen for the position in question instead of all the other applicants is yet another. In addition, getting a job that may not even be the ideal option may sometimes prove to be far from easy. The above scenarios and their challenges can occur in a national setting, meaning natives applying for jobs in their domestic labour markets. To go further from this point and to start considering the challenges non-natives may face in the same labour markets makes the above scenarios of obtaining a 'dream job' or 'just a job' even more challenging. Investigating the situation individuals with foreign backgrounds face in the labour markets is thus an intriguing research topic, especially as the implications of the outcomes in the labour markets are relevant on different levels.

Issues that relate to the functioning of the labour markets, such as employment levels and the effective utilisation of the available human resources are seen to be of interest on the societal level. The concept of employability is highly relevant in this context. According to McQuaid and Lindsay (2005, p. 199), the concept of employability has become central to labour market policies and employment strategies in many countries. The societal concerns relating to the functioning of the labour markets can be seen to originate from the potential costs that are involved. Low employability and the mismatch of jobs and employee qualifications, for instance, cause social costs (Mancinelli et al. 2010, p. 70).

In terms of the potential costs involved, there are quite a few and concern not only the societal level. The social costs related to unemployment include poverty, health problems, psychological stress and crime which may further cause societal costs related to the need of extra public services, such as health care, social services and policing (Eardley 2002, p. 58). Unemployment also involves fiscal costs, such as expenditures on social security and losses in income taxation, as well as costs related to losses in productive output (Ibid, p. 47). In addition to the consequences for society and the individual, the functioning of labour markets could also be seen to have effects on the organisational level as well. The effective recognition and utilisation of potential human resources could be seen as an issue relating to the labour markets that would be central also for organisations. On the basis of the discussion above and the implications at stake for the different stakeholders involved, it can be argued that the examination of outcomes in the labour market such as un/employment and the factors leading to these outcomes such as employability, is very interesting and important.

The labour market performance of disadvantaged groups, such as the long-term unemployed and immigrants, can be seen as especially interesting and important. Although, it is good to note that all immigrants or foreigners are not necessarily disadvantaged in the labour market. Nevertheless, the potential role of employability in tackling the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups has been a factor in increasing the use of the concept (McQuaid & Lindsay 2005, p. 202). The poor labour market position of the disadvantaged would suggest that a lot of resources are left unused especially in the case of individuals belonging to these groups. For instance, immigrants could be seen to be in a disadvantageous position in the labour market due to different factors related to their foreign backgrounds. Similarly, one can expect that also foreigners, who could not yet be necessarily considered as immigrants, might face difficulties in the labour market as well, as they share the same attributes, related to foreignness, with immigrants. Then in terms of the labour market performance of foreigners, a particularly intriguing group is that of the highly skilled foreigners. Investigating their performance is particularly interesting as on the one hand it might be expected that they could face difficulties in finding employment due to factors related to their foreign backgrounds, such as language

skills, cultural skills and potential discrimination. On the other hand, however, their professional skills could be considered as a facilitator in finding employment.

The investigation of the employability of highly educated foreigners in the context of Finland is also very fascinating. Overall, immigration is a rather recent phenomenon in Finland (Ahmad 2005, p. 5, Louvrier 2013, p.13). The number of foreign citizens in Finland has actually increased significantly during the last decades. From 1980 to 2012 the number of foreign citizens in Finland, in fact, increased from 12853 persons to 195511 persons (Tilastokeskus 2014c). The labour market performance of immigrants has according to Ahmad (2010, p. 72), received constant attention among government officials and the wider public since the early 1990s when the number of immigrants rapidly increased. However, it is worth noting again that a foreigner cannot necessarily always be categorised as an immigrant. This is important to realise especially in the case of foreigners who are studying in Finland but have not yet necessarily permanently settled into the country. In terms of these students, it is fascinating to investigate the employability of those who already have a degree from an institution of higher education and are currently studying for another degree. The foreign degree students, who are studying for a Master's degree, form such a group. This group is interesting as they are already highly educated and could, thus, be seen as potential resources for organisations. In addition, their employability is intriguing also from a societal point of view as it could be assumed to influence their willingness to stay in the country after the completion of their studies.

The context of Finland in relation to the employability of highly educated foreigners is also fascinating due to the fact that issues relating to foreigners are topical in the country. Issues pertaining to immigration have, for instance, been central in public debate in Finland especially during recent years. The increased success of the political party "True Finns" can, for instance, to some degree be attributed to their hard stance towards immigration. Immigration was raised in the 2008 municipal elections as a central theme by certain candidates of the True Finns party (Haavisto, Kivikuru & Lassenius 2010, p. 247). In the Parliamentary elections of 2011 several of the party's candidates who oppose immigration were elected (Helander 2011, p. 8). However, despite the views that

are in favour of restricting immigration, there are opposite views as well. The Government Migration Policy Programme of Finland (Työministeriö 2006, pp. 3-12), for instance, promotes work-related immigration and the retention of the foreign students in the country after their graduation. When considering these conflicting views, it is fascinating to discover what the situation is like in the labour market for the highly educated foreigners who are studying in Finland.

Investigating the employability of the highly educated foreigners who are studying in Finland is also intriguing from the viewpoint of the institutions of higher education in which these students study. The strategy for the internationalisation of higher education institutions in Finland 2009-2015, for instance, aims at developing a genuinely international higher education community to improve the quality of research and education and support the internationalisation of the students (Ministry of Education 2009, p. 10). The strategy aims at improving the international co-operation of these institutions, and also involves increasing the amount of foreign staff and students in these institutions. Consequently, the strategy aims also to improve the quality and attractiveness of these institutions. The employability of the foreigners studying in these institutions can be seen as a relevant factor in terms of the attractiveness of these institutions in the eyes of potential students.

1.2 Research Gap

The employment of foreigners is an issue that can be seen to relate to many disciplines and the issue is relevant on different levels of analysis, for instance, the level of the individual, the organisational level and the societal level. However, the issue has received limited interest and focus within certain areas of research. One such field is the field of International Human Resource Management. According to Evans, Pucik and Björkman (2010, p. xv), the field has traditionally focused on issues such as expatriation, responding to cultural and institutional differences and global leadership development. The fact that national labour markets have become increasingly culturally diverse has, thus, remained relatively unrecognised.

In the context of Finland, as already stated, immigration is a rather recent phenomenon, but there has, however, been research in the field of sociology concerning the employment of immigrants in Finland (see Ahmad 2005; Valtonen 2001). However, the focus in studies concerning the employment of immigrants has been on the largest immigrant groups (Väänänen et al. 2009, p. 19). In addition, there has been limited research on the employment of foreigners who are studying in Finland as the focus has been more on individuals who already more or less permanently reside in Finland. Moreover, when considering those foreign degree students who are studying for a Master's degree, it becomes increasingly interesting to investigate their employability, as they are already highly educated and will eventually graduate from a Finnish institution of higher education. It could be assumed that these factors might influence their employability. Thus, there is a need to investigate the experiences and perceptions of the highly educated foreigners who are studying in Finland as it remains unclear to what extent the situation they face relates to the findings of the earlier studies concerning the employment of immigrants.

1.3 Research Problem and Questions

The employment of highly educated foreigners is an issue that is relevant from many viewpoints. In terms of organisations, especially international ones, these individuals could be part of the 'talent pool' to draw from. In terms of society as a whole, the utilisation of these resources and retaining them in the country is of great importance for many different reasons. In the case of those who have studied in the country, a substantial investment has been made on their education on behalf of the society and it would be rational to try to capitalise on this investment. If these resources are left unnoticed, society will thus lose not only in terms of tax revenues but also in terms of knowledge base and organisations might lose valuable human resources. However, the fact remains that foreigners generally face more difficulties in the labour market than natives (Väänänen et al. 2009; Ahmad 2005; Valtonen 2001). This is a real problem that has the above serious implications.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences of highly educated foreigners concerning their employability in Finland.

The main research question is:

What experiences do highly educated foreigners have regarding finding initial employment in Finland?

The sub-questions are:

1. Why and how do they initially engage in searching for employment in Finland?
2. What are the outcomes of the search, why?

1.4 Limitations

As the outcome of acquiring employment involves both the job seeker and the potential employer, it would be useful to gain the insights of both parties involved in the process to arrive at an understanding why a job search process leads or does not lead to gaining employment. However, this study is limited to the views and experiences of the job seekers. This is due to resource constraints as well as limited access to the hiring practices of organisations. The views and experiences of the job seekers alone are, however, very valuable, as they provide vital knowledge on what challenges may exist and what are seen as the most relevant factors influencing the process from the viewpoint of the seekers.

1.5 Definitions

Employability

The concept of employability can be defined in a number of ways. The first section of the literature review chapter of this thesis provides a detailed account on the concept. However, it can be said that the concept can generally be seen to relate to issues that

influence the employment of individuals. According to McQuaid and Lindsay (2005, p. 214) it can be defined as the ability or likelihood of an individual to gain employment or move between jobs. McQuaid and Lindsay (2005, pp. 209-210), who take a broad view in defining the concept, state that employability depends on factors relating to the individual, his/her personal circumstances and the external environment.

Immigrant

An immigrant is usually defined as a person who has been born abroad. The term can, however, also be defined on the basis of other factors such as mother tongue or nationality. A second generation immigrant is usually defined as a person who has been born in the country of residence, but whose parents or one of the parents is an immigrant. (Väänänen et al. 2009, p. 14)

The term 'immigrant', as already seen above, is not very clear and may be given different meanings. It is also a bit unclear as to when or after how many generations a person with an immigrant background is no longer categorised through this background. However, in many cases the underlying idea seems to be to make a distinction between the population groups who have historically resided in the country and the groups or individuals who have arrived more recently, as this might be relevant when examining society as a whole.

The term immigrant can also be defined to only concern those who migrate with the intention to move permanently to the new country (Finlex). This idea of intention is, however, problematic as it may change during the course of stay, but the idea of defining an immigrant in this way is probably just to distinguish between those who are likely to stay and those who are in the country for a predetermined period of time and who after this period are unlikely to stay.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review chapter begins with discussing the concept of employability, which is central to the examination of issues relating to the acquisition of employment. The second section of the chapter focuses on the areas of diversity management, talent management and career studies as these provide additional understanding concerning the issues involved in acquiring employment in relation to the group of individuals this study focuses on and the specific circumstances in which the acquisition of employment is investigated in this study. The third section of the literature review concerns the Finnish context and what is known about the employment of foreigners in general and highly educated ones in particular in Finland. This is necessary as the context in which employment is searched arguably has an influence on which factors prove to be most relevant in finding employment. Finland, for instance is a country in which the number of foreigners or individuals with foreign backgrounds has substantially increased only relatively recently. Thus, the national labour markets in Finland are becoming increasingly diverse but this change can, however, be considered quite recent. In addition, the uniqueness of the Finnish language is also a factor which may set the Finnish context apart from, for instance, the context of an English speaking country. Then, in the fourth and final section of the literature review, the findings of the different sections of the chapter are combined and the framework of the study is presented.

2.1 Employability

In the investigation of issues relating to and affecting the search and attainment of employment, it is useful to take a closer look at the concept of employability. This concept has been defined in a number of different ways, some of which will be shortly presented in further detail. The differences in the ways the concept has been defined are largely due to the differences in the situations it has been applied in and the types of stakeholders involved in these situations. This section concerning employability first provides the historical development of the concept after which different views regarding the concept will be presented. These different views can be roughly divided into those that focus on the factors relating to the individual and those that also include contextual

factors. The section is concluded by some final remarks concerning the section and its relevance in terms of this thesis.

2.1.1 The Historical Development of the Employability Concept

At first, it is useful to take a look at the historical development of the concept of employability. Such an account is provided by Gazier (2001). According to him, during the 20th century there were at least seven versions of the concept, each defined differently. These seven versions emerged in three different waves. The first of these waves consisted of a single version, which Gazier (2001, p. 6) calls dichotomic employability. According to this version, which sees the concept as a dichotomy, individuals in need of social assistance were seen as either employable or unemployable in terms of social policy, and if seen as employable aided back into the labour market in the form of public work projects, or if regarded as unemployable provided with social assistance. The criteria in deeming an individual either employable or unemployable largely boiled down to three issues which were age, health and family constraints. This version was in use in the United Kingdom and the United States during the first half of the 1900s. According to Gazier (2001, p. 6), this version of employability had its flaws in terms of not taking the labour market context into account and in not acknowledging the existence of different levels of employability rather than seeing it as a dichotomy.

The second wave of employability versions which Gazier (2001, p. 6) refers to as the birth of the modern versions of the concept, took place in the 1950s and 1960s. It included three version of employability: socio-medical employability, manpower policy employability, and flow employability. The first of these, namely socio-medical employability, was largely developed by health practitioners and created to address the situation of the handicapped. In this version, the level of employability was determined by assessing the physical and mental abilities and impairments of individuals and on this basis intervening with the creation of an action program for those whose impairments were deemed as curable or compensable. The second version, manpower policy employability, was closely related to the first one, although more general by nature. It was devised to address the unemployed with difficulties. In contrast to socio-medical

employability, manpower policy employability included issues beyond health such as self-presentation, criminal record, professional qualifications and mobility, in assessing the distance between the characteristics of an individual and the requirements of the labour market and intervening when possible to narrow down the distance. The third version of the second wave of employability versions, flow employability, took a different perspective according to Gazier (2001, p. 7) in that instead of focusing on the characteristics of individuals it concentrated on the rate at which different groups of the unemployed found employment. Thus, it leaned more on the demand side of labour, as it examined how well or poorly different groups of the unemployed were performing in the labour market.

In terms of the second wave, Gazier (2001, p. 7) points out that socio-medical employability and manpower policy employability, which were created in the United States, had their flaws as well as they focused solely on the individuals looking for work and regarded the labour market conditions as given and unchangeable. Gazier (2001, p. 8), however, adds that flow employability that originated in France had its shortcoming as well as in times of economic downturn and widespread unemployment it was of little use to record ever declining employability rates for different groups of the unemployed as the cause was mainly in the decline of the economic growth rate.

The third wave of employability versions presented by Gazier (2001, pp. 8–9) consisted of three versions developed in the 1980s and 1990s. These were: labour market performance employability, initiative employability and interactive employability. Labour market performance employability was estimated on the basis of statistics regarding employment paths and involved computing three different probabilities for a specified time period. These probabilities related to the instances of gaining a job or jobs, the duration of the job or jobs, and the level of remuneration. On the basis of these probabilities a synthetic indicator was formed to assess the ability of individuals to find paid work. Gazier (2001, p. 8) highlights the fact that this version of employability took also into consideration, although minimally, quality aspects of employment. However, as it did not link any antecedents to the outcomes in the labour market it could serve only as a retrospective tool in the evaluation of policies or programs. Initiative employability, in

its turn, emphasised the responsibility of the individual in making oneself more employable. This meant that building and the ability to build one's human capital and social capital were of utmost importance. According to Gazier (2001, p. 9), human capital refers to the knowledge, skills and learning ability of individuals, whereas social capital refers to the size and composition of the social networks one can utilise in job search. In Gazier's (2001, p. 9) view the advantage of this version was its dynamism, although it had its problem in focusing only on issues related to the individual. Interactive employability was then the version that encompassed both individual and labour market factors in the assessment of an individual's ability to gain employment.

After the above historical evolution of the concept, next some more recent definitions of employability will be reviewed and compared against the versions that Gazier (2001) presented.

2.1.2 Employability Views Focusing on the Individual

Harvey (2001) does not explicitly provide a definition for employability but however implicitly relates it to having what it takes in order to get a job. Thus his take on the matter is strongly focused on the individual and his/her attributes much like in the version of initiative employability presented by Gazier (2001). The context in which Harvey (2001) examines employability is in that of the institutions of higher education, and the relevance of the concept as a measure of quality for these institutions is discussed. He criticises the use of employment rates as a measure of employability and further as a measure of quality of the institutions, which makes sense given the fact that he sees employability as solely relating to the attributes of the individual. Thus, gaining employment is determined by the applicant's employability and the behaviours of the employers, and one can develop employability within and outside the institution of higher education. Therefore, measures of employment rates do not necessarily tell much of the attributes of individuals let alone to what extent these attributes were acquired in the institution under examination.

Holmes (2001) takes a slightly different approach to employability by focusing on the process of interaction between a graduate and a potential employer. He argues that instead of only focusing on the possession of a set of skills seen as required in a position, it would be more useful to concentrate on the ways in which a graduate can present or communicate his or her ability to perform in the position to the potential employer (Ibid, pp. 112, 117–118). Despite the inclusion of the potential employer into the equation, his focus is mainly on the graduate's ability to argue his/her suitability to the position in question. Thus, in terms of the versions provided by Gazier (2001), this take on employability resembles that of initiative employability as well.

The way in which employability is approached by Harvey (2001) and Holmes (2001) results, to a large extent, from the position the concept is looked upon. As both Harvey (2001) and Holmes (2001) are concerned about the ways in which the employability of students and graduates can be enhanced by the institutions of higher education they attend or have attended, the way in which they perceive employability concentrates on a set of attributes relating to the student/graduate. Defining the concept in this way suggests that employability exists before the individual's interaction with the labour markets and therefore gaining employment depends on the interplay between employability and employer behaviour. However, it is then rather problematic that in the assessment of an individual's employability, outcome measures, such as, gaining employment, are often used (Harvey 2001, p. 97). Especially, when employability is equated to the ability of having or gaining employment and seen as originating solely from the characteristics of the individual, then not gaining employment would be seen as resulting solely from the individual's lacking attributes.

Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth (2004, p. 16) define employability as '...a form of work specific active adaptability that enables workers to identify and realise career opportunities'. Thus, they see that employability improves the likelihood of finding new employment, be it within the same organisation or in a different one. Their take on employability focuses on issues related to the individual, which they justify by stating that as individuals have little to none influence on external factors affecting the job search process the focus should be on these individual factors, especially as they regard the

acquisition of the required characteristics as the responsibility of the individual (Ibid, pp. 15–16). According to them, employability consists of three components. These are: personal adaptability, career identity, and social and human capital.

The personal adaptability dimension of the model of Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth (2004) refers to the differences between individuals when it comes to person-centred factors. The authors argue that the differences, relevant to personal adaptability, are such that are created internally, promote activity and lead to external outcomes in the form of adaptive behaviours (Ibid, p. 21). They further identify five such differences which are: 1. optimism, 2. propensity to learn, 3. openness, 4. internal locus of control, and 5. generalised self-efficacy.

In terms of optimism, Peterson (2000, p. 47), relates it to allowing individuals to take a positive stance towards changes and challenges and provides confidence in facing these situations. When it comes to the ability to adapt to different circumstances, the above mentioned consequences can be seen as useful. Next, in terms of propensity to learn, Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth (2004, p. 22) argue that as environments are continuously changing, learning has a vital role in assuring that one can meet the changing requirements of the environment and that one can also even initiate change. Concerning openness, the authors state that it positively affects continuous learning if an individual is open to new experiences and welcomes change. Then in relation to the issue concerning locus of control, which according to Spector (1988, p. 335) relates to the generalised expectancies of individuals regarding whether they can influence outcomes in life themselves (internal locus of control) or whether these outcomes are determined by external forces (external locus of control), Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth (2004, p. 23) argue that an internal locus of control contributes positively to personal adaptability as the belief in one's own abilities to influence outcomes results in proactive, adaptive behaviours. Then, when it comes to generalised self-efficacy, which according to Judge, Erez, and Bono (1998, p. 170) relates to how individuals perceive their abilities in handling different events and challenges in life, Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth (2004, p. 23) find the possession of high generalised self-efficacy relevant for personal adaptability. This is

because confidence in one's own abilities to perform in different situations and challenges translates as the ability to adapt to changes in circumstances.

The career identity dimension in the model of Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth (2004) refers to the factors that provide an individual with a sense of direction in terms of work and career progression. The authors argue that past experiences and future hopes provide the individual with the idea of who he or she is or wants to be career-wise and guides the individual's actions related to the world of work (Ibid, p. 20). Career identity, thus, consists of goals, values, characteristics and behaviours. In terms of employability as a whole, Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth (2004, p. 20) argue that career identity plays the role of merging the different aspects of the three dimensions that are personal adaptability, career identity, and social and human capital into a unified concept of employability.

Then, in terms of the social and human capital dimension, Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth (2004) contend that both forms of capital positively contribute to an individual's ability to identify and realise career opportunities. They also argue that these are included in or influenced by one's career identity that guides their acquisition (Ibid, pp. 23, 28).

The way in which Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth (2004) view employability once again resembles to a large extent the version of initiative employability (Gazier, 2001). However, in addition to human capital and social capital that are the foci of interest in initiative employability, the employability model of Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth (2004) includes career identity and personal adaptability, which means the inclusion of psychological factors into consideration. This is understandable as they seek to improve the understanding of how individuals are able to manage with changes occurring in terms of work and careers. However, their approach has also been criticised for confusing employability with its antecedents (Rothwell & Arnold 2007, p.25).

2.1.3 Employability Views Focusing on Both the Individual and the Context

Hillage and Pollard (1998, p. 2) define employability as the ability to move within the labour market in the pursuit of fulfilling employment, whether in the form of gaining initial employment, switching between jobs and/or organisations, or keeping a job. They see employability as consisting of four elements which are: (1) personal assets, (2) the deployment of these assets, (3) the presentation of the assets, and (4) the context in which work is sought. In terms of personal assets needed in gaining employment, they identify knowledge, skills and attitudes as relevant and note that these assets can be categorised on three different levels according to their importance. The most basic assets include basic skills and personal attributes such as reliability and integrity. The intermediate assets include occupational skills, communication- and problem solving-skills, and personal attributes like motivation and initiative. The high level assets, in their turn, consist of skills such as team working, self management and commercial awareness which contribute to organisational performance.

When it comes to the other elements of the employability model of Hillage and Pollard (1998), the deployment of the personal assets is seen to be dependent on the individual's career management skills. These consist of the abilities to analyse one's occupational interests and abilities, to recognise the existing possibilities and their requirements, and to develop a strategy of how to attain one's occupational desires. In addition, the career management skills include transition skills like job search skills and the ability to adapt in relation to the labour market situation. Then in terms of the presentation of the personal assets, Hillage and Pollard (1998) stress the importance of being able to demonstrate or sell one's assets through the possession of qualifications, references, testimonials, and interview skills. In terms of context they identify personal circumstances (caring responsibilities and household status) and external factors (macro-economic situation, labour market conditions and employers' behaviour regarding recruitment and selection) as issues that jointly influence an individual's ability to move within the labour market.

In comparison to the employability versions identified by Gazier (2001), the definition of Hillage and Pollard is in line with the version of interactive employability as it addresses both individual and contextual factors in the assessment of an individual's ability to move into or between jobs. Their position is understandable when considering their aim was to provide a framework for analysing government policies relating to labour markets. Thus, the inclusion of both individual and contextual factors is necessary as the focus is on a societal level and includes other actors in addition to the individuals seeking for work.

Another definition of employability which resembles that of interactive employability (Gazier, 2001) is given by Brown, Hesketh and Williams (2003, p. 111), who define it as the relative likelihood of getting and keeping different kinds of jobs. They also include both individual and contextual factors as relevant in terms of employability. However, as they see the labour market playing a more central role in determining employability than the individual's capabilities do, they use the word likelihood instead of ability to stress the priority of external factors in the determination of employability. They also refer to different kinds of employment as one might be more employable for certain jobs in comparison to other jobs.

Yet another way of defining employability that reflects the ideas of interactive employability (Gazier, 2001) is provided by Rothwell and Arnold (2007, p. 25), who define it as the ability to get a job one wants or to keep the job one has. They develop and test a scale by which to measure the self-perceived employability of individuals. The way in which they break down the concept into components and build the scale on is done by building a four quadrant matrix with one axis representing the division between internal and external labour markets, and the other axis representing the division between personal and occupational attributes. In terms of personal attributes, which can be seen to reflect the individual factors of some of the previously presented employability models, the issue is on determining the usefulness of these in keeping the present job (internal labour markets) or in getting a new job (external labour markets). Then, the occupational attributes, which reflect more the contextual factors touched upon in earlier paragraphs, can be seen to reflect the demand or need for the kinds of jobs individuals are

performing, be it within the organisation (internal labour markets) or outside of it (external labour markets).

A similar account to employability as in the previous paragraph to the extent that it corresponds to interactive employability (Gazier, 2001) and concerns the individual's perception of employability is provided by Berntson (2008). According to him, '[e]mployability refers to an individual's perception of his or her possibilities of getting new, equal, or better employment' (Ibid, p. 15). Thus, he stresses the distinction between perceived as opposed to actual or objective employability. The focus on perceived employability is argued by the fact that it is actually the perceived state of one's employability rather than the actual state of employability that affects the thoughts, behaviours and actions of individuals and if this perception is positive it may result in feeling secure and independent with regard to the environment (Ibid, pp. 8, 19).

In terms of the factors perceived employability is built upon Berntson (2008, p. 12) divides these into those relating to the individual and those seen as situational. The individual factors include knowledge and skills, social capital, attitudes, demographics and dispositions, whereas the situational factors include labour market structure, labour market opportunities and organisational factors. In terms of the individual factors, when it comes to attitudes, those relating to work such as flexibility and adaptability are of relevance (Ibid, pp. 27–28). In terms of dispositions, on the other hand, issues such as locus of control and self-efficacy are raised (Ibid, p. 28).

When it comes to the situational factors affecting perceived employability, in terms of labour market structure, issues such as the state of the economy and the related supply of jobs are of interest (Berntson 2008, pp. 23–24). Labour market opportunities on the other hand relate to the ideas that there exist differences between local labour markets and that labour markets are segmented and provide different segments different opportunities (Ibid, p.24). For instance, jobs in the primary segment provide good working conditions, opportunities for career advancement, employment stability and high negotiated wages, whereas jobs in the secondary segment are characterised by employment instability, low wages, few opportunities for career advancement, poor working condi-

tions and high labour turnover (Ahmad 2005, 19). In terms of organisational factors issues such as hiring practices and the provision of development opportunities are seen as relevant (Berntson 2008, p. 25).

Berntson (2008) also empirically tests the relationship between some of the individual and situational factors and perceived employability. According to his results, education, competency development, national economic prosperity, working in metropolitan areas, working in physically pleasant jobs, and working in psychologically demanding jobs are positively associated with perceived employability (Ibid, pp. 49–50). However, only a limited amount of possible factors influencing perceived employability are tested in the study and thus issues pertaining to, for instance, social capital, different skill sets and attitudes might also prove to be relevant.

McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) present their framework of employability. According to their definition, employability is the ability to find employment or move between jobs (Ibid, p. 207). This is built on the individual’s characteristics, circumstances and external factors. Accordingly, their framework consists of three main interrelated components influencing an individual’s employability. These are: (1) individual factors, (2) personal circumstances, and (3) external factors. These components are broken down into subcomponents as seen in the table below.

Table 1. Employability Framework

Individual factors	Personal circumstances	External factors
Employability skills and attributes	Household circumstances	Demand factors
Demographic characteristics	Work culture	Enabling support factors
Health and well-being	Access to resources	
Job seeking		
Adaptability and mobility		

Source: McQuaid and Lindsay (2005, pp. 209-210)

The first subcomponent of the Individual factors, namely the employability skills and attributes, consists of eight further subcomponents: 1. Essential attributes, 2. Personal competencies, 3. Basic transferable skills, 4. Key transferable skills, 5. High level transferable skills, 6. Qualifications, 7. Work knowledge base, and 8. Labour market attachment. The essential attributes include those of possessing basic social skills, having a positive attitude towards work and being reliable. Personal competencies, on the other hand, include confidence, motivation and being proactive. When it comes to the different types of transferable skills, the basic ones include literacy, writing, numeracy and verbal presentation; the key skills include problem solving, team-working, communication and basic information and communication technology skills; and the high level skills include such skills as commercial awareness and continuous learning. The subcomponent of qualifications consists of academic and vocational qualifications, whereas the subcomponent of work knowledge base consists of work experience and occupational skills. Then, the subcomponent of labour market attachment is concerned with the current duration of un/employment and work history. (McQuaid & Lindsay 2005, pp. 208–209)

Moving on with the other subcomponents of individual factors, the demographic characteristics involve such issues as age, gender and ethnicity. The health and well-being subcomponent includes issues related to health in general, such as physical and mental health and medical history, and issues related to possible disabilities, like mental, physical or learning disabilities. The job seeking subcomponent, in its turn, deals with issues related to the effectiveness of identifying and searching for jobs. These include the extent to which formal search services and appropriate search technologies are utilised, the abilities related to completing CVs and being successful in interviews, and the extent to which informal social networks are used in job search. In addition, the job seeking subcomponent is also concerned with the overall intensity of the job search efforts and the level of how realistic the job targeting approach is. The final subcomponent of individual factors, adaptability and mobility, relates to the flexibility concerning the types of jobs sought after as well as the willingness to search employment within a larger geographical area. The flexibility in job search may involve considering jobs across differ-

ent sectors, jobs involving shift work and jobs with different wage levels. (McQuaid & Lindsay 2005, pp. 210–211)

The second component of the framework, personal circumstances, includes three sub-components. These are: household circumstances, work culture and access to resources. The household circumstances involve issues such as direct caring responsibilities, other family and caring responsibilities, and other household circumstances. The direct caring responsibilities may refer to taking direct care of children or elderly relatives, whereas the other family and caring responsibilities involve financial, emotional and time commitments to relatives or other individuals. The other household circumstances include, for instance, the access to affordable and safe housing. The subcomponent of work culture, in its turn, refers to the existence of encouragement and support towards working held by one's family, peers and the surrounding community. Then, the subcomponent of access to resources includes the access to private transport, financial capital and social capital. Access to social capital refers to the availability of formal and informal support networks that may assist in the job search process. (McQuaid & Lindsay 2005, pp. 209, 212)

The third and final component of the framework, external factors, consists of two sub-components: demand factors and enabling support factors. The demand factors involve issues relating to labour market factors, macroeconomic factors, vacancy characteristics and recruitment factors. In terms of labour market factors, the focus is on issues such as the level of and changes in the local and regional labour demand. The possible changes may refer to the skill levels required as well as the distribution of vacancies across sectors. In addition, issues that are relevant and pertain to labour market factors include the extent to which there is competition over jobs and the proximity of the local labour markets in relation to centres of industry. Then in terms of macroeconomic factors, issues of importance include the overall quality and size of labour demand on the level of the national economy as well as the macroeconomic stability of the economy. When it comes to vacancy characteristics, the issues of interest involve the types of employment opportunities available, be it full-time or part-time employment, shift work or work involving business hours, or employment on a fixed term or indefinite contract. Addition-

ally, the extents to which vacancies include career progression opportunities and the levels of remuneration involved are also issues to take into consideration. The recruitment factors, in their turn, involve issues relating to the ways in which employers formally and informally recruit new personnel. These include the search channels used by the employers, the selection criteria applied, and the possible occurrence of discrimination. (McQuaid & Lindsay 2005, pp. 209, 213)

The other subcomponent of the external factors component, namely the enabling support factors, deals with issues pertaining to employment policy factors and other enabling policy factors. In terms of employment policy factors, the provision, accessibility and credibility of public services relating to job search are of relevance as well as the availability of incentives, whether related to tax or benefits, which influence the decisions of potential job searchers to take on employment and the decisions of employers to hire. Also, the provision and relevance of training aimed at improving the employment likelihood of job seekers is of relevance and so is the extent to which employability issues are addressed in education. Other enabling support factors, in their turn, include the likes of having access and affording public transport and child care. (McQuaid & Lindsay 2005, pp. 210, 213)

The employability framework of McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) provides quite a comprehensive take on the different factors that may influence an individual's willingness and ability to seek employment and his/her possibilities of gaining employment if job search is undertaken. Their model reflects the idea of interactive employability too (Gazier, 2001) as it encompasses both individual and external factors. Similarly to Hillage and Pollard (1998), McQuaid and Lindsay are also concerned with labour market policy and therefore as their viewpoint relates to the societal level they attempt to include all the possible factors influencing an individual's employability. It could be argued, however, that they want to stress the importance of the contextual factors as only one of the three main components of their employability framework relates to the abilities or characteristics of the individual.

2.1.4 Concluding Remarks Concerning the Employability Section

In conclusion, it can be said that there does not exist one universally accepted approach to the concept of employability. The discussion above presents some of the ways it has been approached and the rationales behind those approaches. However, although there are differences in the definitions of employability and the extent to which different types of factors are included into the employability equation, the underlying idea common to the different approaches is the relationship of employability with employment. That is, the attempt to identify the crucial factors that in the end are relevant in terms of employment is a common theme across the different approaches. However, the different approaches presented earlier can be roughly divided into two groups: those that focus on the factors relating to the individual (initiative employability (Gazier, 2001)), and the others that include also contextual factors (interactive employability (Gazier, 2001)). Across the different approaches, even within the two main groups, there appear differences in the included factors and the way in which the different factors are prioritised. This division into two groups and the debate of the relative importance of individual and contextual factors can be seen to reflect the agency-structure debate which has historically been present in the social sciences (Louvrier 2013, p. 6).

In relation to the topic of this thesis and the issue under investigation, namely the employability of highly educated foreigners in Finland, this section has provided an overview of the different possible factors that may influence an individual's decision to partake in the labour markets and his or her performance within these markets. The employability models that have been presented have related to the situations of individuals who are in transition from study or other non-work activities into the world of work, those who are unemployed and looking for work, those employed trying to maintain employment, and the employed moving within the labour markets, be it within one organisation or between organisations. Thus, the focus has not been specifically on issues relating to the situation of highly educated individuals searching for employment in a country other than their own, in the case of this thesis it is Finland. However, the factors identified in the employability frameworks are such that can be seen to relate to the situation of these individuals as well. For instance, the proposed relevance of knowl-

edge and skills can be seen to relate to the educational background of the individuals who are of interest in this thesis. Similarly, issues proposed as relevant such as discrimination and access to social capital can be seen to relate to the foreign backgrounds of these individuals.

2.2 Diversity Management, Talent Management and Career Studies

This section of the literature review chapter of this thesis covers the literature streams concerning diversity management, talent management and career studies to the extent that they relate to the topic of the employability of highly educated foreigners. As the previous section concerning employability focused on issues affecting the ability and chances of gaining employment on a more general level and in relation to different kinds of individuals, this section will focus more on issues that relate specifically to the individuals this thesis focuses on. Thus, diversity management is explored as it is a theme relating to the foreign backgrounds of these individuals, whereas talent management is investigated as it relates to their educational backgrounds. These two themes can be seen as ways in which organisations can address the issues of difference and talent. Career studies on the other hand can be seen to relate to both characteristics and provide understanding to the way the individuals make sense regarding their surroundings and the decisions they make concerning their careers.

2.2.1 *Diversity Management*

Louvrier (2013) provides a brief account of the developments leading to the emergence of the diversity management field. In terms of issues relating to difference within the organisational setting, organisational research started taking these issues into account in a more consistent manner with the emergence of gender studies in the late 1970s. Afterwards, other differences, for instance, in terms of ethnicity, social class and race were also beginning to be addressed in research, however, in the form of concentrating on a particular difference one at a time. Since the 1990s, however, the research on differences in organisational settings took a new approach with diversity management, which allows addressing a number of differences simultaneously. This approach originated in

management practice and, thus, is more concerned with finding new ways of addressing the issue of diversity in managerial practice rather than informing organisational theorising, which was more the case with the earlier research that focused on certain differences, one at a time. (Louvrier 2013, p. 2)

Then when it comes to defining diversity management, it appears, similarly as it was in the case of employability, that there are more ways than one to define it. Generally, it can be seen as referring to a number of different organisational and managerial issues and practices that relate to hiring individuals with different backgrounds and the effective utilisation of the resulting diverse workforce (Cox & Blake 1991, pp. 45–46). However, the way in which meaning is given to diversity management can be seen as generally following the lines of how the nature of difference is viewed, which according to Louvrier (2013, p. 3) can be seen to occur on a continuum with an essentialist perspective on one end and a constructionist perspective on the other. According to her, the essentialist view sees differences as internal to the person and that these differences may be used in predicting or explaining the behaviours of the individual, whereas the constructionist perspective sees differences as constructs that are produced in the interaction of individuals and the environment. Thus, the essentialist view sees that the identity of an individual is unified and coherent across different situations, whereas according to the constructionist view an individual may have multiple fragmented identities that come into play in different situations (Ibid, p.3).

The relevance of how the nature of difference is viewed in terms of managing diversity comes from the fact that the organisation has a different role depending on the point of view. The essentialist approach would mean that the organisation would see itself as detached from the individuals' differences or their valuations, whereas an organisation following the constructionist approach would acknowledge that it also has a role in giving meanings or values to different differences (Louvrier 2013, p. 4). This division between treating differences as neutral as opposed to acknowledging that differences are given values in the social context will thus have an effect on how diversity is managed. For instance, if an essentialist approach is adopted, an organisation will assume that its functioning in relation to different individuals is value free and equality can be achieved

by treating everyone in the same way, whereas a constructionist approach would rather identify that organising is not value free and certain individuals may require special treatment in order to achieve equality given the value-laden nature of organising (Ibid, p. 7).

Then in terms of the rationale to engage in managing diversity, it has been argued that it can lead to gains in performance. For instance, from the viewpoint of corporate social responsibility, activities that contribute to the reputation of an organisation, such as addressing diversity issues, lead to increased profitability and market valuation (Bird et al. 2007, pp. 191, 198). Contributing to the discussion of improving performance through managing diversity, Cox and Blake (1991) identify six areas in which competitive advantage can be achieved through addressing diversity: 1. cost, 2. resource acquisition, 3. marketing, 4. creativity, 5. problem solving, and 6. organisational flexibility. In terms of cost, they state that if diversity is not taken into consideration, costs related to employee turnover and absenteeism may be substantial. This of course, however, is dependent on the degree of diversity within the organisation. In terms of resource acquisition, they argue that the reputational advantages related to diversity management will lead to the ability to attract candidates with different backgrounds thus leading to the opportunity to compete for the best personnel. The marketing argument, in its turn, is based on the notion that utilising the knowledge of individuals with different backgrounds, when marketing products to market segments sharing these backgrounds, can lead to enhanced and more effective activities. Then when it comes to creativity and problem solving, Cox and Blake (1991) contend that the increased number of perspectives that follows from managing diversity will have a positive influence on these issues as it provides new and different ideas and solutions. Then, concerning organisational flexibility, they argue that managing diversity leads to less standardised operation methods which enhance the ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

The relationship between managing diversity and enhanced performance has, however, also been viewed as not so straightforward. Research on the relationship has namely provided conflicting results (Ely & Thomas 2001, pp. 233–234). The explanation to this variance in the results has been suggested to originate in the fact that there are factors

that moderate the relationship. Ely and Thomas (2001) argue that the moderator in this relationship is the perspective concerning diversity that the work group holds. They identify three such perspectives (integration and learning, access and legitimacy, discrimination and fairness) that differ in terms of why diversity is sought, how cultural identity is valued, and the way in which diversity is connected to work. The integration and learning perspective views the rationale of diversifying as enhancing core work, sees that cultural identity is a valuable resource enabling learning and renewal, and aims at integrating diversity throughout work. The access and legitimacy perspective, on the other hand, sees that diversity should be sought to have access to different markets and to gain legitimacy in operating within these markets, considers cultural identity as a resource only in relation to occasions when it matches those of the sought diverse customers, and diversity is connected to work only when dealing with diverse customers. Then, according to the discrimination and fairness perspective, diversity is sought in order to achieve equality and eliminate discrimination, cultural identity is rather a threat than a resource as it can be a basis for discrimination, and diversity should not be incorporated in work.

In terms of the outcomes of the three perspectives, all were seen as successful in providing managers motivation to diversify their staffs, but the integration and learning perspective was the only one providing sustained positive outcomes from diversity (Ely & Thomas 2001). This is because the integration and learning perspective truly incorporated diversity into its work processes enabling learning and open discussion of differences, whereas the access and legitimacy perspective utilised the diversity of staff only when it was seen necessary in terms of the customer. The discrimination and fairness perspective, in its turn, did not utilise diversity at all and rather tried to make it disappear. This discussion of perspectives has a lot in common with the idea of viewing differences on the essentialist-constructionist continuum (Louvrier 2013). On this continuum the integration and learning perspective could be seen to represent the constructionist end, and the discrimination and fairness perspective the essentialist end. The access and legitimacy perspective would lie somewhere in between.

As already stated earlier, diversity management has more to it than hiring or recruiting individuals with different backgrounds (Cox & Blake 1991, pp. 45–46). However, as this thesis is concerned with investigating employability and gaining employment, the issues of recruitment and selection become most central among the different issues relating to managing diversity. One suggestion for improvement relating to the issues of recruitment and selection in managing diversity is that the focus in developing job descriptions and in the selection of applicants should be on issues that are truly relevant in terms of the jobs in question (D’Netto & Sohal 1999, p. 532). One issue that might be of interest in this respect could be language requirements. For instance, the required level of proficiency in terms of language skills should be in relation to the actual job content. Another similar issue that D’netto and Sohal (1999, p. 542) point out is the requirement of country specific work experience, which does not necessarily translate as better performance in comparison to work experience gained elsewhere.

Another issue that is of relevance in terms of recruitment and selection when it comes to managing diversity is attracting employees with different backgrounds. One way of achieving this is by performing in a pro diversity manner and thus building a reputation as an employer that offers opportunities to individuals with different backgrounds (Cox & Blake 1991, pp. 48–49). In terms of getting the attention of diverse individuals, recruitment activities could be performed in ways in which individuals with different backgrounds are specifically targeted, for instance, by advertising vacancies in ethnic newspapers (D’Netto & Sohal 1999, p. 542). In addition, to support diversity efforts, organisations could build partnerships with educational institutions to enhance the recruitment of individuals with different backgrounds (Schreiber, Price & Morrison 1993, p. 59)

Diversity management has been examined in the context of Finland as well. Although, as immigration is rather new to Finland (Ahmad 2005, p. 5), the country has been said to be, as such, in an early stage of diversification and the management of diversity as only in the very beginning (Sippola & Leponiemi 2007, p. 111). However, more recently diversity management has also been described as a current issue in Finland (Louvrier 2013 p. 66). In terms of how diversity has then been addressed in Finland, Sippola

and Leponiemi (2007), for instance, present a multiple case study on ten organisations in Finland. They discovered that diversity was generally not taken into account on the strategic level as only one of the organisations had diversity included in their HRM strategy. Two of the organisations, which were subsidiaries of foreign multinational companies, did, however, follow the guidance set by the parent company level strategies covering diversity.

Despite the lack of addressing diversity on the strategic level, some changes were, however, discovered to be made on the operational level, for instance, in the area of recruitment (Sippola & Leponiemi 2007). Ways in which diversity was found to have been taken into account included co-operating with diversity promoting organisations, which was done by four out of the ten case companies. The nature of the co-operation as well as the nature of the activities of the diversity promoting organisations remained, however, unknown. Two of the companies also provided their recruiters diversity training, although it was noted that the selection criteria in many other cases were not adjusted at all in terms of diversity. Two of the organisation did, however, specifically target individuals with different backgrounds in their recruitment activities and the relevance of the already employed diverse individuals in increasing the recruitment of new diverse employees was specifically pointed out. There were, thus, some changes found to have been made in terms of recruitment, although, it could be argued that the level and commonness of these changes was not remarkably high.

In addition to the study of Sippola and Leponiemi (2007), also Louvrier (2013) has investigated the theme of diversity management in Finland. She studied six organisations and discovered rather similarly that in terms of recruitment there have been some changes. For instance, some of the companies had previously even directly rejected foreign applicants and their new stance towards them could be seen as a sign of decreased discrimination. The welcoming or acceptance of diverse individuals to the workforce had also increased the amount of foreign applicants and similarly to the findings of Sippola and Leponiemi (2007) the importance of those foreigners already employed, in the recruitment of new ones was highlighted. An interesting common feature in the investigation of diversity management in Finland, however, was that the main motive for turn-

ing towards increasing the diversity of the workforce had been the decreasing number of natives applying for employment within these companies (Louvrier 2013; Sippola & Leponiemi 2007). Louvrier (2013) highlights this issue to concern especially organisations offering low skilled and low salaried jobs.

In terms of diversity management and its relevance concerning this thesis, it can be concluded that it could play a role in the employment of highly educated foreigners in Finland. First of all, as it was seen there are a number of different motives why organisations may choose to consider different kinds of individuals as potential employees. This could then, regardless of the motives, even lead to specific measures in attracting a diverse pool of applicants. However, when it comes to the context of Finland the existing evidence would suggest that diversity may be an issue that is more likely to be addressed by large multinationals instead of domestic organisations. In addition, as the main motive for diversification, at least in terms of jobs requiring low skills, seemed to stem from necessity rather than seeing diversity as itself bringing value, it remains intriguing to see what the motive, if there exists one, is for high skilled jobs.

2.2.2 Talent Management

As it was with employability and diversity management, unsurprisingly, also talent management is a concept that lacks a universally agreed definition. Lewis and Heckman (2006) present a review of the literature covering the domain of talent management and criticise the lack of clarity relating to how the concept has been approached and to some extent attribute this lack of clarity to the fact that the literature dealing with talent management is largely based on publications aimed at practitioners instead of academic research. They identify three main lines of thought within the talent management literature they reviewed. The first approach sees talent management as no more than a set of practices, (such as recruitment, selection, development and succession management), typically related to the activities of the human resource department. The distinguishing factors between talent management and the traditional management of human resources in this approach are arguably the higher pace of implementing these practices, the involvement of the entire organisation rather than only the human resource department in

the implementation, and the potential utilisation of the available technology in the implementation.

The second approach to talent management identified by Lewis and Heckman (2006, p.140) involves considering talent management as a way of ensuring that there is an adequate number of employees in relation to the needs of the organisation and that the internal movement between jobs or career progression is handled smoothly again with the help of technology. The third approach, in its turn, concentrates on the idea of talent in a generic way without regard to a specific task to be filled. This approach consists of two main views regarding talent. According to the first view, employees can and should be divided into different talent pools on the basis of their performance and the organisations should seek for high performers and reward them differentially regardless of their roles. The second view, on the other hand, concentrates on the potential of each individual employee and the realisation of their potential.

Lewis and Heckman (2006, p. 141) criticise all three approaches to talent management that they identified in their review. They see the first approach as renaming human resource management as talent management without improving the understanding of how to manage talent effectively and strategically. They also see the second approach as nothing more than replacing the names of workforce planning and succession management with talent management again with little improvement to understanding how to manage talent. They consider the third approach problematic as well because regardless of focussing on either high performers or each employee of the organisation the approach would not be strategic as it would not be based on the resource needs set by the organisation's strategy.

Lewis and Heckman (2006, p. 149) then do, however, present their own take on talent management as a strategic process that involves dealing with issues concerning talent on different levels. First of all, on the strategic level of the organisation it should be determined to what extent different resources are necessary for gaining sustainable competitive advantage. Then, in relation to human resources it can further be determined what the most important talent groups are for the successful attainment of the organisa-

tion's goals. After the identification of the different talent groups, it is possible to evaluate the needed performance levels within each talent group, and approaches to compensation and career progression for employees from different groups with different performance levels. On the level of talent management systems, it then becomes necessary to ensure that the systems facilitate the taken approaches and effectively guide the implementation of practices aimed at improving the required areas of talent. These practices include, for instance, recruitment, selection, training and development.

Similarly to Lewis and Heckman (2006), the strategic significance of talent management has been emphasised by Christensen Hughes and Rog (2008, p. 743), who see engaging in talent management as committing to the implementation of a human resource management approach that is strategic, integrated and utilises the available technology. In addition, to the apparent similarity to the views of Lewis and Heckman (2006) concerning the content of talent management, Christensen Hughes and Rog (2008) also similarly point out the fact that talent management has not been receiving much attention within the academic field. They do, however, stress the role talent management could have in providing the opportunity for human resource management to rise to its full potential. This would raise the work of professionals within human resources, in terms of organisational significance, to a higher level.

The significance of talent management in the successful implementation of an organisation's strategy becomes apparent in the article of Lewis and Heckman (2006), as well as in that of Christensen Hughes and Rog (2008). Christensen Hughes and Rog (2008, p. 746), specifically point out the areas of acquiring and retaining talent, as well as engaging employees as areas that can be enhanced through talent management, further leading to enhanced organisational performance. In terms of relevance to this thesis, the acquisition of talent is of most interest among these three areas. Within the area of acquiring talent Christensen Hughes and Rog (2008, p. 753) suggest that improvements can be made through employer brand development as well as through broadening the scope of labour sources to include, for instance, foreigners. Thus, it would seem necessary for organisations to consider what it is they are offering potential employees, how they are

perceived by these potential employees in relation to other organisations, and who actually could constitute the group of potential employees.

Concerning talent management, it can be concluded that it is concerned with ensuring that the organisation has the required human resources in order to achieve sustained competitive advantage. Thus, it could be argued that attracting individuals who correspond to the strategic requirements would be of utmost importance to the organisation. Then in relation to the topic of this thesis, the significance of highly educated individuals as potential human resources would be hard to ignore regardless of the level of labour demand and supply. This is not to say that any individual with higher education would automatically be a strategic resource to any organisation, rather it is the case that the likelihood of locating human resources that may prove to be of strategic importance is arguably higher within groups of people with specific expertise such as among those who are highly educated. This becomes increasingly clear when considering the technological progress of economies and the consequent heightened number of knowledge workers, which calls for emphasis to be put into the recruitment of the best talent available regardless of gender, race or nationality (Brown, Hesketh & Williams 2003, p. 113).

2.2.3 Career Studies

As already touched upon earlier, the area of career studies is relevant to this thesis in the sense that it provides understanding to how individuals make decisions relating to their careers, and to the issues that might influence their career trajectories. One theme related to the examination of careers that is mentioned in the literature and appears important in gaining understanding on the current state of affairs regarding careers is the change that has taken place in the world of work. Long-term employment has, for instance, become harder to come by (Rothwell & Arnold 2007, p. 24). This is one aspect of the transition towards a knowledge-driven economy that Moreau and Leathwood (2006, p. 305) argue has taken place among the post-industrial economies, which has led to increased competitiveness and an increased focus and dependency on skills and knowledge.

The change in working life has also been noted by Berntson (2008), who provides a description of the contemporary labour market. He argues that the two most defining characteristics of the contemporary labour market are flexibility and individualisation. In terms of flexibility, Berntson (2008, p. 2) states that it can take place in the form of numerical flexibility or functional flexibility. The former refers to the ability to control or regulate the number of employees, for instance, through increasing the proportion of temporary employees within the workforce. Functional flexibility, on the other hand, is concerned with broadening the skills of the staff so that they can perform a broader range of tasks than before. Berntson (2008) also notes that flexibility can be sought in a more general way through organisational changes such as reorganisations in the pursuit to adapt to changing circumstances. Against the notion of the transition to a knowledge-driven economy characterised with fierce competition (Moreau & Leathwood 2006), the search for flexibility is understandable as organisations seek to respond to the increased pace of changes in the environment. This, however, translates as increased uncertainty for the individual (Berntson 2008, pp. 3-4).

In addition to flexibility, Berntson (2008) also discusses the issue of individualisation as the other central characteristic of the contemporary labour market. The individualisation of labour means that individuals have taken the responsibility of their own careers and instead of the organisation it is now the individual who has to plan his/her career and find ways to turn that plan into reality (Berntson 2008, p. 4). This has also been noted by Hall and Mirvis (1995) who have described this shift of responsibility from the organisation to the individual as the new career contract. They propose that this shift can be viewed as either a change in the psychological career contract from relational to transactional or from a more individual perspective from an organisational career to a protean career. In terms of the psychological career contract, which concerns the expectations the employer and employee hold for one another, the shift from relational to transactional means a change from a long-term trust based relationship to one characterised by shorter duration and a focus on gains and performance (Hall & Mirvis 1995, pp. 269–271). Then, when it comes to looking at the issue as a shift from an organisational career to a protean one, it is a move from the ideal of career-long commitment with a

single organisation, characterised by the appreciation of seniority and maturity, to thinking of careers as independent of any organisation and driven by the individual's pursuit of self-fulfilment (Hall & Mirvis 1995, pp. 271–272).

Another term that is used to describe the contemporary career is that of the boundaryless career. Mirvis and Hall (1994) discuss the changes concerning organisations that have been brought by globalisation and the move to information-driven business. They state that these developments have led organisations to continuously reorganise themselves, be it through buying or selling off businesses or through forming partnerships with other organisations. According to them, the boundaries of these flexible organisations are blurred and in a state of continuous change, hence these organisations can be called boundaryless organisations. To work in such organisations calls for the ability to move from one level, function, job or company to another in a seamless manner (Mirvis & Hall 1994, p. 366). This essentially means leading a boundaryless career.

The boundaryless career, according to Mirvis and Hall (1994, p. 366), does bring its own challenges to the individual as continuous changes in tasks and jobs make it increasingly difficult to make sense of one's career and the extent of success or achievement one can feel. They state that in terms of success or achievement this is because it is less likely that an individual can enjoy such things as job security, a steadily rising income, or status gains related to promotions. Therefore, in terms of achievement they recommend taking a broader view in defining personal success. This is where the idea of the pursuit of self-fulfilment or leading a protean career (Hall & Mirvis 1995, pp. 271–272), comes to play.

In terms of viewing the contemporary career context through the concept of the protean career, Mirvis and Hall (1994, pp. 369–370) argue that it broadens the way in which careers can be seen to unfold over time and across space. They claim that unlike before a career should not be seen as a single developmental path with one beginning and end, but instead as a number of different cycles including fresh starts after some particular cycles end. Concerning career space, they then argue that it should be viewed to cover more than just paid work as work and non-work roles are intertwined. Thus, the sense of

achievement and success is not and should not be limited only to the domain of work. Hence, the pursuit of self-fulfilment can be seen as trying to find a balance among the different roles an individual holds and the setting of career goals in a corresponding manner. Similarly, it should be noted that the sense of achievement and success might involve different things and consequently aiming at different career goals at different times during the course of a career.

The things that are required in successfully leading a contemporary career have also been discussed in the literature. Mirvis and Hall (1994, p. 368), for instance, mention know-how, learn-how and self-direction as key competencies in the contemporary career context. Similarly, Hall and Mirvis (1995, p. 269) propose identity development and heightened adaptability as the central competencies needed in the current career context and call these meta-skills to emphasise their nature as skills to build skills. This readiness or ability to navigate in the career context of today resembles very much the discussion concerning employability. After all, changes in a career in many cases involve a transition from one task, job or organisation to another and employability is in many cases defined as the ability or chances of doing just that. For instance, Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth (2004) argued that employability consists of three components that are: social and human capital, personal adaptability, and career identity. The similarity of these components with the three competencies (know-how, learn-how and self-direction) presented above by Mirvis and Hall (1994) can be easily noticed.

The discussion concerning the current career environment has, as can be seen above, involved taking into consideration the challenges the changed environment has imposed on the individual. However, the idea of the protean career to a large extent paints a positive picture of the individual who now has the opportunity to decide and define what his/her career will come to be and to pursue that self-fulfilment mentioned by Hall and Mirvis (1995, pp. 271–272). Though, other views on the matter exist as well. Although, employees might be considered freer they still have to make a living and employers, on the other hand, can be seen to have freed themselves from their moral and social obligations towards employees (Brown, Hesketh & Williams 2003, p. 115).

The career literature does also cover the issue of international careers. Carr, Inkson and Thorn (2005, p. 386) introduce the concept of talent flow which they define as the migration of economically valuable individuals between countries. They argue that the examination of global careers can be divided into focusing on traditional expatriate assignments within organisations or on voluntary migrant expatriation. Out of the two, they find voluntary migrant expatriation or talent flow as more significant not least because of its sheer size in comparison to traditional expatriation. They continue that skilled migrants are a significant potential resource for international organisations. This concept of talent flow is then undoubtedly relevant when considering the topic of this thesis.

Carr, Inkson and Thorn (2005, p. 388) also bring up the earlier presented notion of the boundaryless career and extend or modify it a bit to come up with the notion of the boundaryless global career. They argue that in their extension of the concept in comparison to the original, moving across boundaries involves not only crossing organisational but national boundaries. According to them, in a global boundaryless career validation is also drawn outside of the present country instead of only outside the current employer. It is also said to be sustained by international networks or information and not only networks or information external to the organisation. Basically, their idea is to point out that even though the idea of the boundaryless career decouples the notion of a career from any single organisation the career might still be coupled or bounded by a nation. Their take on the global boundaryless career aims at conceptualising a career that breaks these national boundaries as well.

As it was with the more general contemporary career already discussed earlier, also the global boundaryless career has been argued to be dependent on certain issues. According to Carr, Inkson and Thorn (2005, p. 389) the determinants of such a career are: the motivation to make such a career move, the possession and development of the required skills and experiences (including language skills), and the forming and strengthening of networks and reputation. In terms of the motives to internationalise a career they state that five main factors can be identified. These are: 1. economic factors, 2. political factors, 3. cultural factors, 4. family factors, and 5. career factors. Carr, Inkson and Thorn

(2005, p.389–390) add that these factors come together to form a combination of motives for an individual's decision to migrate and involve issues relating to different roles the individual has besides the work role. In addition, they argue that different motives may become stronger with time and lead to further migrations.

Cerdin, Diné and Brewster (2014) also discuss the issue of international careers. Their focus is on qualified (university-educated) immigrants and they argue that the success of these individuals depends largely on their motivation to integrate into their host society which in its turn is dependent on the initial motivation to migrate. Concerning the motivation to migrate, Cerdin, Diné and Brewster (2014) found similar motives (economic, political, cultural, family-based, and career-based) to those presented by Carr, Inkson and Thorn (2005). However, they approach the motives to migrate through comparing the gains and losses for an individual in the decision to migrate from one country to another. By doing so, they arrive at four different types of migration.

The first of the four types of migration presented by Cerdin, Diné and Brewster (2014, p.156), felicitous migration, is characterised by both strong gains and losses, meaning that the individual might have a lot to gain from moving, for instance in the form of career advancement, but at the same may lose much in another area of life, such as family ties or the security of a familiar environment. In this type of migration the perceived gains exceed the losses and result in migration. The second type of migration, desperate migration, involves weak gains and strong losses, essentially meaning being forced to migrate. The third type of migration, chance migration, involves both weak gains and losses and reflects a situation in which migration can be seen to result from taking an opportunity in a situation where either staying or leaving would not make a world of difference. The fourth type of migration, dream migration, is then the one involving strong gains and weak losses meaning that migration would almost solely be connected with positive things.

Then in terms of the connection between the motivation to migrate and the motivation to integrate, Cerdin, Diné and Brewster (2014, p.159) argue that the motivation to integrate would be the highest among dream migrants, lowest among desperate migrants

and somewhere in between for chance and felicitous migrants. They do, however, add that this relationship is moderated by met expectations and organisational integration policies. Concerning met expectations, Cerdin, Diné and Brewster (2014, p. 161) claim that for felicitous and dream migrants, who tend to have higher expectations concerning the host country, negative experiences will have a strong and negative effect on their efforts to integrate whereas positive experiences will have only a slightly positive effect on those efforts. Then in terms of chance migrants and desperate migrants who do not usually expect much from the host country, negative experiences will only have a slight negative effect on their efforts to integrate, while positive experiences will have a strong and positive effect on these efforts.

When it comes to the issue of organisational integration policies, Cerdin, Diné and Brewster (2014, p.162) state that these have a significant positive influence on the integration efforts of felicitous and desperate migrants. This is because for these individuals the decision to migrate has involved strong losses which can be compensated through these integration policies. For dream and chance migrants, however, these policies will only somewhat strengthen their efforts to integrate as in their cases there is less to compensate for.

Cerdin, Diné and Brewster (2014, p.163) conclude their study by arguing that the larger the motivation to integrate, the more successful the migrant when it comes to satisfaction in work or life in general and in terms of career satisfaction. In conclusion their take on international career success begins by identifying four types of migrants differing in terms of their motivation to migrate which further determines their motivation to integrate, which then determines their success. The relationship between motivation to migrate and motivation to integrate is, however, moderated by met expectations and organisational integration policies.

In conclusion, when it comes to career studies, it can be said that examining the changed career environment and subsequent changes in the responsibilities and challenges of building a career, does provide a meaningful contribution to this thesis. Although, as mentioned previously much of the discussion in this field does overlap or

closely resemble the discussion concerning employability, one defining factor that comes strongly through is the relevance of the individual's identity, self-direction or motivation. This implies that it is of great importance to have or develop that knowledge of what you want, what is important, or having that internal guide or compass to navigate in the career context. Investigating these issues provides an explanation to why individuals make the decisions they make in the labour markets. In terms of international or global careers that are arguably closest to the topic of this thesis that internal drive guiding the career/migration decisions is just as, or even more central when compared with national career decisions.

2.3 Foreigners in the Finnish Labour Market

In this third section of the literature review of this thesis the focus is on how foreigners have performed in the Finnish labour market and the reasons behind their performance. Discussing the Finnish context is important because the context in which the search for employment takes place arguably has an influence on which factors prove to be most relevant in terms of job search. The Finnish context is characterised by the fact that the number of foreigners or individuals with foreign backgrounds has increased substantially quite recently in a relatively short period of time and, although, the proportion of foreigners in the entire population is still quite modest, the national labour markets in Finland are becoming increasingly diverse. The arguably rather limited history of foreigners participating in the Finnish labour markets as well as the uniqueness of the Finnish language, are issues that may set the Finnish context apart from say the context of an English speaking country.

As already mentioned there have been studies in Finland that are related to the employment of foreigners, for instance, in the field of sociology (see Ahmad 2005; Valtonen 2001), although many of the studies have concerned immigrants in general regardless of educational background. However, there are also some reports on the issue of employment that concern foreign graduates from Finnish institutions of higher education. The findings of these studies and reports relating to foreigners in general and highly educated ones in particular will be presented in this section of the literature review.

2.3.1 Foreigners in Finland

To begin the discussion about the performance of foreigners in the Finnish labour market, it is good to briefly introduce the developments in the number of foreigners in Finland. According to Ahmad (2005, p. 5), due to historical, geographical and economic factors, Finland was before relatively homogenous in ethno-cultural terms, and until the 1970s Finland had actually rather been a country of emigration than immigration. In terms of the actual number of foreign citizens in Finland, from 1980 to 2012 their number, in fact, increased from 12853 persons to 195511 persons (Tilastokeskus 2014c). This is, of course, quite a substantial (15-fold) increase in a relatively short period of time. However, as the starting point of 12853 persons is quite modest, it perhaps is a better idea to take a look at the development of the proportion of foreign citizens in the entire population. According to Tilastokeskus (2014c) this proportion increased from 0,3% to 3,6%. So, although the increase is substantial, the proportion of foreign citizens in the entire population is still quite modest, for instance, in comparison to the other EU countries. Among the EU countries, Finland actually has the sixth lowest proportion of foreign citizens and it is also lower than the total proportion of foreigners in the entire population of the EU countries which was 6,9% in 2011 (Tilastokeskus 2013).

It is also useful to mention a few words concerning the context in which the number of foreigners increased. Attitudes towards immigration were, namely, initially shaped by the prevailing economic conditions at the time larger scale immigration started. The number of immigrants in Finland rose quickly in the beginning of the 1990s as refugees, asylum seekers, returnees from the former Soviet Union and other foreigners started entering the country (Ahmad 2010, p. 72). This period of rapid immigration in Finland coincided with a serious economic recession, which contributed to perceiving immigrants as an economic burden and thus also contributed to the hardening of attitudes (Ahmad 2005, p. 9). These disapproving sentiments among some of the host population may have been caused by the fact that immigration consisted mostly of other forms (family reunions, humanitarian grounds, returnees) of migration than labour migration (Ibid, 10). Also, in the early 2000s, the role of family ties as a basis for immigration was

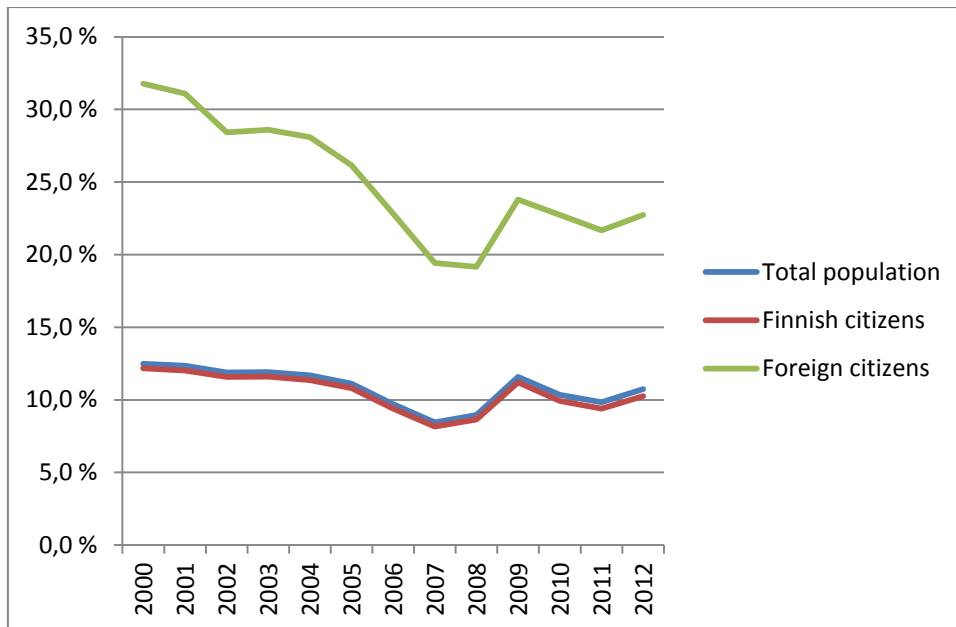
accentuated, but lately the significance of work based immigration has been on the rise (Väänänen et al. 2009, p. 14).

This brief description of the development in the number of foreigners in Finland and the circumstances in which this occurred unfortunately paints a rather unfavourable picture as a starting point to the actual examination of their labour market performance, even if there is a hint that perhaps there has been positive progress. However, even if the proportion of foreigners in Finland might be considered modest, there is research on their participation into the labour market, and this will be examined next.

2.3.2 Foreigners in the Labour Market

This section begins with some statistics on how foreigners have performed in the Finnish labour market to give an initial idea of the situation foreigners face in terms of employment before advancing to the studies conducted in relation to the issue. Tilastokeskus (2014 b) provides data on this topic for the time period of 2000–2012. Concerning the whole population, including both Finnish citizens and foreign citizens, in the year 2000 the unemployment rate was 12,5%. The individual figures for the two groups, however, differed substantially as the unemployment rate for Finnish citizens was 12,2% and that of the foreign citizens was 31,8%. By the year 2012, the unemployment rate of the whole population was 10,7%, the unemployment rate of Finnish citizens was 10,3%, and the unemployment rate of foreign citizens was 22,7%. So, although the unemployment rate of the foreign citizens had somewhat decreased in relation to that of the Finnish citizens it was still more than double for foreign citizens in comparison to Finnish ones. The developments of the unemployment rates are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The unemployment rates of the total population, Finnish citizens and foreign citizens in Finland 2000–2012



Source: Tilastokeskus (2014 b)

Then it is time to turn to the studies concerning foreigners in the Finnish labour market. Valtonen (2001) investigates the unemployment of immigrants in Finland and the difficulties related to their labour market access. The study has been conducted by interviewing immigrant job seekers and by surveying representatives of labour unions, employers and employers' associations. The interview data showed that immigrants have a high level of initiative in job search, use a broad range of job seeking channels and utilise both formal and informal search methods. However, the interviews also showed that most immigrant job seekers faced rejection already in the initial stages of job search. In addition, the interviews revealed that although those immigrants with more advanced educational backgrounds aimed to find employment corresponding to their qualifications, most of them had started to think that succeeding in doing so is impossible. Then according to the survey data in the study of Valtonen (2001), the most important reasons for the high unemployment of immigrants were the lack of Finnish language skills, the economic recession of the 1990s, and the perceptions held by employers that immigrants lack language and vocational skills.

Ahmad (2002) examines the attitudes and practices of employers concerning the recruitment of immigrants and the unequal opportunities of immigrants in finding jobs in the Finnish labour markets. His study was conducted through participant observation by answering 400 job advertisements and undergoing all the processes related to job search. Out of the 400 jobs applied for, six were offered to him. In the study, a native Finn, describing similar characteristics to those the researcher described in his applications, also cross-checked a substantial amount of the vacancies to check any discrepancies between the employers' answers to a native and a non-native. The results of the study showed that in most cases, the previous experience and occupational skills of the non-native applicant were ignored and did not seem to have a large influence on receiving a job offer or even being considered as a potential applicant. In addition, in many cases, employment opportunities nearly disappeared regardless of relevant work experience if there was even one native among the applicants.

Forsander (2002) investigates the developments in the labour market position of immigrants who already have a few years of experience of living in Finland as well as the factors influencing their labour market position. The study was conducted by analysing statistical data concerning the labour market participation of immigrants who had moved to Finland between 1989 and 1993 and by analysing interview data to complement the findings of the statistical data. In terms of the factors influencing the labour market position of immigrants the strongest explaining factor was their country of origin. Immigrants from developing countries and refugees were found to have the weakest labour market position, whereas the strongest labour market position was held by immigrants from Asia and especially the Western countries. Educational background was also found to explain the labour market position of immigrants, however, only partially as it seemed that a degree completed in Finland was of more value in the labour market in comparison to a degree completed elsewhere.

Then in terms of the actual labour market position, Forsander (2002) found that 60% of the studied immigrants had an unstable labour market position meaning that they had been employed during only one of the last two years of the three years that form the period of investigation. Then 28% of the immigrants were found to be in a marginal

labour market position meaning they had not been employed during any of the three years or only during one of the first two years of the investigation period. Only 5% of the immigrants had a stable labour market position meaning that they had been employed during at least the last two years of the investigation period. The remaining 7% were outside of the labour force.

Overall, the labour market position of immigrants has been found to be rather unfavourable (Louvrier 2013 p. 68). According to Väänänen et al. (2009, p. 19) it is unstable and affected by changes in economic conditions. A possible explanation for this is given by Ahmad (2005, p. 7) who states that on the basis of previous studies, it can be assumed that a considerable amount of foreigners, especially those originating from developing countries, are employed in occupations of low human-capital requirements which usually also involve higher levels of employment volatility in times of recession. Immigrants are, thus, overrepresented among those who are the last to gain access to employment and the first to be laid off when times are hard, which puts them in the margins of society, not fully excluded nor included (Forsander 2002, p. 241).

The studies concerning foreigners in the Finnish labour market provide even more explanations for the difficulties they face in acquiring employment in addition to those already mentioned earlier. According to Ahmad (2010, pp. 75–76) there are various factors that have been argued to limit the employment opportunities of immigrants in Finland. These include insufficient Finnish language skills, lack of Finnish cultural skills, the distrust of Finnish employers towards individuals with immigrant backgrounds, discrimination and the low acknowledgement of foreign education and work experience. Other factors, related to those presented above, that have been found to influence the employment opportunities of immigrants include the labour market situation during the time of arrival, length of stay, nationality, and the basis of migration (Väänänen et al. 2009, 19). In addition, the lack of social networks has also been seen as an obstacle in acquiring employment (Ahmad 2005, p. 14).

Despite the fact that a number of different factors have been identified to influence the employment opportunities of immigrants, their weak labour market status is usually

attributed to their lack of human capital (Ahmad 2005, p. 17), such as insufficient language skills. Issues pertaining to the demand side of the labour markets, on the other hand, have not been paid sufficient attention to (Valtonen 2001, p. 423). Thus, it has been implicitly assumed that the problems pertaining to the employment of foreigners are caused mainly by the supply side meaning the lacking attributes of the foreign applicants.

2.3.3 Foreigners with Higher Education

Concerning the employment of foreigners in Finland, there is also evidence relating to the situation of those with higher education. Välivehmas and Ylätaalo (2008) investigate in their report the employers' views on the labour market opportunities and challenges of highly educated job searchers with foreign backgrounds. According to the results of their survey and interviews with employers, the most significant strengths of the highly educated foreigners were considered to be their personal attributes and occupational skills. They were regarded as motivated, committed and were seen to have high work morale and good customer service skills. In addition, they were seen as providers of a new culture in workplaces and their knowledge of business in their own countries was appreciated. In terms of the factors that were seen to facilitate their employment the most, the employers mentioned Finnish language skills, cultural knowledge, familiarity with the industry and the match between education and the quality of work experiences.

Then in terms of the challenges highly educated foreigners face in the labour market (Välivehmas & Ylätaalo 2008), the employers mentioned the lack of language skills, Finnish cultural knowledge and knowledge relating to the rules and legislation concerning work. In addition, limited work experience and the ability to prove their skills as the level and content of foreign education can be hard to determine, were also seen as challenges. Overall, both in terms of opportunities and challenges the discussion seems to revolve around the same issues related to the level of skills and abilities of the job seekers, whereas potential external factors are not mentioned.

Pulkkinen (2003) investigates the employment status of foreigners, who completed a degree at the University of Helsinki during 1997-1999, at the time of graduation as well as at the time the study was conducted. The results of her survey showed that at the time of graduation 65% of the respondents had been employed, 4% had secured a job although were not yet employed, 1% were unemployed, and the rest were engaged in different forms of non-work activities. In terms of those who were employed, 70% had a job related to the field of study and 30% had a job unrelated to the field of study. Then a few years later by the time of the study, 69% of the respondents were employed, which is about the same amount as at the time of graduation, whereas the share of the unemployed had risen to 4%. However, among those with employment, 76% held a job that required an academic background, 21% had one that did not require it and the remaining 3% were uncertain. In terms of the low percentages of unemployment, it is however good to note that between the time of graduation and the time the study was conducted 32% of the respondents had had a period of unemployment.

Shumilova, Cai and Pekkola (2012) also investigate the employment of foreign graduates in Finland. Their survey covers the graduates of 15 Finnish institutions of higher education for the years 2009-2010. The results of their study indicated that nearly 70% of the respondents were employed at the time of the study, whereas the majority of the remaining 30% were continuing further studies. The number of those who were unemployed was not, however, available in their report. Then, concerning the relevance of the employment to the field of studies, the results showed that 57,8% found their employment as fully relevant, 27,1% found it somewhat relevant, and 15,1% found it not at all relevant. The relevance of the employment was also examined in terms of the level of education. The jobs were mostly 64,3% seen to correspond to the level of studies and 10,7% held a job that was seen as above the level of education. However, 14,3% saw their jobs requiring a lower level of higher education than that held by them, and 10,7% had jobs that were seen as not requiring a higher education degree at all.

The results of Shumilova, Cai and Pekkola (2012) are similar to that of the study of Pulkkinen (2003). Both showed similar percentages concerning those who were employed. In terms of the correspondence between employment and education, there were

some differences. However, in both studies the majority of those who were employed had found jobs that corresponded to their field or level of studies. It is, however, good to notice that it is quite difficult to determine how well these figures represent the employment rates of the entire population of highly educated foreigners in Finland. Statistics on the matter are not available.

Determining the difference between the situation of highly educated foreigners and that of natives with higher education is also challenging. However, some idea of the situation may be provided by the fact that in 2012 the percentage of the highly educated, regardless of citizenship, who had graduated in 2011 and were employed was 83,6% (Tilastokeskus 2014 a). Thus, although statistics on the differences of the employment rates between highly educated foreigners and natives are not available, it can be assumed that the employment rates of the foreigners are lower than that of the natives. Similarly, on the basis of the earlier mentioned challenges foreigners, in general, face in the labour market it could be assumed that the correspondence between jobs and education might be higher among the natives than among the foreigners.

There is also further evidence of the factors that influence the employment of highly educated foreigners in Finland. Pulkkinen (2003) found that factors that had significantly improved the opportunities of her respondents in the Finnish labour market included good Finnish language skills, good general language skills, Finnish education, relevant work experience, and personal qualities such as persistency. Concerning challenges or obstacles in finding employment, Pulkkinen (2003) discovered that simply being a foreigner and the possession of insufficient Finnish language skills were seen as hindering factors in gaining employment. In addition, she found that issues, such as, gender, skin colour, age and the lack of social networks were seen to influence the employment opportunities in a negative way.

Similarly, Shumilova, Cai and Pekkola (2012) discovered, on the basis of their survey and interviews with international graduates and representatives of employers, factors that influence the employment of foreign graduates. In terms of barriers to employment, they found that the lack of adequate Finnish or Swedish language skills, the lack of right

contacts and the lack of work experience were among the main obstacles to finding employment. Additional issues that were mentioned as barriers included the limited cooperation between institutions of higher education and the labour market, as well as ethnic discrimination in the recruitment process. Then when it comes to facilitators in finding employment, they found that relevant work experience, team working skills, mastery within one's own field, inter-cultural competences, leadership skills, computer skills, knowledge concerning other disciplines, ability to coordinating projects and activities, analytical and research skills, and the ability to acquire new knowledge fast enhance the likelihood of gaining employment. In addition, Finnish language skills and attitudinal factors, such as, ambition, motivation and energy were seen to have a positive influence on being successful in the labour market.

2.3.4 Concluding Remarks Concerning the Finnish Context

In conclusion, it can be said that in general individuals with foreign backgrounds face more challenges in the Finnish labour markets than natives do and this can be attributed to a host of different factors. It can be argued that one such factor is the fact that the number of foreigners in the country has risen dramatically in a relatively short period of time and the time during which the rapid growth began was not favourable in economic terms. This might have had an impact on the labour markets as well through the shaping of employer attitudes. The unemployment rate of foreigners has, however, decreased from the initial figures, but still remains over two times as high as that of the natives. So, even though it could be argued that there has been positive development, the difference in the performance of foreigners and natives in the labour market remains substantial.

When it comes to the factors affecting the employment of foreigners in general or highly educated ones in particular, issues that had already been discussed in the previous sections of this literature review chapter re-emerged. The significance of the international context, however, can be seen in the types of issues that were brought up. For instance, in terms of factors relating to the individual, issues such as language skills and cultural skills were brought up, whereas in relation to circumstantial factors the rele-

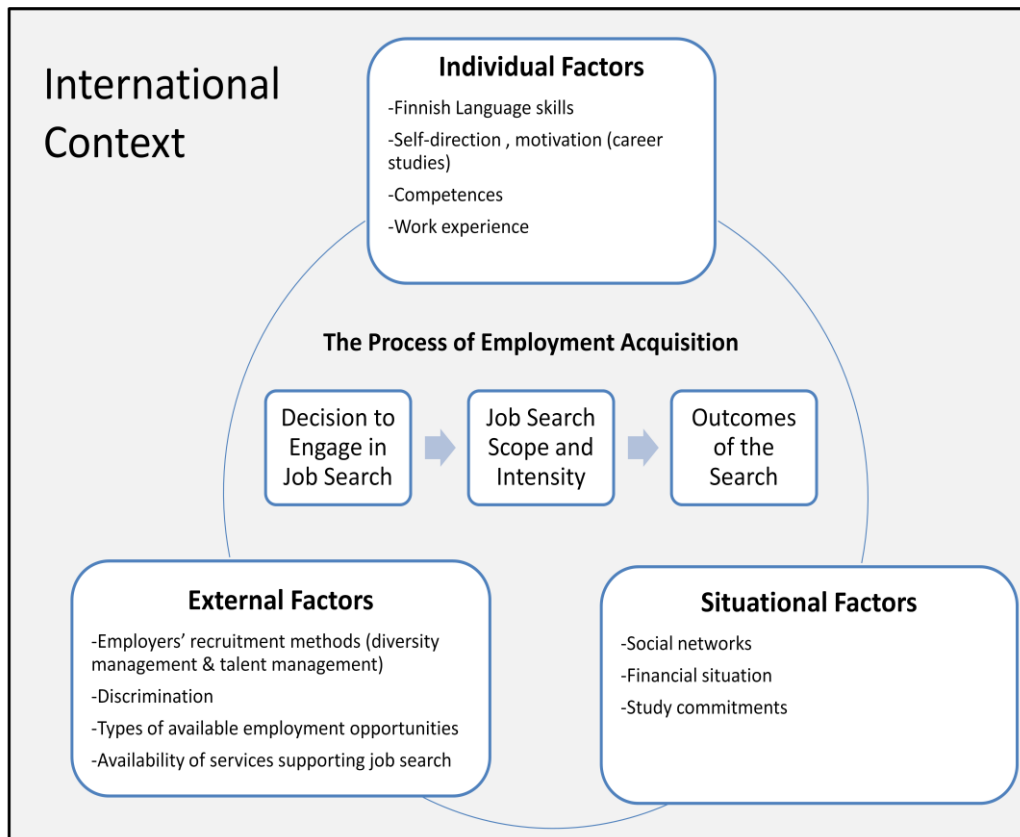
vance of social networks was stressed. Then in terms of factors external to the individual, issues such as discrimination, employer preferences regarding the origins of education and work experience, and the lack of trust towards foreign applicants were brought up.

2.4 Framework

This literature review chapter concludes with the presentation of the framework of this study. The framework is built on the issues covered in the literature review and provides understanding on how the different sections of this literature review chapter relate to the research questions of this study. The main research question of this study is to find out what experiences highly educated foreigners have regarding finding initial employment in Finland. This is further divided into two sub-questions. The first sub-question serves the purpose of discovering why and how they initially engage in searching for employment in Finland. The second sub-question, in its turn, aims to find out what the outcomes of the search are, and why.

The graphical representation of the framework of this study can be seen in Figure 2. The framework consists of five components: 1. the actual process of employment acquisition, 2. the context in which the acquisition of employment is investigated, 3. the individual factors that influence the process, 4. the situational factors that influence the process, and 5. the external factors that influence the process. The factors influencing the process of employment acquisition were divided into the above three groups following the example of McQuaid & Lindsay (2005). Although, the different approaches to employability provided a number of different issues to be considered in the examination of gaining employment, and different ways in grouping these issues, grouping the issues or factors under the main headings of individual factors, situational factors and external factors is most appropriate for the purpose of this thesis. This is because the aim is to take as broad a view as possible in the investigation of the different issues that influence the job acquisition process of highly educated foreigners in Finland. Next the components of the framework will be discussed individually.

Figure 2. Framework of the study



2.4.1 The Process of Employment Acquisition

This study focuses on the acquirement of employment. Thus, the process of employment acquisition is at the heart of this study and can logically be broken down into three phases. The first phase concerns the decision to take part in acquiring employment or job search and can temporally be seen as the phase preceding the actual job search. The second involves the way in which employment is searched for and thus concerns the actual search. The third is concerned with the outcomes of the search and the reasons behind the outcomes, so this logically follows the actual search phase. Overall, the idea is to first find out the motives behind the decisions to either partake in job search or not. Then, it is of interest to discover how those who participate in job search actually do so in terms of scope and intensity. Of course, the outcomes of the search and reasons for these outcomes are of interest, as well. In relation to the research questions of this study, the first two phases of the process of employment acquisition relate to the first sub-question of why and how highly educated foreigners initially engage in searching for

employment in Finland. The third phase, in its turn, relates to the second sub-question of what the outcomes of the search are, and why.

As the framework suggests, the answers to the research questions lie in the factors influencing the process of employment acquisition and the context which, in its turn, has an effect on which of the possible different factors prove to be most relevant.

2.4.2 International Context

As already touched upon earlier, the context in which the process of job acquisition is investigated in this study arguably has an effect on the emphasis different factors have in influencing the process. This context is characterised by an international setting, meaning individuals searching for employment in a country other than their own. In addition, the focus is on individuals who are highly educated. Further, the evidence concerning the Finnish context in particular also suggests that certain factors may have more weight in influencing the process of employment acquisition in the case of this study. Thus, although the employability section of this thesis provided quite a comprehensive view of the different, potentially relevant factors influencing job search, the viewpoint to the investigation of job search was, however, quite general in nature and could mostly be seen to relate to situations concerning a national or domestic setting. Therefore, due to the specific context in which the process of employment acquisition is investigated in this study, the findings within the areas of diversity management, talent management, career studies, and the Finnish context were combined with those of the employability section to understand which factors might prove most relevant in the case of this study. Next, the different factors found to be relevant in the context of this study will be presented.

2.4.3 Individual Factors

As can be seen in Figure 2, the factors related to the individual that can be considered most relevant in terms of this study are: Finnish language skills, self-direction/motivation, competences, and work experience. The Finnish language was especially stressed as a factor influencing the ability to find work in Finland. It can thus

be seen as an explaining factor relating to the outcomes of the process of employment acquisition. Self-direction or motivation, covered in the section of career studies, on the other hand can be seen as explaining factors to why job search is initially taken up and also to the way in which this is done. Then, in terms of competences and work experience, Shumilova, Cai and Pekkola (2012) discovered that in the case of highly educated Foreigners in Finland certain competences and work experience positively influenced the likelihood of finding employment. These can therefore be seen as factors influencing the outcome of the process of employment acquisition.

2.4.4 Situational Factors

When it comes to situational factors, social networks or the lack of right contacts were found as a barrier to finding employment. Thus, it is a factor explaining the outcome of the process. Then, in terms of financial situation and study commitments, these can be seen to explain why job search is taken up and the kinds of jobs that are applied for. These were included as they specifically relate to the situation of the individuals this study focuses on (being students).

2.4.5 External Factors

The external factors include the recruitment methods of employers (covered specifically in the sections of diversity management and talent management), discrimination, the types of available employment opportunities, and the availability of services supporting job search. The recruitment methods of employers could be seen as an explaining factor in the actual search phase of employment in the sense that employers who target a diverse pool of candidates in recruitment activities might be more attractive in the eyes of diverse applicants. Discrimination on the other hand was found as a factor that negatively affects the outcome of job search. Then, the types of available employment opportunities can be seen to explain why job search is taken up, and the availability of services supporting job search can be seen to influence the outcome of the job search.

3. METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapter of this study it was established what the literature says about the phenomenon this study focuses on and what the answers to the research questions of this study are based on the literature. Now, it is time to move from the literature or theory to this actual study. This begins with discussing the methodological issues concerning the study. So, in this methodology chapter the way in which this study was actually conducted will be presented. First, the actual research method will be introduced as well as the reasons why this method was chosen. Then, as this study consists of both a quantitative and a qualitative portion, the issues relating to how the actual empirical research was conducted will be presented separately for both the quantitative and qualitative parts.

3.1 Research Method

As already hinted above, this study uses a mixed-methods approach and thus utilises both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quite often research is conducted by using either quantitative or qualitative research methods, but there are situations in which there is justification for using both. To come to an understanding when the use of a mixed-methods approach is warranted it is necessary to first gain an idea of why the choice concerning research method often boils down to an either-or decision between quantitative and qualitative methods.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) discuss how the advocates of quantitative and qualitative research have for more than a century argued over which method is superior and as a result, so called purists have emerged in both camps. The quantitative purists do not see a difference between observing social phenomena and, for instance, physical phenomena and thus believe that objectivity can be maintained also in the examination of social phenomena. This means that the observer is regarded as separate from the entities under observation. The qualitative purists, on the other hand, believe that reality is socially constructed and there is no single absolute reality that can be objectively observed or measured. Thus, time- and context free generalisations that are seen as desirable by

the quantitative purists are deemed neither desirable nor possible by the qualitative purists. In addition, qualitative purists believe that research is value-bound and that causes and effects cannot fully be distinguished from one another.

The debate between the quantitative purists who are proponents of a positivist philosophy and the qualitative purists who advocate a constructivist philosophy, has led to the tendency of regarding quantitative research and qualitative research as mutually exclusive (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). This is because the basic assumptions of these conflicting philosophies are different, as already mentioned in the previous paragraph, and because it is these assumptions that guide or determine the ways in which new knowledge can be obtained. For instance, the difference between the positivist assumption that reality can be objectively measured and the constructivist assumption that reality is socially constructed arguably has its influence on what are seen as the appropriate ways of building knowledge in relation to social phenomena.

Despite the apparent divide created by the dispute between the quantitative purists and qualitative purists, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) point out that some of the ideas put forward by the purists are, however, rather debatable and the basic assumptions of the philosophies the quantitative and qualitative purists advocate can be questioned. Therefore it can also be questioned whether either research method is actually superior to the other or whether they really are mutually exclusive. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), in fact, argue for the usefulness of mixed methods research as a way to combine the insights of both quantitative and qualitative research to form a workable solution. They do not claim it provides a superior approach in comparison to either method but argue that in certain situations a mixed methods approach may provide the best opportunity to answer research questions. The starting point in mixed methods research is, thus, the research question. As Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, pp. 17–18) state, ‘What is most fundamental is the research question—research methods should follow research questions in a way that offers the best chance to obtain useful answers’.

In terms of this study, the mixed methods approach was indeed chosen because it offers the best opportunity to answer the research questions of this study. The aim of this study

is to discover the experiences of highly educated foreigners regarding finding initial employment in Finland. In order to get a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation both quantitative and qualitative methods are needed. Quantitative data is, for instance, needed to get an idea of how common it is that the individuals this study focuses on participate in job search and the extent to which they are successful in finding employment. Qualitative data, on the other hand, is also needed to get a deeper and more informed understanding of the reasons behind engaging in job search and getting a job. This is in line with the notion of Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000, pp. 27–30) that quantitative methods like surveys can be used to determine the breadth or scale of a phenomenon whereas qualitative methods enable digging deeper into the experiences of the respondents.

In terms of this study the quantitative part was conducted first after which the qualitative part followed. The different parts of the study were thus conducted individually and the findings of the two portions were then combined to answer the research questions of this study. Next these two parts of this study will be discussed individually.

3.2 Quantitative Part of the Study

The quantitative part of this study was done by conducting a web-based survey. The group of individuals that were targeted consisted of the foreign degree students of the Aalto University School of Business, who were registered in the Master's Degree Programmes at the time of the survey. They were chosen as they already held a university level degree and could thus be considered highly educated. The choice of the target sample was made on the basis of access to respondents and the available resources for conducting the study. This, of course, means that the sample is not a representative sample of all the highly educated foreigners studying in Finland and the results of the survey cannot be generalised to the entire population of highly educated foreigners studying in Finland. However, the results of the survey can be considered useful in gaining an idea of the extent to which the individuals within this sample engage in job search during their studies and the extent to which they are successful in acquiring employment. In addition the results increase our understanding on what issues are consid-

ered relevant in the process of employment acquisition in this specific context and contribute to theory even though don't allow generalisations to population.

The questionnaire that was used in the survey was developed on the basis of the literature covering the phenomenon under question as advised by Jyrinki (1976, p. 42). The questionnaires used by Shumilova, Cai and Pekkola (2012) and Pulkkinen (2003) were to some extent used as examples in the development of the questionnaire of this study as those studies also concentrate on the employment of highly educated foreigners in Finland even though they targeted graduates instead of students. In line with the recommendations of Jyrinki (1976, p. 49), before conducting the actual survey, the questionnaire of this study was tested by sending it to six respondents in order to improve its quality. This was done to find out how understandable the questions were and to gain an idea of the appropriateness of the length of the questionnaire. As a result of the testing, the length of the questionnaire was considerably reduced and some of the remaining questions were reformulated to improve their clarity.

The final questionnaire follows the logic of the process of employment acquisition in the sense that it first makes the distinction between those who have applied for jobs and those who have not. Then in terms of those who have applied, it makes the distinction between those who have been successful in job search and those that have not. Thus, although some of the questions are answered by all the respondents, the resulting three groups end up answering a different number of questions and some questions are specific to the specific groups in question. The respondents, depending on which group they belonged to, therefore answered to 20-43 questions. The final questionnaire that was used in this study is presented in Appendix 1.

Then in terms of the actual data collection of the survey, the contact information of the target sample was provided by the International Student Services of the Aalto University School of Business. The number of students belonging to this group was 190. An invitation to participate in the survey was sent to all 190 students in the middle of April. This invitation consisted of a link to the actual questionnaire and a cover letter that introduced the study, stressed the importance of each response regardless of the types of

labour market experiences, and guaranteed the anonymity of responses. This invitation resulted in 29 responses. To improve the response rate two reminders were sent a week apart from each other and by May 8th the final total number of respondent was 67. This results in a response rate of 35,3% which falls in between the response rates of the studies of Shumilova, Cai and Pekkola (2012) and Pulkkinen (2003) which were 21,3% and 44,2% respectively.

Concerning the analysis of the survey data, this was done mainly through descriptive statistics in the form of percentages, means, and the comparison of the obtained results to the findings of other studies related to the phenomenon in question. The survey included also open-ended questions so these qualitative data were combined together with the quantitative data and later the qualitative data from the interviews to answer the research questions of this study.

3.3 Qualitative Part of the Study

The qualitative portion of this study was done by conducting six semi structured interviews. The interviewees were identified and chosen by using the survey that formed the first part of this study. Out of the survey's respondents who indicated the willingness to take part in the interviews, the ones that were contacted represented different backgrounds and had different experiences of searching for jobs in Finland. This was done intentionally to discover as many different viewpoints to the phenomenon as possible and to get a better understanding of the different issues relating to the search of employment in the specific context under investigation. Altogether nine individuals were contacted out of which two had to cancel the interview and one refused despite indicating willingness to be interviewed in the survey. The six interviewees included four women and two men. They all came from different countries and represented four different continents. Only two of the six studied in the same Master's Degree Programme so in terms of major subjects concerning studies there was also variation. All of the interviewees had engaged in job search in Finland and half of them had by the time of this study been successful in finding employment.

The semi structured interview was chosen as the type of interview used as it allows the experiences and interpretations of the interviewees to come forth (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, p. 48). Instead of using a same set of questions for each interview, the interviews covered a set of themes. This made the interviews flexible and allowed the interviewees to go deeper within the themes in which they felt they had more to express. All the themes were covered with all the interviewees, however, as mentioned some interviewees had more to express in terms of certain themes than others.

Then in terms of the themes that were covered in the interviews the decision of what to include was made on the basis of the existing literature covering the phenomenon (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, p. 66), just as it was done with the development of the questionnaire of the survey. However, as it was found necessary to limit the length of the survey, certain issues, which in the literature were found to be of relevance in terms of the phenomenon under investigation, were left to be covered in the interviews. Thus, the interviews dug deeper with some of the issues that were already included in the survey but also covered issues that went beyond the scope of the survey. The actual themes that were covered in the interviews included the way in which the interviewees had ended up in Finland, how they had settled in the country, the support they had received in integrating into society, their experiences concerning job search, and their views on how diversity is addressed in Finland. So the issues that went beyond the scope of the survey were mostly related to issues covered in the section of career studies specifically concerning international careers, like the motivation to migrate and integrate.

The actual interviews were conducted in May and each interviewee was interviewed individually. The interviews varied in length, with the shortest being half an hour and the longest being one and a half hours long. The interviews were conducted in English which was not the mother tongue of either the interviewer or the interviewees except for one interview with a native English speaker. However, language was not an issue in any of the interviews as all the people involved were quite proficient in the language. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees and they were also promised that they could not be identified in the results of the study. It actually appeared that the interviewees could be quite open and speak rather freely about the issues

discussed in the interviews. This could to some extent also be related to the fact that the interviewer has a multicultural background.

The interview data was analysed in such a way that the interview recordings were transcribed and first classified on the basis of the themes of the interview. Then within the themes further classes were identified, to a large extent on the basis of the existing literature, and afterwards the connections between different classes were investigated. The findings were then compared with existing literature to interpret or provide explanations to the findings.

4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Now that the way in which this study was conducted has been presented, it is time to move to the findings of the study. This chapter starts with the description of the survey respondents. Thus, in the first section of this chapter it will be discussed who actually took part in the survey and how well this group of individuals represent the target sample of the 190 students by comparing the data of the survey to the data that was available concerning the target sample of 190 students. Then the next sections of this chapter are formed on the basis of the process of employment acquisition. Thus these sections respectively concentrate on the decision concerning engaging in job search or not, the ways in which those who engage in job search do so, and the outcomes of the search and reasons for these outcomes. These are followed by a section focusing on the findings from the interviews after which the chapter is concluded with the presentation of the revised framework of the study.

4.1 Description of the Survey Respondents

As mentioned before, in this section it will be discussed of whom the group of respondents in the survey consists of and how this group compares to the target sample of 190 students. It was already established that the total number of respondents in the survey was 67 which adds up to 35,3 % of the target sample. In terms of the age of the respondents, the majority (71,6 %) belonged to the age group of 25–29 years, whereas the

share of those who were 20–24 years was 22,4 %, and the share of those who were 30–35 was 6%. The age structure of the target sample is not available but it could be assumed that as the level of studies involved is the Master's Degree level, the age group of 25–29 years could be the largest one in the target sample as well and the distribution of the age groups concerning the respondents in the survey might to some extent represent that of the total sample.

Then in terms of gender, the majority of the respondents in the survey were women. The respective shares were 62,7 % women and 37,3 % men. This is, however, somewhat surprising as according to the International Student Services of the Aalto University School of Business the shares of women and men in the Master's Degree Programmes are actually quite even. It is hard to tell why the women were more willing to participate in the survey. The topic of the survey is such that it could be assumed to be of equal interest to both men and women. Perhaps, it could be that women were more active because there is still much to be done in terms of gender equality in the labour markets and therefore the topic might have raised attention to a larger extent among women than men, or perhaps among the women there were more individuals who were willing to help a fellow student with his thesis by participating in his survey. Despite what the reasons may be, the fact remains that in terms of gender the respondents of the survey do not represent the target sample that well.

When it comes to citizenships, it was known that the target sample of 190 individuals represented 40 different countries. In comparison, the respondents of the survey represented 25 different countries, which is quite a reasonable result, given the distribution of citizenships in the target sample. Actually, among the 40 different countries in the sample there are 17 countries that are represented by a single student. Also, in terms of the countries that were not represented among the respondents in the survey, from each there were only between one and three students in the target sample.

The three largest groups of students in terms of citizenship were the same in the sample of 190 students and among the 67 respondents, although their order was different. In the target sample the country with the most students was China with 59, followed by Viet-

nam with 32 and Russia with 21 students. Among the respondents of the survey 17 were Chinese, 11 were Russian and 4 from Vietnam. It is good to note that in the target sample the students from these three countries actually account for 58,9 % of all the foreign degree students in the Master's Programmes. It is also worth mentioning that these three countries are also the only countries that have more than six students in the target sample, and among the countries that follow there are only four countries that have between four and six students representing them.

Then in terms of differences in the shares of citizenships between the group of respondents and the target sample, there were some. For instance, in terms of the largest groups, the Russians were overrepresented in the group of respondents and the Chinese underrepresented. However, the most notable difference was the underrepresentation of the Vietnamese. It is worth mentioning also here that the three largest groups in the survey together added up to 47,8 % of all the respondents. Other than that, it could also be mentioned that two respondents indicated that they had obtained Finnish citizenship. In terms of the related issue of mother tongue, those responses were in line with the citizenships of the respondents, although there were four who answered being bilingual.

Concerning the Degree Programmes in which the respondents of the survey study, the actual number of students in each programme can be seen in Figure 3. There were two programmes from which there were no respondents in the survey. These were business law, and management. There were actually no students in the programme of business law in the target sample either, but there were three in the programme of management. Further, in comparing the number of students in the different programmes among the survey respondents and the sample, it was noticed that there were differences in the response rates of the different programmes. As a result the shares of the different programmes in the survey differed from the shares found in the sample. For instance, in the sample the programme of Finance was the second largest and accounted for 11,6% of all the students, whereas in the survey the Finance programme was joint sixth in size accounting for 4,5 % of the respondents. This as well as the other differences between the shares found in the survey and in the sample can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 3. Number of students in the different Degree Programmes among the respondents of the survey

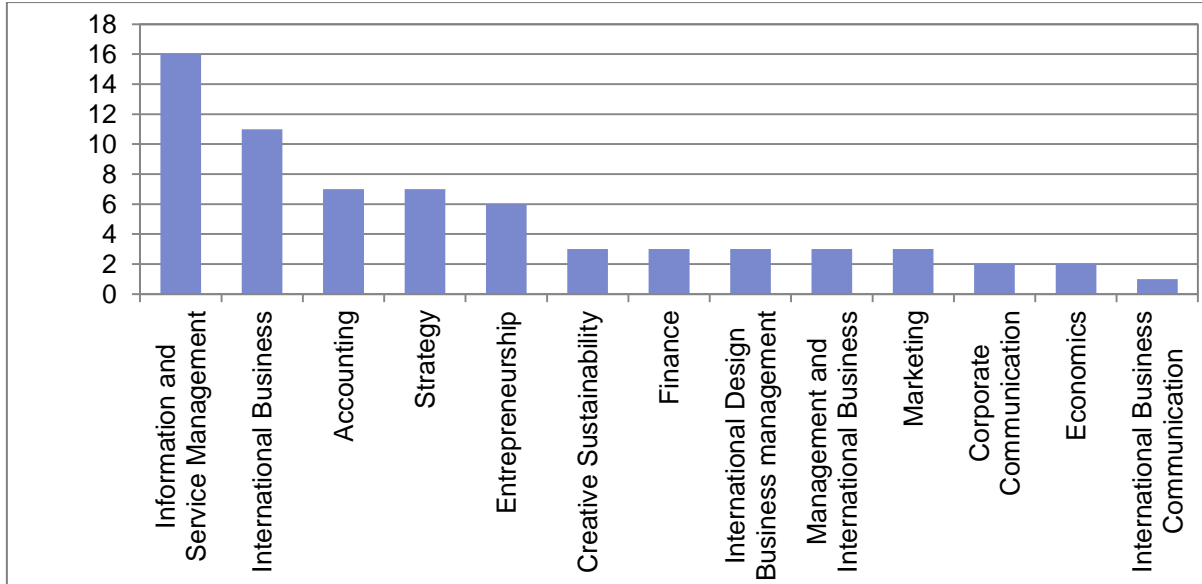
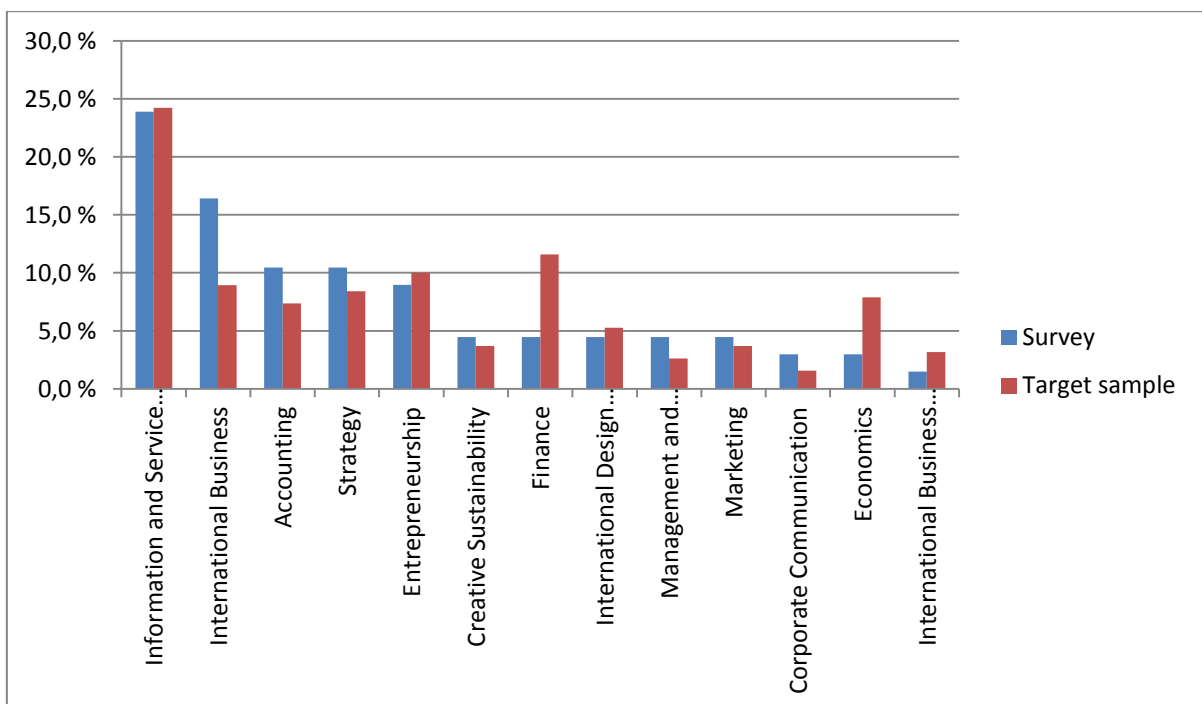


Figure 4. The shares of the different Degree Programmes in the survey and the sample



In terms of how well the respondents of the survey represent the sample of 190 students when it comes to the issues of citizenship and degree programme, it can be said that there were differences between the respondents and the sample especially in some of the proportions. However, concerning both citizenship and degree programme, the largest groups were in fact represented in the survey although their shares might have differed from those in the sample. In addition, the groups that were not represented consisted of three students or less. So the different groups were covered relatively well in the survey although the proportions weren't identical to those of the sample. However, due to the found differences related to citizenship, degree programme, and gender distribution, it is good to keep in mind that the results of the survey may not exactly reflect the target sample.

Then in terms of other factors related to the respondents, concerning the year in which the respondents began studying in their current programmes, it was found that most of the respondents (71,6 %) had started in 2012 or earlier. This is understandable as it could be assumed that issues related to employment become more relevant the closer to graduation a student gets. So by the time of the survey the clear majority of the respondents had already studied at least for nearly two whole academic years and the remaining minority for almost one academic year, assuming there had been no interruptions in their studies. There was, however, one student, who had actually exceptionally started studying in the beginning of 2014. Then concerning the question whether the students had moved to Finland for their current studies or already before, it was found that 46,3 % had moved to Finland already before, whereas 53,7 % moved for their current studies. As will be discussed more later on, the individuals who came already before may include those who came to complete some other degree as well as those who came to Finland for other reasons than to study.

Next, it is time to move on and discuss issues relating to the actual research questions of this study. First, the focus is on the decision concerning whether to take part in job search or not. So, the aim is to find answers relating to the question of why highly educated foreigners initially engage in job search in Finland.

4.2 Decision Concerning Whether to Engage in Job Search

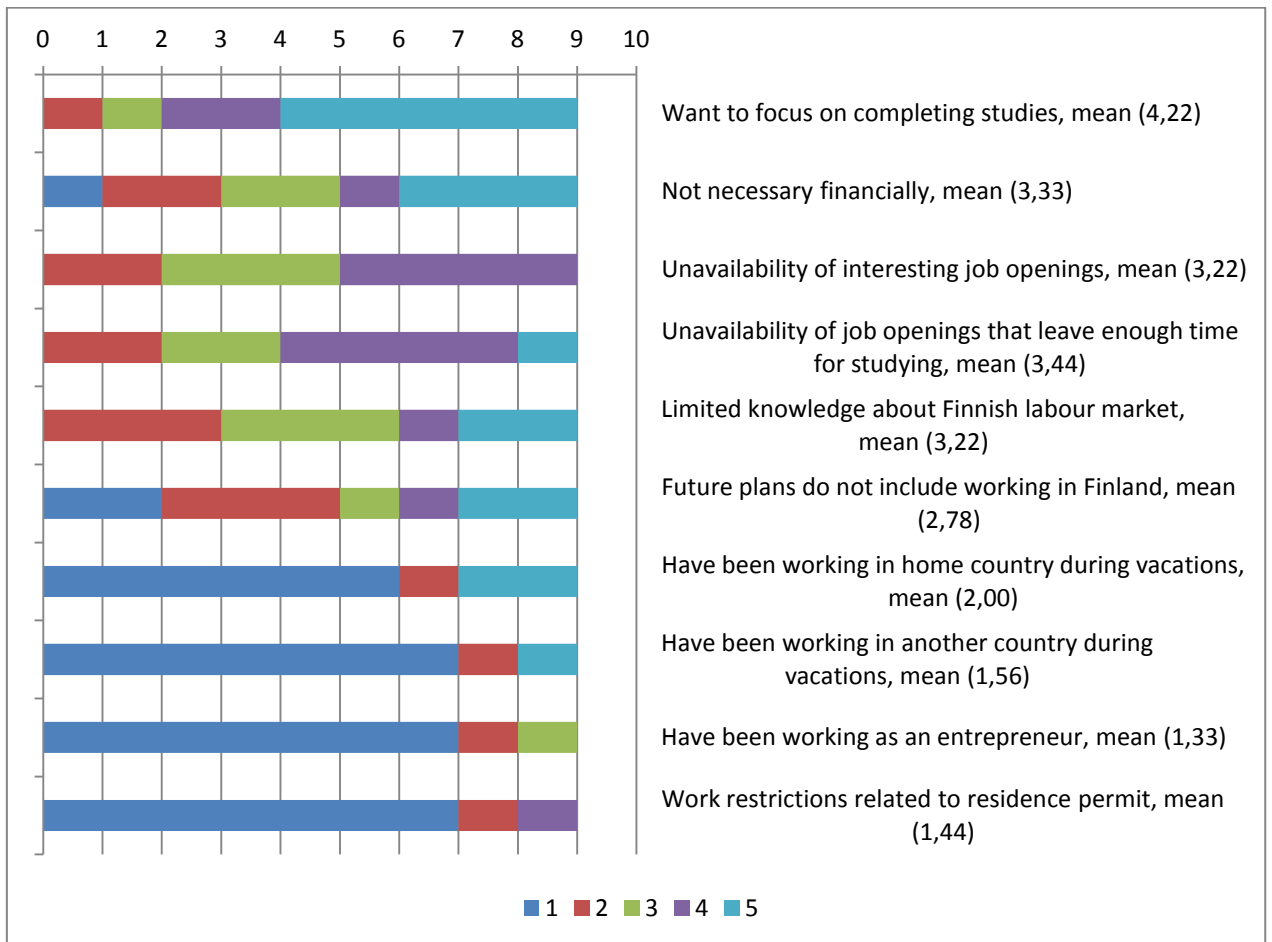
In this section it will be presented to what extent the respondents of the survey actually took part in job search as well as the reasons provided for why they had or had not engaged in job search. The resulting two groups are also examined in terms of different variables to find out the characteristics of these groups as well as the possible differences between the groups.

In terms of the actual number of respondents relating to the question of job search engagement, the results of the survey showed that 58 (86,6 %) out of the 67 respondents had searched for employment in Finland and 9 (13,4 %) had not. Rather similar results were provided by Kinnunen (2003) who investigated the integration of foreign degree students in Finland and found in her survey that only 18,6 % of the foreign degree students had not searched for employment in Finland. However, it might be that among the 190 students in the whole sample, those who had not searched for employment, perhaps, did not find participating in the survey interesting or relevant for them, although the importance of their responses was also stressed in the invitation to the survey. Thus, though the results of the survey would indicate that nearly all students engage in job search, the share of those who actually do not might be a bit larger in the sample. It can, however, be stated with certainty that 58 out of the 190 students, meaning 30,5 % of all the students in the sample have searched for employment in Finland. This, itself, is already a substantial share but it can be assumed that the actual share in the sample is closer to that of the survey as there can be various motives for not participating in the survey regardless of the types of experiences the individual had regarding job search.

So, when it comes to those 9 respondents who had not searched for employment in Finland, they were asked to rate the importance of different factors influencing their decision not to search for employment on a scale of one (not important) to five (very important). The results can be seen in Figure 5. As can be seen, the desire to focus on the completion of studies was rated as very important by the majority of the respondents and actually seven out of nine (77,8 %) rated it as either important (4) or very important (5). The only other factor that was rated as important or very important by over half of

the respondents was the unavailability of job openings that leave enough time for studying, which makes sense given the relation of the two factors. This, however, would suggest that job search is not necessarily totally ruled out because of studying but depends on the possibilities to combine work and studies.

Figure 5. The importance of different factors in deciding not to search for employment, scale 1 (not important) – 5 (very important)



As can be seen, the arithmetic means of the responses concerning the different factors in Figure 5 were also calculated. Although the suitability of using a mean for what can be considered an ordinal scale is debatable, this was done as the distances between the alternatives within the scale can be argued to be close to equal. The first five factors in Figure 5 had a mean above three meaning the responses among these were on average closer to very important than not important.

In relation to the factors that were, on the basis of the literature, identified to influence the decision concerning engaging in job search, the first four of the five that were on average closer to very important in Figure 5 can be seen to relate to the situational factors of study commitments and financial situation, and the external factor of the types of available employment opportunities. The fifth concerning the knowledge about the labour market was not in the initial framework of the study and thus is an interesting find. This discovery is in line with the fact that the mean concerning how these respondents rated their knowledge on how to effectively search for employment in Finland was 2,33 on a scale from very low (1) to very high (5) meaning their responses were on average closer to the low end than the high end and none of the respondents had rated their skills in this area as higher than average. The factor of limited knowledge about the Finnish labour market could, however, also be seen to relate somehow to the factor of study commitments in the sense that if this knowledge is seen as necessary in order to successfully take part in job search then one would have to develop it before engaging in job search. Developing this knowledge would, however, require time and effort, which would be away from the time and effort dedicated to studying.

There was also a factor that was identified in the framework to influence the decision concerning engaging in job search but which did not rate on average as closer to very important instead of not important in Figure 5. This factor in the framework is self-direction or motivation. On the basis of the literature, it could have been assumed that those who have come to Finland for the long term would be active in job search. This is because the future plans involving Finland would guide or motivate them into activities related to deeper integration into the society already during their studies. The opposite would then apply for those whose plans did not involve Finland as there would not be that motivation for such activities related to integrating into society. The factor in Figure 5 concerning future plans in terms of working in Finland relates to this. Actually, it was discovered that out of the nine respondents who had not searched for employment, five stated in the survey that their plans after graduation involved working or studying in a country other than Finland, whereas four were going to work in Finland after graduation. Two of the four who were going to stay in Finland did, however, plan on searching for employment before graduating while the other two said that they might. In

addition, among the five who were going to leave the country after graduating, there was only one who had decided not to search for employment in Finland before graduating while the four others had not ruled it out although they remained uncertain.

The decision of not searching for employment is, thus, not necessarily connected with plans concerning life after graduating in the assumed way. Rather, it may actually be connected in many different ways. For instance, those who intend to stay but do not search for employment might actually choose to focus on their studies instead because they see that by doing so they can improve their employment opportunities in Finland after graduation as they are able to focus on learning the substance within their areas of expertise without distractions. Then for those who intend to leave the country the decision not to search for employment, on the other hand, may partly stem from the fact that they do not intend to stay but other reasons such as study commitments may have more weight in the matter. It may, however, also be that there are simply cultural differences between countries in relation to whether work and studying can or should be combined as one of the interviewees pointed out:

“In my country not a lot of students work besides studying. They do not do this part-time work.”

The factor of self direction or motivation in the framework of this study could, however, be argued to be included in the factor concerning the unavailability of interesting job opportunities in Figure 5. Self direction or motivation is arguably not just concerned with the future geographic location of one’s career. As was discussed concerning career identity (Fugate, Kinicki & Ashforth 2004), the career related decisions of the individual are guided by the ideas concerning who the individual wants to be career-wise. Positions that would be deemed unsuitable or of little use in attaining the objectives a person has concerning his or her career would not be of interest for the person. Thus, the weight of the unavailability of interesting job opportunities in explaining why employment is not searched for, would suggest that self direction or motivation also has a role in explaining the decision not to search for employment. This idea is supported by an

open comment by one of the respondents concerning the reason for not searching for employment:

“Most jobs open are like...cleaning jobs.”

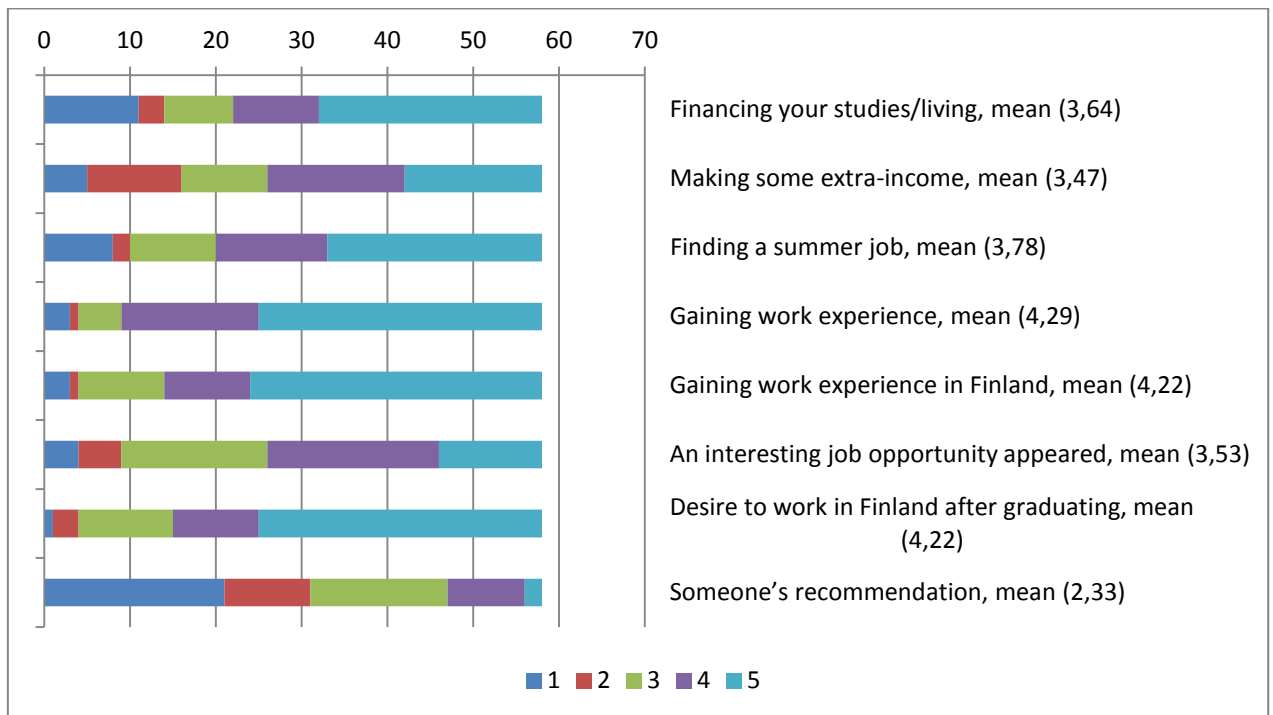
Then when it comes to those 58 respondents who had searched for employment in Finland, they were also asked to rate the importance of different factors influencing their decision to search for employment on a scale of one (not important) to five (very important). These results are presented in Figure 6. As can be seen, the first seven of the eight factors were rated on average as closer to very important than not important in influencing the decision to search for employment. There were three factors among these that had an average rating above four. These were the desire to work in Finland after graduating, gaining work experience in Finland, and gaining work experience in general. These factors were, in fact, rated as very important (5) by over half of the respondents. The factor of gaining work experience in general was actually rated as very important (5) or important (4) by 84,5% of the respondents.

The above mentioned three factors that had an average rating above four can be seen to relate to the factor of self direction or motivation in the framework of this study. As already discussed earlier, the literature raised the assumption that future plans involving staying in Finland could lead into activities related to deeper integration into the society already during studies. Similarly, the ideas related to career identity and making career decisions on the basis of who one wants to be in career terms is relevant also here. The fact that work experience in general got the highest average rating once again points to the fact that self direction or motivation is not just concerned with the location of the future career.

In terms of the other four factors that were rated on average as closer to very important than not important in Figure 6, two (financing your studies/living, making some extra-income) can be seen to relate to the situational factor of financial situation and one (an interesting job opportunity appeared) to the external factor of types of available employment opportunities. The remaining factor of finding a summer job can, on the other

hand, be seen to relate to the situational factor of study commitments in the sense that during the summer one usually does not have these commitments and can focus on other things.

Figure 6. The importance of different factors in deciding to search for employment, scale 1 (not important) – 5 (very important)



There was, however, a surprise when comparing the ratings in Figure 6 with the answers concerning the plans the respondents had concerning life after graduation. Actually, 12 of the 58 that had searched for employment indicated that they were planning to work in some other country than Finland after graduating. When looking at the responses concerning the importance of the desire to work in Finland after graduating in deciding to search for employment, it is surprising to see that all but one rated it as having some importance in the decision. An explanation for this was, however, found by including into the equation, the answers concerning the initial plans the respondents had in the beginning of their current studies in terms of life after graduation. It was found that actually 11 of these 12 had initially planned on staying in Finland after graduation but by the time of the survey had changed their mind. It could then be assumed that perhaps the experiences they had gained in job search might have contributed to this

change of heart. Although the findings concerning the outcomes of job search will be dealt later on, it can be mentioned here that out of the 11 who had changed their minds on staying in Finland, 9 had not been able to find employment.

Then, in terms of comparing the groups of those who had and those who had not searched for employment, there were a lot of similarities in terms of certain variables. For instance, the groups were rather similar in terms of gender distribution. The proportion of men in the group that had not searched for employment was 33,3 % ,whereas the proportion of men in the group that had searched for employment was 37,9 %. In terms of age, the two groups were also rather similar with the majority belonging to the age group of 25–29 years. In terms of degree programmes both groups consisted of students from different programmes. The nine students who had not searched for employment represented six different degree programmes, whereas the 58 who had searched for employment represented 13 different degree programmes. Both groups were also represented by students from different countries, although among the nine who had not searched for employment, five or the majority came from the same country, China.

There were, however, some differences between the groups as well. As already mentioned earlier, the group that had not searched for employment had on average rated their skills concerning the knowledge on how to effectively search for employment in Finland as 2,33 on a scale from very low (1) to very high (5) meaning their responses were on average closer to the low end than the high, whereas those who had searched for employment rated the same issue on average as 3,17 or closer to the high end. This difference could be explained by the fact that those who have searched for employment have arguably been able to enhance their knowledge concerning the specifics of job search in Finland. This is more likely to be the explanation than differences in job search skills in general as the responses concerning the previous work experience the respondents had before coming to Finland showed that in both groups the clear majority had some kind of work experience already before and thus arguably also job search experience. In fact, in the group that had not searched for employment in Finland, the share of those who already had some kind of work experience before coming to Finland was higher (88,9%) than in the group that had searched for employment in Finland

(77,6%). The share of those who already had experience that was related to the current field of study was nearly equal: 44,8% in the group that had searched for employment in Finland and 44,4% in the group that had not.

In terms of other differences between the groups, the issue of language skills can be mentioned. Out of the nine who have not searched for employment, all responded to have had no Finnish language skills at the time of arriving in Finland. In terms of their current Finnish skills, four of the nine stated that they still had no Finnish skills, another four responded having basic skills and one responded having adequate skills. In the group that had searched for employment there were actually seven individuals who reported having basic skills in the language already before arriving while the rest responded having none. Then concerning their current skills, 41,4% of the respondents in this group rated their current Finnish skills as either adequate, good or fluent, although this group consisted mostly of those with adequate skills. However, there were three who responded being currently fluent in Finnish.

The difference between the groups in terms of language skills could, to some extent, be explained by the respondents' future plans concerning Finland and the related motivation to engage in activities related to deeper integration into the society. As already touched upon, in the group who have not searched for employment, the share of those planning to stay in Finland after graduation is 44,4% whereas in the group who have searched for employment the share is 70,7%. In addition, the willingness to focus on one's actual studies, which was noted among those who had not searched for employment, could explain why there has not necessarily been that much effort in developing language skills as the focus has been on the actual degree studies. A further issue that could provide some explanation to the difference in Finnish language skills is the fact that in the group that have searched for employment, half of the respondents had already come to Finland before their current studies whereas in the group that have not searched for employment, only 22,2% had come to Finland before their current studies. Thus, there is a larger share of those who have been in the country for a longer period of time in the group that has searched for employment. These individuals have then had more time to study the language.

In conclusion, it can be said that in terms of the factors influencing the decision concerning the participation in job search, the findings were to a large extent in line with the framework of this study. The framework suggested that the factors influencing this decision included self direction/motivation, financial situation, study commitments, and the types of available employment opportunities.

It was actually found that for those who have not searched for employment the factor, which was rated on average as highest in terms of importance in deciding not to search for employment, was related to study commitments. The mean for the want to focus on completing studies was 4,22 on a scale of one (not important) to five (very important). In addition, the factors that were rated on average as closer to very important than not important in this decision were related to financial situation, the types of available employment opportunities and a factor that was not included in the initial framework. This factor is the knowledge concerning the Finnish labour market which in the initial framework of this study would fall under the heading of individual factors.

Then for those who have searched for employment there were three factors with a mean above four. These were the desire to work in Finland after graduating (4,22), gaining work experience in Finland (4,22), and gaining work experience in general (4,29). These are related to the factor of self direction/motivation. The other factors that were rated on average as closer to very important than not important in deciding to search for employment relate to financial situation, the types of available employment opportunities, and the level of study commitments.

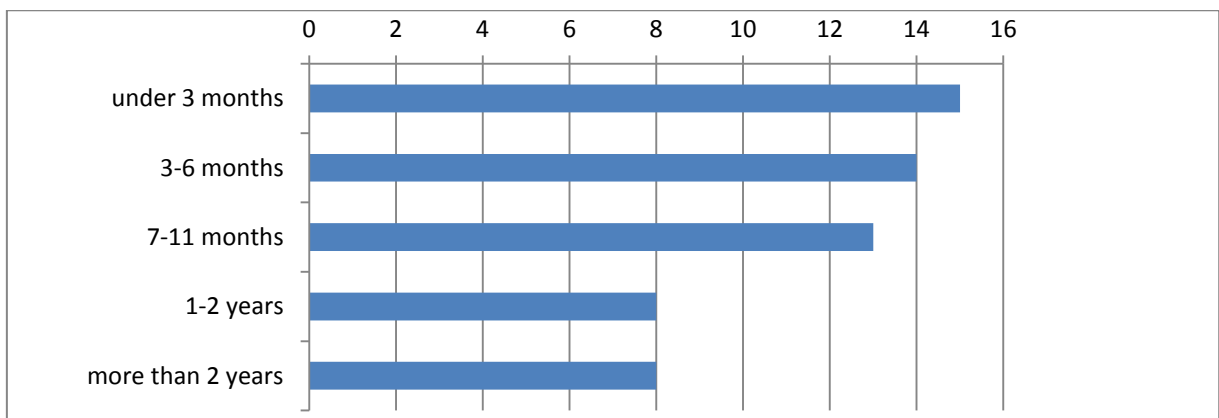
Overall it was also found that 86,6% of the respondents in the survey have searched for employment in Finland, which suggests that a remarkable share of students at least when it comes to the target sample of this study engage in job search already during their studies. Similar findings can be found also elsewhere (Kinnunen, 2003). Now that the question of why highly educated foreigners initially engage in job search in Finland has been answered, it is time to look at how they actually do so.

4.3 Job Search Scope and Intensity

This section concentrates on how those who have searched for employment in Finland have actually done so. As seen in the previous section there were 58 out of the 67 respondents who had searched for employment in Finland. The time it took for these 58 to start searching for employment after moving to Finland can be seen in Figure 7. The figure shows that the clear majority (72,4%) had engaged in job search already during the first year of stay and half of the respondents already during the first six months. It could thus be assumed that quite a few have begun their search with the intention of working besides their studies and not just in terms of finding a summer job as the search period for those is mainly in the spring. Then there can also be those who have studied for another degree in Finland before the current one and had started their job search for finding a work placement that was compulsory in the previous degree. Two of the interviewees had actually completed their Bachelor's Degrees in Finnish Universities of applied science where work placements are a part of the degree. One of them studied in Tampere and told the following concerning the beginning of job search in Finland:

“I started the job search in Tampere during the second year for the work placement but also I wanted to get experience and get more independent financially.”

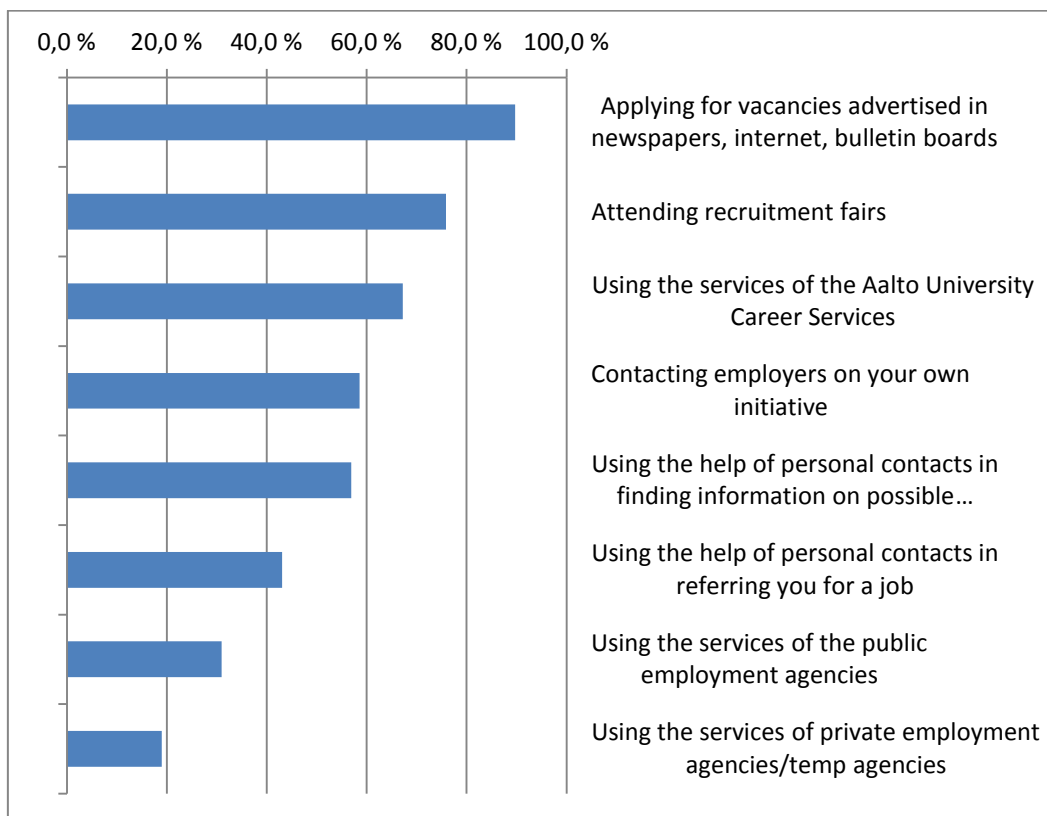
Figure 7. Length of stay in Finland at the time job search was started



When it comes to the actual methods that were used in searching for employment, Figure 8 shows to what extent different methods were used among the respondents who have searched for employment. The method that was most commonly used was apply-

ing for job advertisements, which was used by 89,7% of the respondents. This was followed by attending recruitment fairs (75,9%) and using the career services of Aalto (67,2%). These two methods can be seen as related in the sense that the career services organise such fairs and these are probably the ones the respondents have attended. It seems that the other services provided by the career services besides the fairs are also used by a substantial number of respondents. Then, contacting employers on one's own initiative was used by 58,6% of the respondents. The fact that the methods of using personal contacts in finding information (56,9%) and as references (43,1%), although used by many, are not even more common would suggest that the social networks of the respondents are in many cases such that do not provide much advantage in job search.

Figure 8. The use of different job search methods



The results concerning the job search methods did raise an interesting issue when compared with the results of Pulkkinen (2003) who investigated the employment status of foreign graduates of the University of Helsinki. The results concerning search methods were similar to the extent that applying for advertised vacancies was the most com-

monly used method also in her study. However, the use of the career services of the University was found as much less common in her study and these were actually used by only 13,8%. The second and third most common search methods in her study were contacting employers directly and the use of personal contacts in job search. So, the results would be similar if it were not for the commonness of the methods related to the University career services in this study. This may be caused by the fact that as the study of Pulkkinen focused on graduates, the use of the career services provided by the University could have therefore been less common, as the respondents had already graduated and were not anymore formally connected to the University. On the other hand, the common use of the career services found in this study may reflect the quality of the services. Actually, in the interviews the career services of Aalto were widely appreciated and the following comments were made concerning them:

“Career services are very friendly. They do a great job in helping foreigners integrate. They do a great, great job...The kauppis career services are very welcoming”

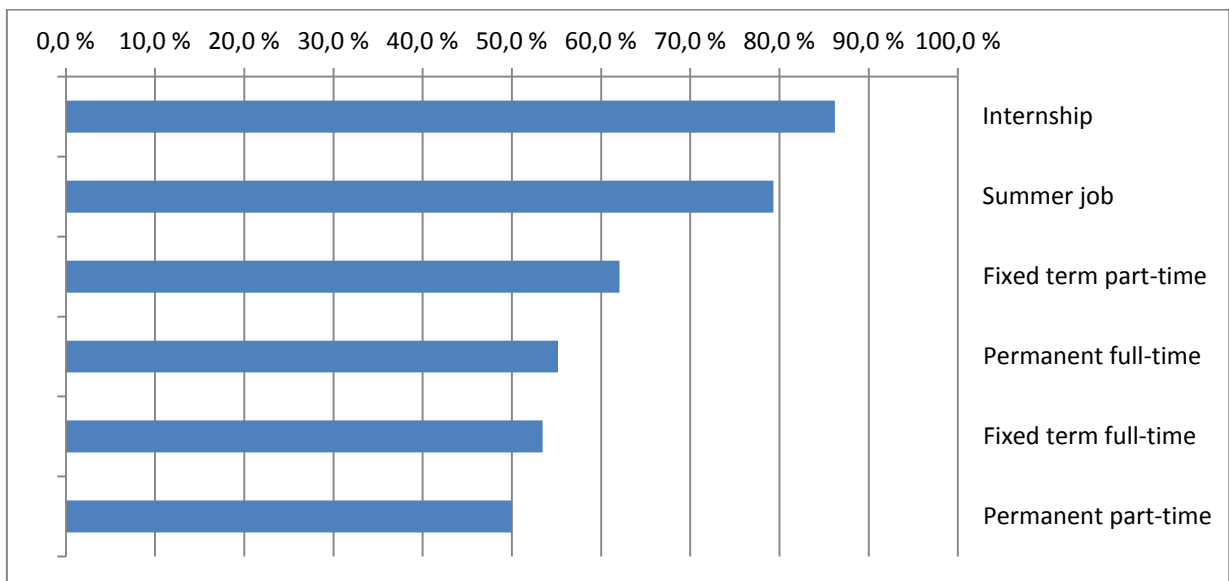
“It’s the best career service that I have encountered. I have studied in three different Universities and the career services here are by far the best”

“I have attended some career fairs but haven’t been active in searching for jobs as I am currently employed. But, I have friends who were searching for jobs. Based on what they told, the University gave a lot in preparing for job search”

Then, concerning the types of jobs the respondents had applied for, it can be seen in Figure 9 that the most commonly applied jobs (internships and summer jobs) were those that are associated with the student status of the respondents. However, it is surprising to find that each type of job had been applied by at least half of the respondents. It can be assumed that part-time work was all in all more commonly applied than full-time work and the fact that permanent part-time work was the least common is likely due to the fact that part-time work is not that often offered with a permanent contract. Nonetheless, it is especially surprising to find that 55,2% of the respondents had applied for permanent full-time positions, which definitely means jobs that are not internships or

summer jobs. It is especially surprising as they also have their studies to be done. A possible explanation for this may, however, lie in the already earlier mentioned fact that half of the respondents who have searched for employment came to Finland before their current studies. Thus, the search for permanent full time positions might in some cases have occurred before the current studies.

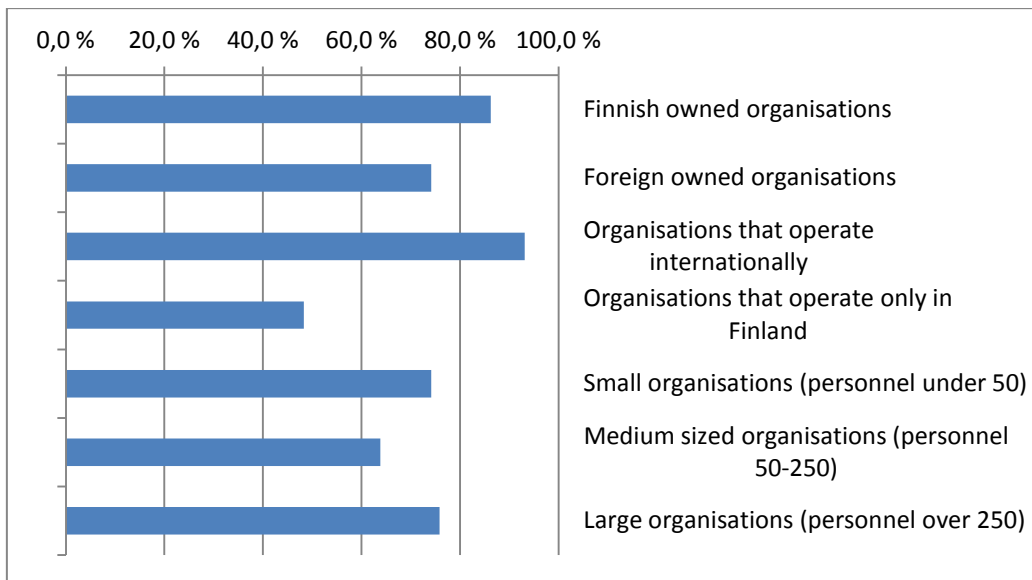
Figure 9. Types of jobs applied for



The types of organisations in which employment had been applied for was also examined. As can be seen in Figure 10, in terms of ownership it was discovered that a larger share of the respondents had actually applied for jobs in Finnish owned organisations (86,2%) than in foreign owned ones (74,1%). This is understandable given the fact that the search took place in Finland. The rather large shares in both would suggest that the difference is probably just due to difference in the number of companies that are foreign and Finnish owned. A factor that is arguably more relevant than ownership is where the organisations operate. As can be seen, 93,1% of the respondents had applied for employment in organisations that operate internationally, whereas 48,3% had applied for jobs in organisations that operate only in Finland. This difference is understandable and rather expected as it could be assumed that, for instance, language requirements concerning the Finnish language might be more of an issue in organisations that operate only domestically. However, it is thus surprising that nearly half of the respondents had

applied for jobs in such organisations. Perhaps, it could be that a considerable share of these organisations could actually be public organisations like educational institutions and English language skills might therefore suffice.

Figure 10. Types of organisations in which employment was applied for



In terms of the size of the organisations, it was found that jobs in organisations of different sizes had been applied by rather similar shares of the respondents. It could have been assumed beforehand that large multinational companies might have been the ones that the respondents focus on, but as seen they do consider many different kinds of organisations.

Other things were also discovered in the investigation concerning job search. For instance, in terms of geographic location, unsurprisingly nearly all (98,3%) had searched for employment in the capital region, whereas only 15,5% had searched outside the capital region. Concerning the sectors in which employment was searched for, it was discovered that 93,1% had searched within the private sector, whereas the shares of those who had searched within the public sector and non-profit sector were 32,8% and 19,0% respectively. The share of those who had searched within the public sector could indeed to some extent explain the earlier mentioned substantial share of those who had applied for jobs in organisations that operate only in Finland. Then in terms of language

requirements, all had applied for jobs in which English was required, 67,2% had applied for jobs requiring Finnish skills, 37,9% had applied for jobs requiring their mother tongue, and 19% had applied for jobs requiring a language that was not one of the earlier mentioned ones. In terms of those who had applied for jobs in which their mother tongue or another language was required, it was actually discovered that Russian was by far the language that was involved the most. This is, however, quite expected given the share of Russian respondents in the survey and the fact that Russia and Finland are neighbouring countries with business ties.

The respondents were also asked what kind of jobs they had applied in relation to their studies. The results concerning this question can be seen in Figure 11. Rather unsurprisingly jobs that were related to the field of study were more commonly applied for than those that were not. Nearly all (94,8%) had applied for jobs related to their field whereas 55,2% had applied for those unrelated. It could be that related jobs are the ones primarily applied for but the search is broadened if one does not get a job within the preferred field. This was supported by the findings in the interviews. As a couple of the interviewees explained:

“When I arrived here the whole fall I had been applying for consultancy internships. I was not even invited to a single interview...Then in the spring I was applying into all sorts of internship positions.”

“I have focused a bit too much on the finance and logistics positions. I should have been more open to other positions. For example, a friend of mine got a job in an international company in a position that relates more to my studies than hers. Then I started to think that I could also have a broader approach.”

It could be, however, argued that in the above examples, although the job search is broadened, the jobs still somehow relate to their studies. Then in terms of jobs that hardly at all relate to the studies, the interviews did reveal that some who had not been successful in finding employment were considering or applying for even these kinds of jobs as can be seen in the following comments:

“I have even considered doing any kind of position not related to my studies just to make some money here. But I haven’t really applied for those”

“I have also applied for jobs that are not related to my studies like waitressing. I think it is better when you work. You are more creative. I like to work. I don’t want to stay at home.”

Figure 11. Types of jobs applied for in relation to studies

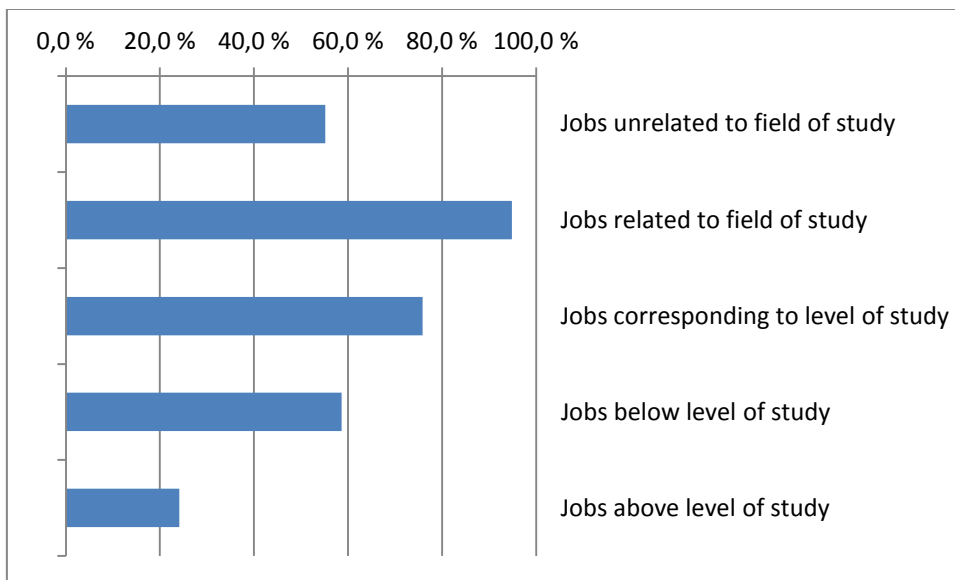


Figure 11 also shows that in terms of relation to the level of study the most commonly applied jobs were those that corresponded to the level of study. These had been applied by 75,9% of the respondents, whereas 58,6 had applied for jobs below the level of studies and 24,1% for jobs above the level of studies. This would similarly suggest that corresponding jobs are the primary target and lower level jobs might be considered after that.

Job search was also examined in terms of issues relating to the foreign backgrounds of the respondents. Concerning the ability to utilise one’s cultural knowledge, 56,9% of the respondents had applied for jobs where such knowledge relating to their home countries could have been useful whereas 43,1% had not applied for such jobs. Unsurprisingly,

most of those who had applied for such jobs in which their cultural knowledge could have been useful were either Russian or Chinese as these were also the largest groups in terms of nationality in the whole survey. However, this could also suggest that there is demand for these backgrounds in the labour markets. Another issue that was examined was whether the respondents had in general applied primarily for jobs in organisations that are known to employ people with foreign backgrounds. The results showed that the clear majority (75,8%) had indeed done so. This might reflect the fact that organisations that operate in a pro-diversity manner could have been considered as more attractive.

The respondents' experiences and views concerning the employment opportunities of international students were also investigated. The vast majority (82,7%) stated that they had not encountered advertisements that were specifically targeted for international students in their job search efforts. This might then again imply that although there are organisations that do hire foreigners, they do not necessarily explicitly target foreigners in their recruitment activities. Thus the level of activity when it comes to addressing diversity might actually not be that high. It might then rather be that the respondents are not necessarily primarily focusing on organisations known to employ foreigners because of the organisations' approach to diversity, but because there is a limited amount of companies that employ foreigners in the first place.

The respondents were also asked to rate the supply of study related employment opportunities for Finnish students and international students on a scale of one (very poor) to five (very good). The mean for the responses concerning the Finnish students was 4,36 whereas the mean concerning the opportunities for international students was 2,17. Thus, the responses do point to the fact that the respondents view the supply of opportunities for Finnish students and international students as very different. Finnish students are on average seen to have good opportunities whereas international students are seen to have rather poor opportunities in terms of study related employment. This would also suggest that organisations do not necessarily target foreigners in their recruitment activities. Thus, it would seem that Finnish students and international students actually compete for the same jobs and the Finns would seem to have the advantage. Support for this was found in the interviews:

“I just realized yesterday evening when I was talking with other people from the strategy program that we are all applying for the same jobs and the jobs go to the Finnish people...So you are competing with all the other international students for the same five jobs and then also with the Finnish students”

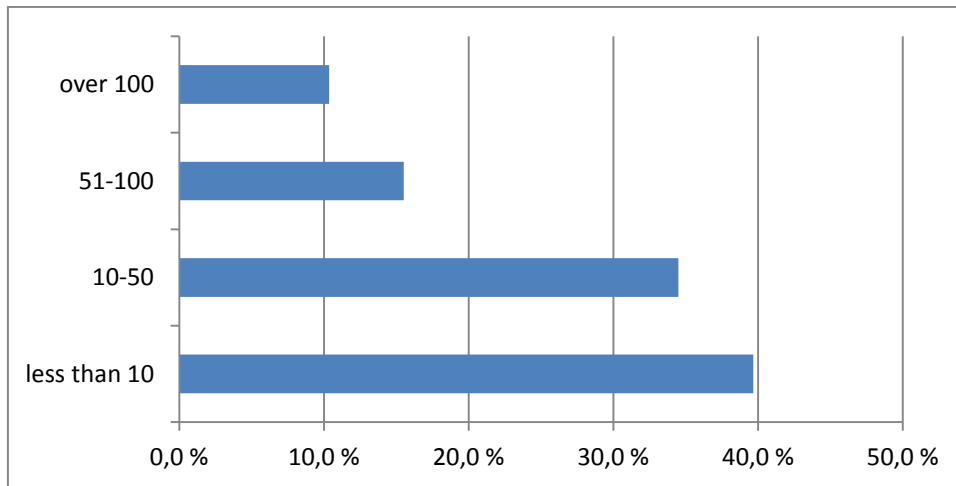
“Some companies with international operations, they still prefer Finnish speaking persons other things being equal. I don't see why. Because it's clear that if you have operations like in 30 countries worldwide why would you prefer someone who speaks your local language. I think it's something personal you tend to favour. There are many companies who don't specify that they need Finnish but they still imply that they would prefer a Finnish speaking person”

“The international companies prefer Finns even to positions where Finnish isn't really necessary”

In addition to the scope of the job search, the results also provided some idea concerning the intensity of the search. Figure 12 shows the shares of the respondents in terms of the number of jobs applied for. Overall, it was found that at least 60,3% of those who had searched for employment had applied for 10 or more jobs and 25,9% to more than 50 jobs. However, these shares might, in fact, be even larger as concerning those who had found employment the number of jobs applied for, referred to the amount before getting the first job. So they may have applied for more since then. The results do show that there are differences in the levels of activity when it comes to job search. There are quite a few of those who have applied for less than 10 jobs but also a substantial number of those who have applied for over 50 jobs which is quite a considerable amount. However, the share of those who have not been able to gain employment and have applied for less than 10 jobs is only 13,8%. Thus, the fact that quite a few have been able to find their first job with applying for less than 10 jobs has to be noted as a reason for the apparently large total proportion of those who responded having applied for less than 10 jobs. So the large share of those who have applied for less than 10 jobs is arguably

caused more by the fact that many have been successful with less than 10 applications than because of say not putting that much effort in job search.

Figure 12. Number of jobs applied for



Then it is time to compare the findings of this section concerning the actual search for jobs with what was suggested in the framework of this study. The factors that were in the framework identified to influence the actual search phase in the process of employment acquisition included: self-direction/motivation, financial situation, study commitments, and employers' recruitment methods. In terms of self-direction/motivation the findings did provide support for the relevance of this factor in the search for employment. Concerning the types of jobs that were applied in terms of relation to the field and level of study it was discovered that corresponding jobs were the ones most commonly applied for among the respondents and also the findings in the interviews suggested that corresponding jobs are the primary target and other jobs might be considered after that. This is once again in line with the notions concerning career identity (Fugate, Kinicki & Ashforth 2004) that the career related decisions of the individual are guided by the ideas concerning who the individual wants to be career-wise. The fact that other jobs are considered after these primary jobs can be explained by situational factors such as financial situation, which was also supported in the interviews.

Then when it comes to the factor of study commitments, the findings were to some extent in line with the framework of this study. In terms of study commitments, it was

discovered that the types of jobs that were most commonly applied for were those that are associated with the student status of the respondents. This was a somewhat expected finding. However, over half of the respondents had applied for permanent full-time positions, which definitely means jobs that are not internships or summer jobs. This is rather surprising as they do have their studies to complete. So, study commitments could be seen to explain that internships and summer jobs are the types of jobs most commonly applied for, but the discovery concerning the permanent full-time positions is in conflict with the idea of assuring there is enough time allocated for studies.

The recruitment methods of employers were also seen to influence the actual job search in the framework. It was assumed that employers who target a diverse pool of candidates in recruitment activities might be more attractive in the eyes of diverse applicants. Although, this could be the case, the findings would suggest that organisations in Finland do not necessarily target foreigners in their recruitment activities. This is in line with the earlier findings concerning diversity management in Finland that showed that diversity issues are not yet so widely addressed (Sippola & Leponiemi 2007, Louvrier 2013). The reason why the respondents primarily applied for jobs in organisations that are known to employ people with foreign backgrounds is, thus, more likely to be related to issues like language requirements than the organisations' approach on diversity. The fact that these organisations hire foreigners is seemingly not based on a diversity programme. The influence of the recruitment methods of employers on the actual job search, identified in the framework of this study was, thus, not supported by the findings.

In conclusion, it can be said that in terms of job search the respondents did seem to focus on those kinds of jobs that corresponded to their backgrounds and circumstances. Thus jobs that were related to their student status, corresponded with the field and level of studies, and that could be assumed not to involve tough Finnish language requirements, were the most commonly applied for. However, it was found that quite a few of the respondents did also look beyond these kinds of jobs, too. It was also discovered that the respondent were rather active in their job search efforts.

This section has provided the answers to how highly educated foreigners engage in job search. Next, it is time to look at the findings concerning the outcomes of the job search and the reasons for these outcomes.

4.4 Job Search Outcomes

This section focuses on the outcomes of job search. The issues that are examined in this section thus include: the extent to which those who have applied for employment have been successful in their search, the reasons for gaining and not gaining employment provided by those who have and those who have not been able to find employment, and the comparison of these two groups in terms of certain variables. The general views of all the respondents of the survey concerning the factors that are seen to impede international students from gaining employment in Finland are also covered, as well as their views regarding employment opportunities after graduation and the plans they have concerning life after graduation.

It was already earlier mentioned that the number of the respondents who had engaged in job search was 58. Out of these there were 31 who had been able to find employment by the time of the survey and 27 who had not. Thus, over half (53,4%) had been able to find employment. This result, however, is different when compared to findings in earlier studies. For instance, Kinnunen (2003) found in her study on the integration of foreign degree students in Finland that only 15,6% of those who had searched for employment had not been able to do so. Similarly, Niemelä (2008), whose study also focused on the integration of foreign degree students in Finland, discovered that only 16,9% of those who had searched for employment had not been successful. Thus, the result of this study that 46,6% of those who have engaged in job search have not been successful is considerably different when compared with the findings in previous studies.

There are a couple of possible explanations for the differences in the rates of finding employment presented above. One could assume that there might be a difference in the willingness to take on employment of any kind between the respondents of this study who represent the business students of a single University and the respondents in the

above mentioned studies whose respondents represented many different institutions of higher education. This could be one explanation why the results of this study showed a lower rate of success in finding employment. Although there might be such a difference, the more likely reason for the discrepancy between the results is the fact that the employment opportunities of individuals with higher education have arguably decreased. The number of the unemployed highly educated individuals in Finland, in fact, hit a record in 2014 with over 40000 and the figure had actually doubled from the year 2008 (Blomqvist 2014). In addition, it was also mentioned in the above news article that individuals with business degrees were among those especially affected by the decrease in the number of jobs. Then, when considering the fact mentioned in the literature review that individuals with foreign backgrounds face more challenges in the labour markets than natives, it can be assumed that there are much fewer job opportunities than before. This would explain the difference between the results of this study and the earlier ones.

Then in terms of the 27 respondents who had not been able to find employment, they were asked whether they had been invited to job interviews. The results showed that 59,3% of them had been invited to interviews. Including the information concerning the number of jobs that had been applied for, it was rather expectedly discovered that the shares of those who were invited for job interviews were higher among those who had applied for a larger number of jobs. Out of those who had applied for less than ten jobs, 37,5% had been invited for interviews. The corresponding shares in the other groups were 44,4% among those who had applied for 10-50 jobs, 100% among those who had applied for 51-100 jobs, and 75% among those who had applied for over 100 jobs. This could be seen as an indication that effort pays off in the long run, but might also suggest that the scope of the types of jobs applied for is also broadened if applying for the preferred ones does not provide the desired outcome.

The same respondents were also asked to provide reasons for why they had not been able to gain employment. The question was an open-ended question that was answered by 23 out of the 27 respondents. The most commonly stated reason was the Finnish language that was mentioned by all but one of the respondents. Most referred to their own level in the language and answered that they had not reached a sufficient level. How-

ever, some answers also suggested that the language requirements could be a bit excessive. The following comments hint that the level of Finnish required might be unrealistic:

“Finnish is not my native language”

“Even for the jobs offered in the University (Aalto Business School) where you would imagine that language would not matter Finnish speaking students are preferred.”

The commonness of the other reasons provided was much lower in comparison to the Finnish language. The second most commonly stated reason was the lack of work experience mentioned by eight respondents. The third was discrimination related to their background mentioned by six. Joint fourth were study commitments that were seen to restrict the number of available opportunities, and the effort put into job search. These both were mentioned by four respondents. One respondent also mentioned the lack of contacts as a reason.

Then it is time to look at the 31 respondents, who had been able to find employment. One issue examined was the amount of time it took for them in their search to find the first job. It was actually found that 77,4% of them had found the first job within a year from starting their search and only 6,5% had to search for more than two years. Then in terms of the number of jobs they had applied for, as already touched upon earlier, there were a considerable number of those who had got their first job by applying for less than 10 jobs. Their share was actually 48,4%, and the share of those who had applied for 10-50 jobs was 35,5%. This, of course, is in line with the finding that the clear majority got the first job within the first year of job search. So, many of those who have been able to find employment have done so relatively fast and seemingly without an excessive amount of effort.

Then in terms of what kinds of first jobs the 31 respondents had gotten, it was discovered that there were many different kinds of positions, but the majority seemed to be related to the educational backgrounds of the respondents. The jobs were found within

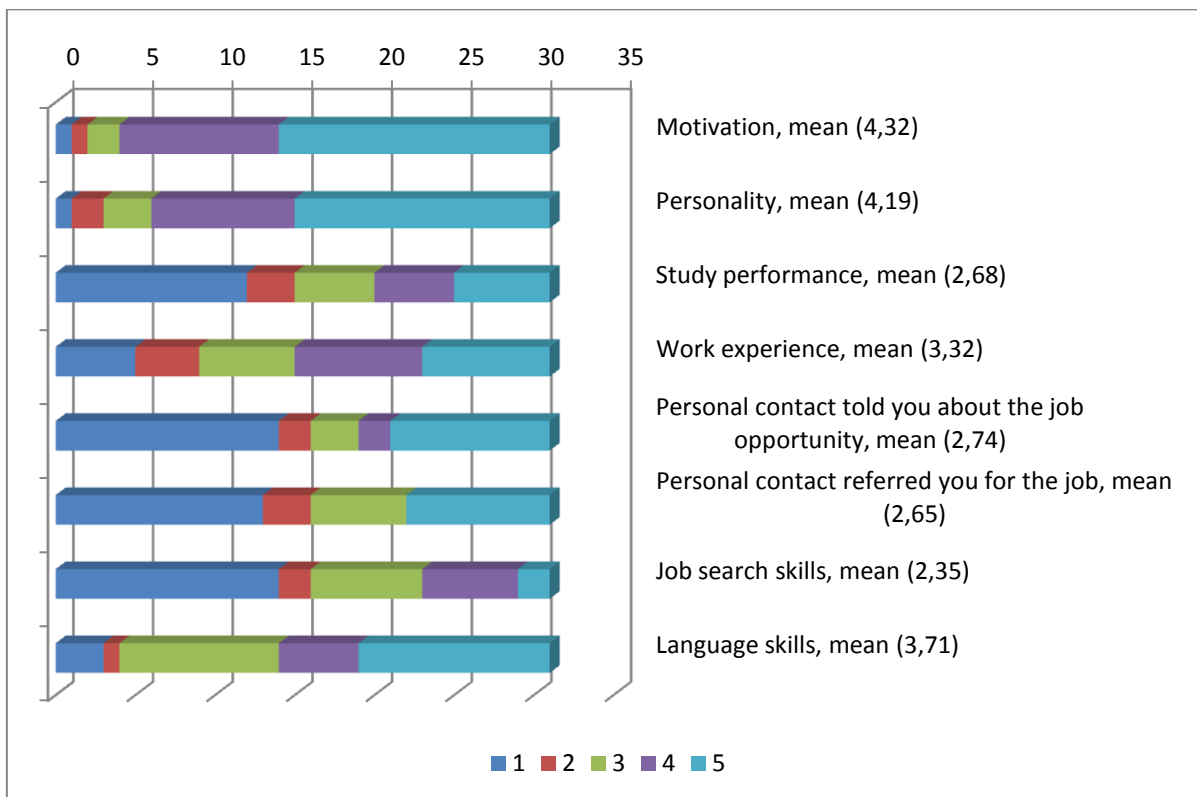
different professional fields such as IT, finance, consulting, entertainment, hospitality, education, and construction. The jobs were related to functions like marketing, logistics, finance, accounting, communications, and sales. The specific contents of the positions were not provided but the job titles that were mentioned by a few included the likes of assistant, trainee, and coordinator. The jobs were arguably thus largely entry-level positions. There were only a couple of jobs that appeared as rather unrelated in terms of study background. These included postal sorting and packing, bartending, postal deliveries, and stock picking at a warehouse.

The respondents were also asked how they got to know about these particular jobs. It was found that 41,9% of the respondents got this information through a personal contact, 22,6% found it in an advertisement, 19,4% had contacted the employer directly, 12,9% got it through the Aalto University Career Services, and 3,2% through an employment agency. The relevance of personal contacts in job search becomes apparent from these results. It was mentioned earlier concerning those who had not been able to gain employment that only one of them had mentioned the lack of contacts as a reason for not gaining employment. This could be a result of the open-ended nature of that particular question or it could also point to the fact that contacts are seen to provide an advantage in job search but jobs can be found without contacts too. The findings concerning how the information regarding the first job was found is in line with this, as many have had the advantage of personal contacts but still for the majority personal contacts were not involved.

In terms of how they got these particular jobs, the respondents were asked to rate the importance of different factors on a scale of one (not important) to five (very important). These results can be seen in Figure 13. The factors that got the highest average ratings were motivation and personality with average ratings above four. In addition, there were two factors that were rated on average as closer to very important than not important. These were language skills and work experience. It was an interesting discovery that motivation and personality were on average rated as the most important factors and that study performance did not get that high of a rating. Study performance could after all be seen to some extent reflect the skills related to their field of studies.

Perhaps, the respondents do not think that the differences between them and the other applicants in the area of skills or study performance are that big. It is rather the suitability to the job in terms of personality and the drive to get the specific position that may count the most. Work experience, on the other hand, is arguably more of an indicator of the abilities of the applicants to perform certain tasks from the viewpoint of employers and, thus, could explain its rating. Then, the importance of language skills could refer to both Finnish language skills as well as other languages skills. Some respondents actually specifically mentioned that their first jobs were somehow connected to their countries of origin. Finnish language skills might also be concerned although among the respondents there were only four individuals who rated their Finnish skills as fluent or good. Thus, the number of those who had to use Finnish in their actual work is not necessarily that high.

Figure 13. The importance of different factors in why the first job was got, scale 1 (not important) – 5 (very important)



The 31 respondent who had been able to gain employment were also asked about how the salary of the first job corresponded to the local average salary for the type of job in question. Only one reported to have had a higher salary. Nine said their salaries were similar to the average. 11 respondents said their salaries were lower than average and 10 did not know. At least, it does not appear that all foreigners are treated unfairly in this regard. However, the proportion of those who were paid less than the average is quite large with a bit over a third of the respondents. The reasons for this might be caused by issues other than the fact of being a foreigner, however. One of the interviewees commented on the issue like this:

“So, I wouldn’t say it was particularly because I was a foreigner. It was just that they were not willing to pay more for this job. It had more to do with the company’s finances.”

Then in terms of comparing the groups who had gained employment and who had not gained employment, there were some interesting discoveries. In terms of study program and citizenship both groups were rather diverse. Those who had found employment represented 12 different programmes and 15 nationalities whereas those who had not, represented 8 different programmes and 17 nationalities. In terms of gender it was however found that the share of men was higher in the group of those who had not found employment (44,4%) than in the group that had (32,3%). Thus, there was a difference in the rate of finding employment between the men and the women. Actually, 58,3% of the women who had searched for employment had found a job whereas the corresponding figure for men was 45,5%. There can be many different reasons for this difference. One could be that among women there was a larger share (61,1%) of those who had applied for jobs that were not related to their field of study than there was among men (45,4%). However, it is good to note that the found difference does not necessarily reflect the situation of the entire target sample.

Another interesting discovery concerning the two groups was the fact that both groups were rather similar in terms of rating their own competences. The competences that were rated on a scale of one (very low) to five (very high) can be seen in Appendix 1,

question 11. It was actually discovered that all respondents regardless of whether or not they had been able to find employment, rated their competences as rather high. Calculating the mean for each competence and then the mean for these means showed that the two groups were very similar. This figure was 4,02 in the group that had gained employment and 3,98 in the group that had not. In addition, it was found that in the case of four (Knowledge concerning own field of study, Problem-solving skills, Computer skills, and Foreign language skills) out of the ten competences, the means were actually higher among those who had not gained employment. Overall, the differences between the average ratings for each competence by the two groups were very small.

The above discovery was rather different from the one in the study of Shumilova, Cai and Pekkola (2012), who found that for all the competences they tested there seemed to be a connection between having a higher level of competence and finding employment. This could be explained by the fact that their study dealt with graduates. It could be assumed that as graduates become more fully engaged in job search they might begin to question their own skills if they are not successful in finding a job. Similarly, finding a job can be regarded as confirmation for the possession of a high level of skills. Students, on the other hand, are primarily students and therefore might not as readily associate negative outcomes in the labour markets with a lack in their skills. These skills can still be regarded as work in progress. Another explanation may be found in the fact that graduates could be assumed to be more demanding in terms of what kinds of employment they would consider.

In addition to competences, another interesting discovery was found in relation to the issue of work experience. Examining the shares of those who had found employment among the respondents who had work experience related to their current field of study, those who had experience unrelated to their current field, and those who did not have any experience at all, provided surprising results. It was actually found that 75% of those who did not have any previous work experience had found employment. The corresponding shares were 50% for those who had experience related to their current field of study and 45% for those who had unrelated work experience. This discovery is once again different from that of Shumilova, Cai and Pekkola (2012), who found an associa-

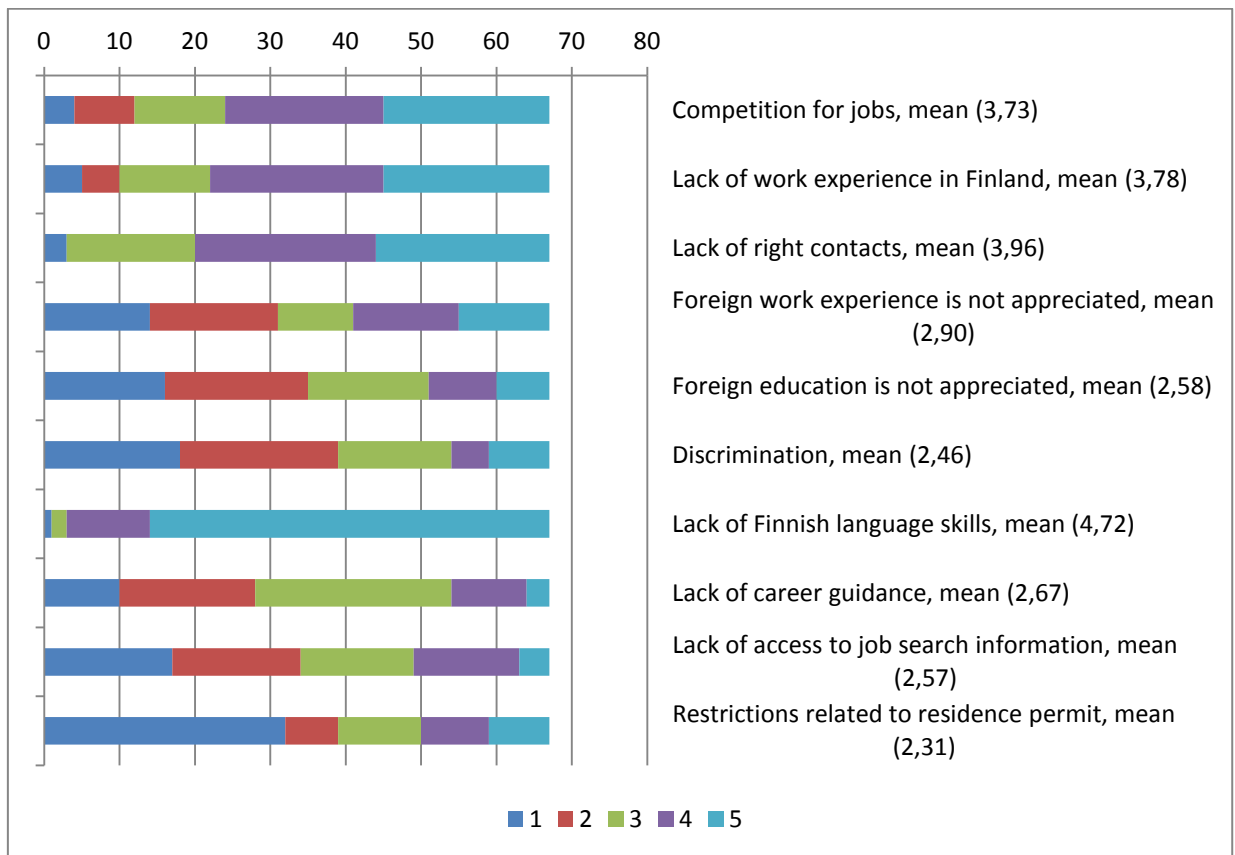
tion between a higher level of work experience and gaining employment. This may be again caused by the fact that this study deals with students. Thus, as mentioned earlier the types of jobs that were gained can be considered as entry-level jobs that do not necessarily require previous experience. In addition, in terms of the previous work experience of the respondents, it is only known what kind of experience they had but not how much of it they had. Anyhow, it remains surprising that the highest rate of success in finding a job was found among those who did not have any work experience at all.

In terms of Finnish language skills, there was also an interesting discovery. The results showed that despite of the level of Finnish language skills, the respondents were quite evenly able to find employment. Within the groups that had rated their Finnish language skills as either none existent, basic or good, 50% had been able to find employment. Out of those who reported having adequate skills, 58,8% had found a job, whereas 66,7 % of those who reported being fluent had found employment. These results combined with the fact that the vast majority of the respondents reported having a level of Finnish that was either adequate or lower, would support the assumption that most of the employed had jobs that did not require Finnish.

Next it is time to look at the general views of all the respondents of the survey concerning the factors that are seen to impede international students from gaining employment in Finland. All 67 respondents of the survey, thus, rated the importance of different factors on a scale of one (not important) to five (very important). The results can be seen in Figure 14. The factor that got by far the highest average rating (4,72) in terms of importance was the lack of Finnish language skills. This is in line with the earlier mentioned results concerning the reasons for not gaining employment provided by those respondents who had not been able to find a job. In addition to the lack of Finnish language skills, there were three other factors that got an average rating closer to very important than not important. These were: lack of right contacts (3,96), lack of work experience in Finland (3,78), and competition for jobs (3,73). Although, it was earlier pointed out that among those who had gained employment there were individuals who had been able to do so either without contacts or any previous work experience, it might be that the competition for jobs actually accentuates the perceived importance of both work experience

and contacts. As mentioned earlier, the competition for jobs is actually fiercer than before and the international students arguably compete not only against each other but also the Finnish students for the same jobs.

Figure 14. The importance of different factors in impeding international students from finding employment in Finland, scale 1 (not important) – 5 (very important)



Then it is time to look at the general views of all the respondents of the survey concerning the chances of finding satisfying employment after graduation. The 67 respondents of the survey were asked to rate their chances of finding such employment in Finland, in their home country, and somewhere else, on a scale of one (very poor) to five (very good). The highest average rating was found to concern their home country with a mean of 4,1. In terms of being successful somewhere else, the mean was 3,5 and thus still closer to the positive end. However, in terms of finding such employment in Finland the mean was 2,8 and closer to the negative end. It is understandable that the home country

was on average seen to provide the best opportunities and the fact that language issues might not be issues in, for instance, an English speaking country would explain why somewhere else came second. However, what is worth noting is the fact that the chances of succeeding in Finland were on average seen as negative.

All the respondents of the survey were also asked about their plans concerning life after graduation. It was discovered that 67,2% planned on staying in Finland after graduating, whereas 25,4% were planning to leave the country and 7,4% remained uncertain. Concerning the initial plans the respondents had when they began their current studies, the results showed that 79,1% were initially planning to stay in Finland after graduation whereas 20,9 did not have Finland in their initial plans. As can be seen, the share of those planning to stay in Finland has decreased. As already touched upon earlier, it was discovered that the majority of those, who had initially planned on staying in Finland but had since changed their minds, had not been able to find employment. Similarly, the majority of those, who initially did not plan on staying in Finland but had since changed their minds, had been able to find employment. Thus, it would seem that employment is of relevance when it comes to future plans. All in all, it can, however, be stated that the majority of the respondents are planning on staying in Finland after graduation, despite the fact that the chances of finding satisfying employment upon graduation in Finland were not seen to be as that positive.

Then, as in the previous sections, the findings of this section are also compared with what was suggested in the framework of this study. The factors that were identified in the framework to influence the outcomes of job search included: Finnish language skills, competences, work experience, social networks, discrimination, and availability of services supporting job search. In terms of Finnish language skills the findings are in line with the framework. As was seen, this factor was on average rated by all the respondents as the most important in impeding international students from gaining employment in Finland. Similarly, nearly all of the respondents who had not found a job and provided reasons for this mentioned the Finnish language.

Other factors identified in the framework that were supported by the findings were work experience and social networks. In terms of work experience, it was rather surprisingly found that the highest rate of success in finding a job was found among those who did not have any work experience at all. However, the lack of work experience in Finland was rated by all the respondents on average as closer to the important end as an impediment to finding employment. Similarly, those who had gained employment rated having work experience on average as closer to the important end in gaining the first job. Thus, it would seem that it is possible to get a job without previous experience, but it is an advantage to have experience. Then concerning social networks, it was similarly discovered that it is possible to find a job without the use of social connections but having these connections is an advantage. For instance, among those who had found employment, the single most common way of getting to know about the first job was, in fact, through a personal contact. In addition, the lack of right contacts was rated on average closer to the important end by all the respondents in terms of impediments to finding employment.

When it comes to competences, discrimination, and the availability of services supporting job search, the findings were not, however, in line with what was suggested in the framework. In terms of competences it was actually found that all respondents regardless of whether or not they had been able to find employment rated their competences as rather high, and the differences between the two groups were very small. In addition, those who had found a job did not rate study performance, which could be seen to reflect their skills, on average as closer to the important end in finding the first job. As mentioned earlier, these findings might be caused by the fact that this study focuses on students whose skills might, thus, still be regarded as work in progress, and who might also be less demanding in terms of what kinds of employment they would consider.

Then, concerning the availability of services supporting job search, it was found that issues relating to this such as lack of career guidance and lack of access to job search information were rated on average as closer to the not important end by all the respondents in terms of impediments to employment. This was in line with the findings in the previous section concerning the use and quality of the Aalto University Career Services.

Then, when it comes to discrimination it was found that all the respondents rated it on average as closer to the not important end as an impediment to employment. However, it is good to note that among those who had not found employment, one fourth mentioned discrimination as a reason for this. Thus, discrimination does exist and is surely a large and difficult problem for all who have to face it. The results, however, indicate that discrimination is an issue that does not seem to concern, or is not seen as that common by the majority of the respondents.

There were also some factors that were not identified in the framework of the study but proved to be of relevance according to the findings. For instance, motivation and personality were on average rated by those who had gained employment as closer to the important end and actually as the most important factors in getting the first job. These would fall under the heading of individual factors in the framework. In addition, the competition for jobs was rated by all the respondents on average as closer to the important end in terms of impeding the gaining of employment. This would fall under the heading of external factors in the framework.

In conclusion it can be said that over half of those who had searched for employment had been successful in their search. However, compared with earlier results and what is known about the current labour market situation regarding the highly educated, the competition for jobs seems to be tougher than before. Those who had found employment had, however, to a large extent found jobs that related to their educational backgrounds. In addition, it seemed that in many cases the first job was actually got relatively fast and seemingly without an excessive amount of effort. Nevertheless, nearly half of the respondents searching for jobs were still looking for the first one.

This section has provided the answers to what the outcomes of the search are, and the reasons for these outcomes. Next, it is time to look at the findings from the interviews.

4.4 Findings from the Interviews

The previous sections dealt mainly with the findings concerning the survey but did include evidence from the interviews as well. However, in this section the focus is specifically on what was found on the basis of the interviews. These findings complement the findings of the survey and increase our understanding concerning the process of employment acquisition in the specific context under investigation.

One of the main themes covered in the interviews was the way in which the interviewees had ended up in Finland. The discovered motives for coming to Finland included the same kinds of motives which were identified in the literature as motives to internationalise a career or to migrate (Cerdin, Diné and Brewster 2014; Carr, Inkson & Thorn 2005). These included economic, political, cultural, family-based, and career-based motives. Three out of the six interviewees had family related motives and two of them actually did not mention having other motives for coming. They commented on coming to Finland in the following ways:

“I have a Finnish significant other...we met in 2008, took two years of coming and going until I decided or could move in 2010. So it’s because of her.”

“I came with my family...we moved here in summer 2005 and since that time I have been permanently living here.”

As could be assumed on the basis of the above comments both interviewees also indicated during the course of the interview that they had come to Finland for the long term. The third interviewee who had family related motives also mentioned other motives for coming to Finland such as economic, cultural and career related motives, but did admit the weight of having a Finnish partner in making the decision as can be seen below:

“Without my boyfriend I probably would have done my master’s in my home country. It helped to sway my decision and also the free cost of education. I would say he played a big factor but I also wanted to come and study here...the quality of the education that I

had heard about and then I had liked Finland when I had been here before. I have a lot of Finnish friends or already had a lot of Finnish friends. I was interested in the culture too.”

However, she did mention later in the interview that her initial plans involved staying in Finland only for the duration of her studies after which she would have returned to her country. She had, however, changed her mind since then.

Then in terms of those three who did not have family related motives, all had considered also other alternatives in terms of study locations and did mention the free tuition as one of the motives for choosing Finland. However, one of them had chosen Finland mainly because she saw Finland as a location where she could fulfil her career aspirations as well as have time for other things in life. She described her decision in the following way:

“When I started studying I had the wish of becoming a consultant and consultants in my country work like 90 hours per week. And it is not only that you work 14 hours a day from Monday to Friday, but you also work on Sunday so like Saturday is the only day off and you still have to check your e-mails. So I figured if I maybe study in a country where then I could stay if I liked it and where I know they have reasonable working hours. I mean they also work 14 hours here but only from Monday to Friday and Sunday maybe an hour. So, I think it was the picture of Finland as a work-life balance country with people who are more laid back.”

During the interview she did also indicate that staying in Finland had been throughout her stay the primary plan concerning life after graduation.

In terms of the remaining two interviewees, they both stressed the importance of free tuition but differed in terms of how they perceived issues relating to their home countries:

“The situation in Finland was kind of the optimal choice from the financial point of view...the political situation in my country is quite complicated so I didn’t feel I belonged there.”

“My dream used to be to study in the USA or in the UK, because it’s quite popular in my country. But the costs there make it difficult and here in Finland tuition is free...I think studying back home would have been a good choice as well. The education is international. The private schools co-operate with other universities from different countries. So you can study a double degree and have the opportunity to get an international certificate within accounting for example.”

Out of these two interviewees the one who made the former comment of the above two had planned on staying in Finland just for his studies whereas the other interviewee initially planned on staying, changed her mind, but changed it once again and was going to stay after all.

As seen above, there were different kinds of motives for coming to Finland but one issue that later on in the interviews appeared as important when it comes to activities related to integrating into society was the plan concerning staying in Finland. All of the interviewees were at the time of the interview planning on staying in Finland, but as mentioned before two of them had different plans initially and one had changed her mind a couple of times during her stay. It was actually discovered that those who had planned on staying in Finland from the beginning seemed to have perhaps a more structured or consistent approach in terms of integration into Finnish society. This does not, however, mean that the others had not put a lot of effort in activities related to integrating, such as taking Finnish language courses or applying for jobs. Those who had consistently focused on Finland in their long term plans perhaps just focused also more consistently and in a more planned manner on integrating.

In terms of participating in Finnish language courses, all the interviewees had done so but there were some differences between those who had consistently focused on Finland

in their long term plans and those who had not. One of the interviewees who had completed a Bachelor's degree in Finland commented on the issue like this:

“I did study the language during my bachelor's studies, especially in the beginning. But as during my bachelor studies I started to think that I wouldn't stay in Finland I stopped the language studies.”

She had however later on started studying the language again. Another interviewee who initially did not plan on staying for the long term stated:

“Initially I was thinking should I invest more time on the Finnish language or on my profile studies like finance studies. I thought if I invest more on finance studies I get more mobile and international and I can get an internship somewhere abroad...Now I am planning to invest a lot of time on studying Finnish.”

In contrast one interviewee who had consistently focused on staying in Finland told that she had actually started studying the language already before coming to Finland even though she did not have prior connections to the country. She had participated in the available language courses from the beginning of her studies but also worked at improving her skills independently. She, for instance, stated:

“I have made one very good friend like my best friend in Finland. She is a Finn. We have switched to speaking Finnish maybe three months ago.”

Another interviewee who had also come to Finland for the long term and actually already before starting her studies told how she had immediately focused on learning the language:

“I started studying the language straight away because I thought that it was important...I took morning courses had a few hours break and took evening courses. I knew I had to build my networks and I knew I needed the language to do that because Finnish people are distant.”

Another issue related to integration that appeared to show some differences between those who had consistently focused on Finland in their long term plans and those who had not was social networks. Although, all had at least some Finns in their networks, it seemed that those who had long term plans concerning Finland had specifically focused on building their networks in Finland. This was done in terms of thinking about job search too. One such interviewee spoke about her network in the following way:

“Some nationalities have their own informal groups. Since I am trying more to integrate into the Finnish one I sort of neglect the international one...So I think I am more integrated than most international students but still not as much as I hoped I would be.”

She also mentioned how she had actively been involved in networking with companies by attending career events and by participating in the organisation of the activities of the student association related to her degree programme. Another interviewee whose long term plans had also consistently involved Finland had taken the building of networks in Finland to another level by basically creating a job opportunity for himself. He told the following about a job he wanted to get:

“I created a club in Aalto...to get this position. So I got to know everyone got to network with everyone. So then I got the job but didn't get an offer in the end.”

In contrast, among those who had not consistently focused on Finland, none had participated in those kinds of student associations that could have further enabled building contacts with companies. They had, though, attended events where one can network with companies but getting involved in the associations seems to be even a step further in the creation of networks. In addition, in terms of personal networks there seemed to be differences as well, an example of which can be seen below:

“I know quite a few students from my country but I have like two or three Finnish friends only. Even in the team work here in the school of business they tend to group with each other not with international students.”

In terms of actual job search, it was also discovered that those who had consistently focused on Finland in their long term plans had also searched for a larger number of jobs than those who had not. They were also the ones who had by the time of the interviews already been successful in finding employment in Finland. However, as seen in the results of the survey, quite a few had been able to find their first job without applying to that many jobs, so it is not necessarily just about the number of jobs applied for.

The findings from the interviews would suggest it could be about approaching job search and integration in a planned manner, working consistently on building within areas, such as, language skills and networks that are useful and perhaps even necessary in being successful. It would also seem that the future plans of the individual could help to explain when and why such an approach is adopted. These findings are in line with the views of Carr, Inkson and Thorn (2005) that the determinants of success concerning international careers are the motivation to make an international career move, the possession and development of the required skills, and the building of networks. Similarly, there is a lot in common with the findings from the interviews and the take of Cerdin, Diné and Brewster (2014) concerning international careers according to which the motivation to migrate determines the motivation to integrate, which then determines career success.

The interviews did also provide insights concerning the available support in integrating into society. As seen already earlier, the Career Services of the University were largely seen as doing a good job. However, there were some suggestions for how they could improve:

“So they are really good but I think that it’s still focusing very much on the Finnish students.”

“They have student projects related to or proposed by a company... But most of them in my opinion focus on Finnish students or who speak Finnish well, not really on the international students.”

“I think the school is doing what they can to empower students but I don’t think they’re doing as much as they could to change the mindset of the employers.”

Similarly, in terms of the provision of language courses there were suggestions:

“The way the Finnish courses was planned out wasn’t very good because my mandatory finance minor courses were at the same time as the Finnish courses.”

“Finnish courses should be offered the whole time and throughout the different levels...I know it’s my own responsibility to learn the language, but I just feel like the assistance wasn’t there. I don’t know if it is now.”

The discussions concerning the issue of support in integration also brought up the fact that also on the level of the government there was seen to be a lack of effort in ensuring that the international students integrate into society:

“From the government’s perspective, if you are allowing free education to foreigners inside your country, you should make sure that these people don’t just take the education and go elsewhere. “

“I think there is a huge gap in the corporate policy of the government...It’s a great thing that foreigners are here but we are not giving them any jobs.”

Overall, in terms of integration and the provided support, in the interviews the responsibility of the individual was accentuated and the support provided by the University was appreciated although room for improvement was found, too. However, the biggest problem seemed to be that in terms of job search, despite of the provided support and the individual’s efforts, in the end it is the employers who decide, and apparently not much is seen to be done on behalf of the government or the University to encourage employers to employ international students.

The interviews also covered the issue of job search in terms of the issues that were seen to be of relevance in terms of influencing the process. Similar issues to those that were found in the survey came up. So, issues such as work experience, the use of contacts and the competition for jobs were brought up and discussed. However, as it was in the survey, also in the interviews the issue that received the most emphasis was the issue of the Finnish language. Different ideas related to this issue were brought up. One of the interviewees found it problematic that in job ads it is not clearly indicated what level of skills is required:

“I am not sure, in some cases you do need it and in some cases you probably don’t. The companies should maybe write in their job ads, the ideal candidate has, the minimum requirement is.”

Another interviewee pointed out in relation to this issue that:

“Many require fluent Finnish... I haven’t seen many that say anything about basic Finnish skills required or anything less.”

However, some of the interviewees knew about cases in which their fellow international students had successfully applied for positions requiring fluent Finnish skills without being fluent in Finnish. They eventually found out that the jobs did not involve Finnish at all. So it appears hard to tell when a position actually requires fluent Finnish skills.

Whether or not language requirements are then used justly did however raise different views. Some saw that requiring Finnish was to some extent understandable as it could play a significant role in being able to participate in the informal communications within the company even though not necessarily required in the actual task. Therefore the ideal candidate might be a fluent Finnish speaker but the minimum requirement might be lower. However, the justness of the use of Finnish language requirements was also questioned:

“In some cases, companies cut out the foreigners with requiring Finnish. That really happens to some extent, but I can’t say it’s the rule.”

The general level of the Finnish language requirements was criticised as well:

“You have to speak perfect Finnish. And you are not able to speak perfect Finnish even in ten years in this country... And that’s what the companies want from the graduates of Master’s degree programs. There is a structural problem. It doesn’t make sense. It’s literally impossible to get a job if you need to learn Finnish in two years, you cannot.”

The issue of the Finnish language was overall seen as the toughest challenge in job search and its relevance was also brought up in relation to building networks in Finland. The fact that the actual language requirements of a job often remain unclear was seen as problematic in job search because it makes it hard to tell when one actually could be considered for a job or if applying would be a waste of time.

In terms of job search, the interviews also covered the issues of how diversity is addressed in Finland as well as whether discrimination appears as a problem. In terms of the way diversity is addressed, as already touched upon earlier, it was discovered that diversity does not seem to be that widely addressed in Finland:

“I think a couple of job ads have addressed the issue of diversity but not many. I can think of only one or two that had maybe said something about diversity and that they were going for that.”

Even in terms of international companies that might have corporate level diversity related policies it was seen that diversity is not high on the agenda.

“Normally the corporate headquarters don’t care because the company is run by locals. Just look at some of the international companies here. They don’t have foreigners working there.”

Then in terms of discrimination, the interviewees to a large extent did not consider it as a major obstacle in terms of job search. However, it was acknowledged that it might be an issue depending on the origins of the applicant:

“The stigma to an immigrant from my country is maybe different to that of an immigrant elsewhere. I am not sure if that is true or not but I am just assuming. I have the European passport. That’s one important thing. Then culture-wise we are very close.”

It was also noted that discrimination is something that one might face but is not necessarily the norm:

“It depends on the mindset of the employers. You have the racist people and even the people who don’t know they are racist but are. But you also have people who are very welcoming and very open. Who don’t think that it matters where you come from. There are both sides.”

The interviewees also talked about their plans concerning life after graduation. As mentioned before at the time of the interviews all were planning to stay in Finland. Although they had had different experiences regarding job search, all had staying in Finland as their primary plan. Their plans were, however, to a large extent conditional:

“If I wouldn’t find a good job here I don’t think I would stay in the long term because I have ambition and I want a good job and if I have to do it in another environment, I will even though it’s not my first choice. Although I haven’t been here more than one and a half years the networks I have built here are better than anywhere else so the conditions here would be better than anywhere else.”

“Finland is the first plan and I think I have the plan to work home as a backup”

“If I get a lower job I will not be that motivated or be kind of disappointed or not excited. I think that it’s best to get to the stuff that really matters and you can have an impact on. That’s how I feel. It would be very hard to settle with whatever.”

Some of the interviewees had made tentative deadlines and contingency plans regarding job search. One thing that, however, became evident was that by the time of the interviews, for most the decisions concerned also their partners and families so it was not just a career decision anymore. This could to some extent explain the finding in the survey that the majority of the respondents were planning on staying in Finland after graduation, despite the fact that the chances of finding satisfying employment upon graduation in Finland were not seen to be as that positive.

In conclusion, it can be said that the findings from the interviews were very similar to the ones in the survey. As seen, the interviews helped to explain the findings of the survey and provided the idea that the approach an individual has in terms of migrating could help to explain the resulting approach concerning actions related to integrating into the new environment and then perhaps also the following success. Overall, all of the interviewees did stress the difficulties and challenges related to finding employment in Finland. They might have somewhat differed in terms of how optimistic they were concerning their future in Finland, but they were all willing to work for it. This was expressed well by one of the interviewees in her comment concerning international students and their search for work in Finland:

“There are great people who have hopes and who are determined to work hard.”

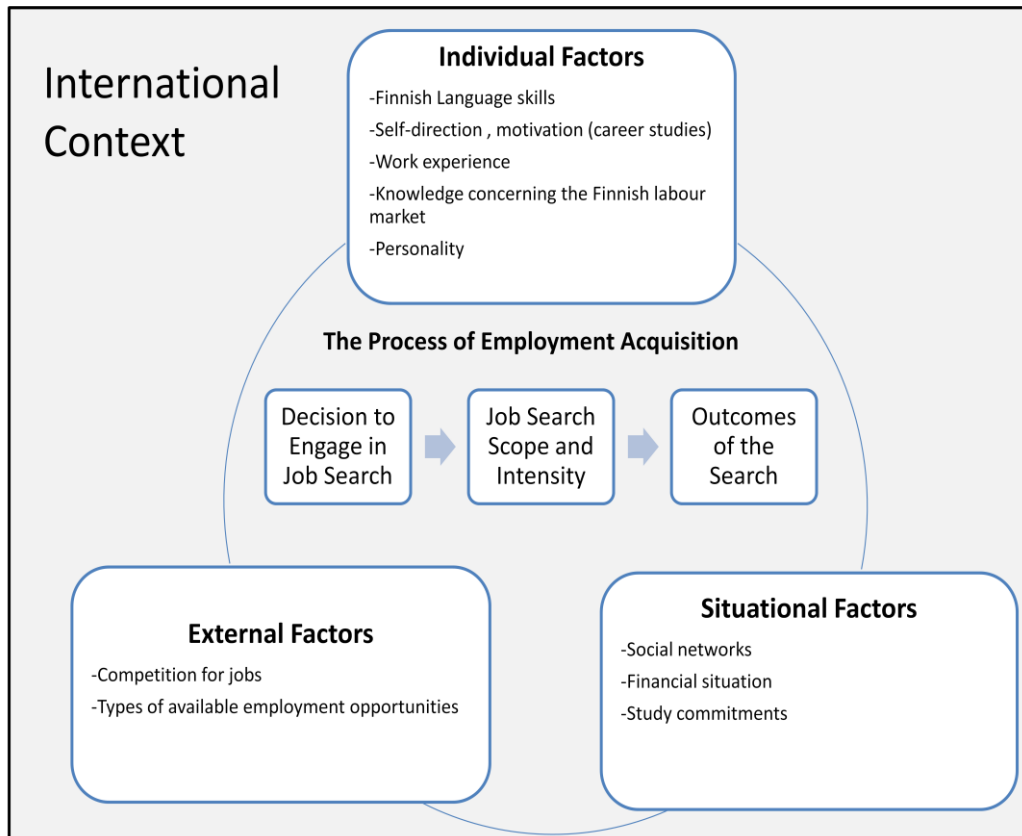
Now that the findings of this study have been presented it is next time to draw the findings together and present the revised framework of the study.

4.5 Revised Framework

As seen in the previous sections, the findings of this study did show similarities to what was suggested by the initial framework that was built on the basis of the literature. Thus, many of the factors that were identified in the initial framework were supported by the results of this study. However, there were also factors in the initial framework that were not supported by the results, and some new factors were also discovered in the

findings of this study. On the basis of the results, a revised framework was built and can be seen in Figure 15.

Figure 15. Revised framework



Concerning the first phase of the process of employment acquisition, the decision to engage in job search, the results of this study showed that the factors that influence this decision include: self-direction/motivation, knowledge concerning the Finnish labour market, study commitments, financial situation, and types of available employment opportunities. In relation to the decision not to engage in job search, the factor that appeared to be of most importance was study commitments, while other factors of importance were financial situation, types of available employment opportunities, and knowledge concerning the Finnish labour market. So issues such as wanting to focus on the completion of studies, being financially in a situation that does not require working, having limited knowledge about the Finnish labour market, and seeing the available job opportunities as uninteresting were found to be behind the decision not to partake in job search.

Then in terms of the decision to take part in job search, the factor that proved to be of most importance was self-direction/motivation, whereas the other factors of importance included financial situation, study commitments, and types of available employment opportunities. Concerning self-direction/motivation it was found that issues relating to both where the future career would take place (desire to stay in Finland) as well as who the individual wants to be in career terms (gaining work experience), influenced the decision to engage in job search. Other issues involved in deciding to start to search for employment included financing one's living, the occurrence of an interesting job opening, and the ability to take on work when study commitments are not in the way (summer job).

When it comes to the second phase of the process of employment acquisition, it was discovered that the factors that influence the way in which the actual search takes place are: self-direction/motivation, financial situation, and study commitments. Concerning the relevance of self-direction/motivation, the findings from the survey and interviews showed that in terms of relation to the field and level of study, corresponding jobs were the ones primarily applied for. The results also showed that other types of jobs were considered as well due to, for instance, financial reasons, if corresponding ones were not found. When it comes to study commitments, it was similarly found that the jobs primarily applied for were the ones that corresponded with the status of being a student.

Then in terms of the third phase of the process of employment acquisition, the results showed that the factors influencing the outcomes of job search are: Finnish language skills, motivation, work experience, personality, social networks, and the competition for jobs. Finnish language skills were found as the factor with the most emphasis in influencing the outcomes of job search. The lack of language skills and the inconsistent and ambiguous use of language requirements were seen as obstacles to finding a job. Similarly, lacks in the areas of social networks and work experience were found as impediments to gaining employment. Motivation, personality, contacts, and the possession of work experience were, on the other hand, found to be factors that enhance the chances of getting a job.

Now that the factors which were discovered to influence the process of employment acquisition have been presented, it is time to discuss these in relation to the existing literature. Concerning the individual factors, Finnish language skills were widely noted in the literature (Shumilova, Cai & Pekkola 2012; Ahmad 2010; Välivehmas & Ylätaalo 2008; Pulkkinen 2003; Valtonen 2001) as having an influence on the outcomes of job search in the Finnish context. The results of this study are similar and complement these earlier findings by suggesting that, in terms of job search, in addition to the actual level of language skills, it is the way in which employers use language requirements that should be considered as well. Then, when it comes to the factor of self-direction/motivation, the findings of this study are in line with the views of Cerdin, Diné and Brewster (2014), and Carr, Inkson and Thorn (2005). Thus, the plans concerning the future location of a career were found to be of relevance in terms of career related actions and outcomes. In addition, the findings relating to the influence of the contents of the career plans on the job search process are, in their turn, in line with the notion of career identity (Fugate, Kinicki & Ashforth 2004). In the results of this study, motivation was also found to enhance the chances of getting a job, as it was in the study of Shumilova, Cai & Pekkola (2012).

In terms of the other individual factors in the revised framework, the relevance of work experience in job search has also been identified in the literature. It has been mentioned as a relevant factor in general terms (McQuaid & Lindsay 2005), the lack of experience has been noted as an impediment to gaining employment (Välivehmas & Ylätaalo 2008), and the possession of experience as a facilitator in getting a job (Pulkkinen 2003). Then, when it comes to the factor of knowledge concerning the Finnish labour market, this was a factor that was not in the initial framework of the study. However, the finding that the lack of such knowledge is one of the factors behind the decision not to take part in job search can to some extent be related to the importance of job search skills (McQuaid & Lindsay 2005; Hillage & Pollard 1998) even if in this study the question is not about job search skills in general but about such skills in relation to the Finnish context in particular. In terms of personality that was not included in the initial framework either, there is also evidence in the literature supporting the importance of person-centred fac-

tors (McQuaid & Lindsay 2005; Fugate, Kinicki & Ashforth 2004) in terms of gaining employment.

When it comes to the situational factors of the revised framework, the findings of this study can be tied to the literature as well. Concerning social networks, the finding that lacks in social networks impede gaining employment is similar to that of Ahmad (2005) and Pulkkinen (2003). On the other hand, the finding that having contacts enhances the chances of gaining employment is in line with the views of McQuaid and Lindsay (2005). Similarly, the findings concerning financial situation and study commitment are in line with the views of McQuaid and Lindsay (2005), even though they discussed time commitments in relation to caring responsibilities and not studying. Thus, their views that time commitments and financial situation may influence the willingness to take up a job opportunity are supported by the findings of this study.

Then concerning the external factors of the revised framework, the competition for jobs was not in the initial framework of this study. However, the finding of this study that the competition for jobs was one of the impediments in gaining employment is in line with the view that the level of competition for jobs has an influence on a person's employability (McQuaid & Lindsay 2005). Similarly, the finding that the types of available employment opportunities have an effect on job search is in line with the notion that vacancy characteristics influence a person's employability as well (McQuaid & Lindsay 2005).

As mentioned earlier, there were, however, factors in the initial framework that were not supported by the results of this study. These were competences, employers' recruitment methods, discrimination, and the availability of services supporting job search. The factor of competences that was found as relevant in finding employment by Shumilova, Cai & Pekkola (2012) was not supported by the findings in this study. In fact, it appeared that there was not much difference in the level of competences between those who had gained employment and those who had not. Similarly, in relation to skills, those who had gained employment did not put much weight on study performance as a reason for getting employed. Then in terms of the recruitment methods of employers,

the results of the study did not support the notion (D'Netto & Sohal 1999; Cox & Blake 1991) that job search behavior is influenced by the employers' pro-diversity activities concerning recruitment. This was, however, discovered to be the case due to the fact that diversity issues do not yet seem to be that widely addressed in Finland, which is in accordance with the view of Sippola and Leponiemi (2007).

In terms of the availability of services supporting job search that was considered by McQuaid & Lindsay (2005) as a factor influencing employability, the results of this study showed that the lack of such services was not among the impediments to employment. However, it was also found that such services were widely used among both those who had gained employment and those who had not. Thus, although found useful, it could be argued that the use of these services is not necessarily the decisive factor. In a similar vein, the factor of discrimination that was found in the literature (Ahmad 2010; Pulkkinen 2003) to influence the chances of gaining employment was not found in this study to be considered on a general level as that decisive a factor. However, it is good to point out that discrimination could surely be an issue of relevance to some more than others. Overall, in terms of the factors that were included in the initial framework but not in the revised one, it can be said that although some of them could be considered to have some influence on the process of employment acquisition in the context in question, they were excluded because they did not prove to be considered as that decisive on a general level.

There is still one component in the revised framework that needs to be addressed, namely the context. The results of this study did, indeed, support the assumption that context has an effect on the emphasis different factors have in influencing the process of employment acquisition. The relevance of the international aspect related to the context was reflected in the emphasis of the Finnish language in influencing the outcome of job search. It was similarly reflected in the emphasis self-direction/motivation, especially discussed in relation to international careers (Cerdin, Diné & Brewster 2014; Carr, Inkson & Thorn 2005), had in influencing the decision concerning engaging into job search and the actual search. In addition, the emphasis of study commitments in influencing the

decision concerning engaging into job search and the actual search highlights the fact that the search for employment was examined in relation to students.

In terms of the context and its influence on the emphasis of different factors in the process of job search, a couple of issues relating to Finland, in particular, can also be pointed out. As mentioned, the discovered relevance of the Finnish language highlights the fact that this study focused on foreigners applying for jobs in Finland, but also reflects the fact that the language is not widely spoken outside the country. In addition, the fact that immigration is a rather recent phenomenon in Finland (Louvrier 2013; Ahmad 2005) could be seen in the discovery that diversity issues do not yet seem to be that widely addressed in the country (Sippola & Leponiemi 2007). This provides an explanation for why the recruitment methods of employers, at least when it comes to addressing diversity, were not seen to influence the actual search for jobs.

Now that the revised framework has been presented and discussed in relation to the literature, it is time to move on to the concluding chapter of this thesis.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter of the thesis the main findings of the study will first be presented. Then, the theoretical contribution of the study will be discussed followed by the managerial implications of the study. The chapter is concluded with the limitations of the study and some suggestions for further research.

5.1 Main Findings

The presentation of the main findings of this study begins with looking at the actual research questions the study aimed to answer.

The main research question was:

What experiences do highly educated foreigners have regarding finding initial employment in Finland?

To find an answer to the main question, two sub-questions were formed:

1. Why and how do they initially engage in searching for employment in Finland?
2. What are the outcomes of the search, why?

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, to get a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, it was necessary to get an idea of the extent to which the individuals this study focuses on participate in job search and are successful in finding employment, and about the factors that are seen to influence the process.

In terms of the first sub-question, if looking specifically at the issue of engaging in job search, the results of the survey showed that the majority of the respondents (86,6 %) had searched for employment. This gives an idea of the extent to which, at least in the target sample, job search is participated in. In addition, although the sample was not a representative sample of all the highly educated foreigners studying in Finland, the discovery was in line with findings (Kinnunen 2003) in earlier research.

Then, concerning the reasons why job search was started or not, the results of this study showed that the factors of self-direction/motivation, knowledge concerning the Finnish labour market, study commitments, financial situation, and types of available employment opportunities were found to be of importance. In relation to the decision not to engage in job search, the factor that appeared to be of most importance was study commitments. This discovery can be seen to relate to the view of McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) that time commitments may influence the willingness to take up a job opportunity. Then, in terms of the decision to take part in job search, the factor that proved to be of most importance was self-direction/motivation. This finding can be seen to relate to the views of Cerdin, Diné and Brewster (2014) concerning motivation and international

careers, as well as the view (Fugate, Kinicki & Ashforth 2004) that the career related decisions of the individual are guided by the ideas concerning who the individual wants to be career-wise.

The first sub-question also covered the issue concerning the way in which jobs were searched for. The results of this study showed that in terms of job search, different search methods were used and different kinds of jobs were also considered. However, the focus seemed to be on the kinds of jobs that corresponded with the backgrounds and circumstances of the individuals the study focused on. Thus, jobs that were related to being a student and corresponded with the field and level of studies were the ones most commonly applied for. Study commitments and self-direction/motivation were, hence, discovered as factors influencing the actual search. However, it was also discovered that even other types of jobs were considered due to financial reasons if the preferred ones were not got. Thus, financial situation was also discovered as a factor influencing the actual search. It also appeared that those engaging in job search were rather active in their job search efforts.

Then in terms of the second sub-question concerning the outcomes of the search, the results of this study showed that over half (53,4%) of those who had searched for employment had also been able to find employment. This finding, however, differed from the findings in earlier studies (Niemelä 2008; Kinnunen 2003) in the sense that the share of those who had not been able to find employment was larger in this study when compared to the earlier studies. Again, even though the sample in this study was not a representative sample, the finding is in line with the fact that the number of the unemployed with higher education has risen dramatically in Finland between the years 2008 and 2014, and those with business degrees are among the ones especially affected by the decrease in the number of jobs (Blomqvist 2014). Thus, the competition for jobs is arguably fiercer than before, which could explain the higher share of those who had not found employment in this study.

The results of this study also showed that in terms of the reasons for the outcomes the factors of Finnish language skills, motivation, work experience, personality, social net-

works, and the competition for jobs were seen to be considered of importance. Finnish language skills were found as the factor with the most emphasis in influencing the outcomes of job search. The importance of this factor in the Finnish context is also widely covered in the literature (Shumilova, Cai & Pekkola 2012; Ahmad 2010; Välivehmas & Ylätaalo 2008; Pulkkinen 2003; Valtonen 2001). In this study it was found that in addition to the lack of language skills, the inconsistent and ambiguous use of language requirements was seen as an obstacle to finding employment.

Concerning the outcomes of the search, there are still a few things the results showed that are good to note. When it comes to those who had been able to find a job, it was found that to a large extent the first jobs that were gained, did actually relate to the educational backgrounds of the respondents. In many cases it also seemed that the first job was actually got relatively fast and seemingly without an excessive amount of effort. However, nearly half of the respondents engaged in job search were still looking for the first one. Then, in relation to the natives the results showed that the participants of this study considered their own situation in terms of job search in Finland as much poorer in comparison to Finns. In addition, they did not find their chances of finding satisfying employment after graduation as that good in Finland. However, the majority were still planning on staying in Finland after graduation.

By answering the sub-questions it is possible to provide an answer to the main question concerning the experiences highly educated foreigners have regarding finding initial employment in Finland. The simple answer is that they have different experiences, but there are certain factors that can be considered as largely common in influencing whether or not one has started gaining such experiences and what those experiences have been like. The results of this study indicate at least in terms of the highly educated foreigners studying in the Aalto University School of Business that they participate to a large extent in job search and the shares of those who have been successful and those who have not yet been successful seem to be quite even. In addition, they largely seem to consider being in a disadvantageous position in comparison to Finns, when it comes to job search. Although these results cannot be generalised to the entire population of highly educated foreigners studying in Finland, they do suggest that there are many

challenges these individuals face in the Finnish labour markets and their chances of gaining a job, their employability, in Finland is not necessarily that high, at least in relation to the natives.

5.2 Theoretical Contribution

In the introduction chapter of this study it was established that the increasing cultural diversity of national labour markets has remained relatively unrecognised, at least in some fields of study. An indication of this could be seen in the literature covering employability. In terms of the models on employability, it was seen that these models (Berntson 2008; Rothwell & Arnold 2007; McQuaid & Lindsay 2005; Fugate, Kinicki & Ashforth 2004) were largely general in nature and could be seen to reflect a national or domestic setting. In addition, it was established that in terms of Finland there has been studies concerning the employment of foreigners, but the focus has been on the largest immigrant groups (Väänänen et al. 2009), and there have been few studies on the topic in relation to foreigners with higher education (Shumilova, Cai & Pekkola 2012). The findings of this study help to fill the identified gap found in earlier research.

For instance, it was unclear whether the situation of highly educated foreigners concerning job search in Finland differed from what was found in the studies focusing on immigrants in general. The results of this study suggest that also those with higher education face challenges in the Finnish labour markets. The views of the participants in this study were actually in line with the notion that foreigners generally face more difficulties in the labour markets than natives (Väänänen et al. 2009; Ahmad 2005; Valtonen 2001). The most significant theoretical contribution of this study is, however, the provided framework concerning the process of employment acquisition in Finland in relation to highly educated foreigners studying in Finland. This framework addresses the issue of increasing cultural diversity that is also found in the Finnish labour markets and is based on the context in which the search for jobs is investigated. It provides understanding on the different factors that are of importance in influencing the different phases of the process of employment acquisition in the context in question.

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge relating to the literature on employability and the research concerning the participation of foreigners in the Finnish labour markets, especially in terms of those with higher education. In addition, it highlights the fact that, for instance, in the field of international business it should be noted that in the management of international human resources the view should be broadened from a focus on within company expatriation, and realise that even national labour markets are becoming more international.

5.3 Managerial Implications

The findings of this study have managerial implications as well. In the introduction of this study it was also established that the migration policy of Finland (Työministeriö 2006) aims for the retention of foreign students in the country after their graduation. Although, it was found that the majority of the participants in this study were planning on staying after graduation, the conditionality of these plans in relation to finding satisfying employment was also expressed. Then, considering that the chances of finding such employment were not seen as that good, and the efforts on the governmental level to enhance the situation were questioned, it does send out a message to the political decision makers that this is an issue that should be given more emphasis.

The findings of this study also have implications for the administration of the Aalto University School of Business. The University follows the strategy for the internationalisation of higher education institutions, set by the Ministry of Education. One aim of this strategy is to improve the attractiveness of these institutions in the eyes of foreign students (Ministry of Education 2009). The attractiveness of the University is surely influenced by the available employment opportunities upon graduation. As mentioned, the situation after graduation was not seen as that good by the participants of this study. Although, the findings of this study showed that the responsibility of the individual in finding work was highlighted, it was also suggested that the University could take a larger role in promoting its international students and graduates to employers. So, in addition to providing job search support that focuses on the individual the University could also engage in activities aimed at influencing the views of employers. By working

in all the possible ways to enhance the employment opportunities of its international students and graduates, the University can also enhance its attractiveness in the eyes of new potential students.

The managerial implications of this study concern also those individuals who are involved in the decisions regarding the hiring of new employees in the different organisations in Finland. The discovery that diversity issues do not seem to be that widely addressed in Finland, points out an opportunity for employers who are open towards diversity to position themselves favourably (Cox & Blake 1991) in the eyes of applicants with different backgrounds. In addition, in terms of requirements, it would be useful for employers to consider what is actually necessary in relation to the specific job in question (D'Netto & Sohal 1999). For instance, in relation to the Finnish language the findings showed that language requirements were seen to be used in inconsistent ways. By requiring fluent Finnish to a position that does not actually require it, an employer risks losing an applicant that fits the actual requirements of the job perfectly. Perhaps most importantly, employers should realise the existence of a motivated pool of talent that still seems to remain relatively unnoticed, and start to question their own assumptions and activities related to hiring new employees.

5.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

In terms of the limitations of this study, it can once again be mentioned that as the participants of this study consist of the international Master's degree students representing the business programmes of a single University, the results cannot be generalised to the entire population of highly educated foreigners studying in Finland. However, the findings do increase our understanding on the issues that are considered relevant in the process of employment acquisition in the specific context of this study and, thus, contribute to theory. In addition, it is good to note that the findings of this study are based on the views and experiences of the job seekers and these views could differ from those of the employers.

Then, concerning future research, a longitudinal study following the career developments of foreign degree students in Finland would be of value to discover the determinants of career paths and success. Another interesting topic would be to investigate the views of employers concerning diversity in Finland. This could be done especially in relation to highly educated foreigners to find out the motives for the approaches organisations have or do not have in relation to diversity. In addition, in terms of facilitating the employment of foreign students and graduates, it could be investigated what measures the institutions of higher education in Finland take in terms of influencing employers to hire their international students and graduates.

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7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Survey Questionnaire



Employability of the foreign degree students of the Aalto University School of Business

Background information

1. Age? *

- <20
- 20-24
- 25-29
- 30-35
- >35

2. Gender? *

- Male
- Female

3. Citizenship/country of origin?*

4. Mother tongue/s? *

5. What degree programme are you studying in? *

- Accounting
- Business Law
- Corporate Communication
- Creative Sustainability
- Economics
- Entrepreneurship
- Finance
- Information and Service Management
- International Business
- International Business Communication
- International Design Business management
- Management
- Management and International Business
- Marketing
- Strategy

Other, Please specify

6. In what year did you begin your studies in the current programme? *

- 2013
- 2012
- 2011
- 2010

Other, what?

7. Did you move to Finland because of your current studies or had you already moved here before? *

- Because of current studies
- Moved already before

Skills & competences

8. How would you describe your knowledge about how to effectively search employment in Finland? *

- Very low
- Low
- Average
- High
- Very high

9. How would you evaluate your Finnish language skills? *

1 none, 2 basic, 3 adequate, 4 good, 5 fluent

1 2 3 4 5

When you arrived in Finland

Now

10. What kind of previous work experience did you have before coming to Finland? *

Mark all that apply

- None
- Experience unrelated to current field of study
- Experience related to current field of study

11. How would you rate your own level among the following competences? *

1 very low, 2 low, 3 average, 4 high, 5 very high

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Knowledge concerning own field of study | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Analytical skills | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Problem-solving skills | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ability to learn | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Team working skills | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Communication skills | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Presentation skills | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Computer skills | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Foreign language skills | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Inter-cultural skills | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

12. Since moving to Finland have you been searching for employment in Finland? *

- No
- Yes

13. How important have the following factors been in why you have not searched for employment in Finland?

1 not important, 2 slightly important, 3 somewhat important, 4 important, 5 very important

	1	2	3	4	5
Want to focus on completing studies *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not necessary financially *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unavailability of interesting job openings *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unavailability of job openings that leave enough time for studying *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limited knowledge about Finnish labour market *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Future plans do not include working in Finland *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have been working in home country during vacations *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have been working in another country during vacations *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have been working as an entrepreneur *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work restrictions related to residence permit *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, What? _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. Are you going to search for employment in Finland before graduating? *

- No
- Maybe
- Yes

Job search in Finland

15. How long after moving to Finland did you start searching for employment?

*

- under 3 months
- 3-6 months
- 7-11 months
- 1-2 years
- more than 2 years

16. How important were the following factors in deciding to start searching for employment in Finland?

1 not important, 2 slightly important, 3 somewhat important, 4 important, 5 very important

	1	2	3	4	5
Financing your studies/living *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making some extra-income *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Finding a summer job *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gaining work experience *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gaining work experience in Finland *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An interesting job opportunity appeared *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desire to work in Finland after graduating *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Someone's recommendation *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, What? _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. What of the following methods have you used in searching employment in Finland? *

Mark all that apply

- Applying for vacancies advertised in newspapers, internet, bulletin boards
- Contacting employers on your own initiative
- Using the services of the public employment agencies
- Using the services of private employment agencies/temp agencies
- Using the services of the Aalto University Career Services
- Attending recruitment fairs
- Using the help of personal contacts in finding information on possible employment opportunities
- Using the help of personal contacts in referring you for a job

Other, What?

18. What types of jobs have you applied for in Finland? *

Mark all that apply

- Permanent full-time
- Permanent part-time
- Fixed term full-time
- Fixed term part-time
- Summer job
- Internship

Other, What?

19. In which geographic areas have the jobs you have applied for in Finland been located? *

Mark all that apply

Capital region

Outside capital region, Where?

20. Within which sectors have you applied for employment in Finland? *

Mark all that apply

Public

Private

Non-profit

21. In what kinds of organisations have you applied for jobs in Finland? *

Mark all that apply

Finnish owned organisations

Foreign owned organisations

Organisations that operate internationally

Organisations that operate only in Finland

Small organisations (personnel under 50)

Medium sized organisations (personnel 50-250)

Large organisations (personnel over 250)

22. In terms of language requirements, what have been required in the jobs you have applied for in Finland? *

Mark all that apply

- English
- Finnish
- Your mother tongue

Other, What

23. Have you applied for jobs in Finland in which you could have used your cultural knowledge relating to your home country? *

- No
- Yes

24. In terms of relation to your studies what kinds of jobs have you applied for in Finland? *

Mark all that apply

- Jobs unrelated to field of study
- Jobs related to field of study
- Jobs corresponding to level of study
- Jobs below level of study
- Jobs above level of study

25. In your job search efforts in Finland, have you primarily applied for jobs in organisations that are known to employ people with foreign backgrounds? *

- No
- Yes

26. Have you encountered job advertisements that have been specifically targeted for international students? *

No

Yes, Could you provide an example?

27. How would you describe the supply of study related employment opportunities within your field of study in Finland? *

1 very poor, 2 poor, 3 somewhat good, 4 good, 5 very good

1 2 3 4 5

For Finnish students

For international students

28. Have you been able to gain employment in Finland? *

No

Yes

29. Could you estimate how many jobs you have applied for in Finland? *

less than 10

10-50

51-100

over 100

30. Have you been invited for job interviews? *

- No
- Yes

31. What do you think are the three most important reasons why you have not gained employment?

First job in Finland

32. How long after first starting your job search in Finland did you get your first job ? *

- under 3 months
- 3-6 months
- 7-11 months
- 1-2 years
- more than 2 years

33. What was the job and within which professional field? *

34. How did you get to know about this job? *

- Advertisement in newspaper, internet, bulletin board
- Contacted employer on your own initiative
- Through an employment agency
- Through a personal contact

Through the Aalto University Career Services

Other, What?

35. How many jobs had you applied for before getting this job? *

less than 10

10-50

51-100

over 100

36. How important do you consider the following factors in why you got this job?

1 not important, 2 slightly important, 3 somewhat important, 4 important, 5 very important

	1	2	3	4	5
Motivation *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personality *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Study performance *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work experience *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal contact told you about the job opportunity *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal contact referred you for the job *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job search skills *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Language skills *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, What? _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

37. How did your salary compare to the local average salary for the type of job in question? *

- Do not know
- Lower than average
- About the same as the average
- Higher than average

After graduation & final thoughts

38. How would you evaluate your chances of finding satisfying employment after graduation? *

1 very poor, 2 poor, 3 somewhat good, 4 good, 5 very good

1 2 3 4 5

In Finland

In your home country

Somewhere else

39. What plans do you currently have concerning life after graduation? *

- Work in Finland
- Study in Finland
- Work in home country
- Study in home country
- Work in another country
- Study in another country

Other, What?

40. Did you initially, when you began your current studies, plan on staying in Finland after graduation? *

- No
- Yes

41. On the basis of your experiences and/or perceptions, how important do you consider the following factors are in making finding employment difficult for international students in Finland?

1 not important, 2 slightly important, 3 somewhat important, 4 important, 5 very important

	1	2	3	4	5
Competition for jobs *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of work experience in Finland *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of right contacts *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foreign work experience is not appreciated *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foreign education is not appreciated *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discrimination *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of Finnish language skills *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of career guidance *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of access to job search information *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Restrictions related to residence permit *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, What? _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

42. How could the employment opportunities of international students in Finland be enhanced?

43. Would you be willing to be interviewed as a follow-up to this survey? If you would, could you kindly fill in your contact information below? Your participation would be extremely appreciated whatever your experiences regarding job search in Finland may be.

Name

Email address

Telephone number (if you prefer to be contacted by phone)
