Master's Thesis

Identifying strategic factors for a market entry process for professional development education export in the United States market area

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Tiivistelmä

Koulutusvienti on noussut globaaliin tunnettuuteen viime vuosina, ja suomalaisen koulutuksen brändi on kansainvälisesti yksi kirkkaimmista. Suomalainen koulutusvienti ei ole kuitenkaan saavuttanut maineensa veroista koulutusviennin markkinaosuutta, osittain koulutusviennin ja kansainvälisen markkina-avauksen kyvykkyyksien puutteesta johtuen.

Tämä tutkielma pyrkii ratkaisemaan haasteen yhdistämällä kaupallisen ja koulutusalan akateemista kirjallisuutta 22 haastattelun muodostaman empiirisen datan avulla, tuoden lisäymmärrystä kahteen pääteemaan. Ensinnäkin parhaiden toimintatapojen ymmärrykseen ammatillisen kehityksen (PD) palveluiden koulutusviennin osalta Yhdysvaltain markkina-alueelle, ja toisekseen, miten koulutus tuotteena vaikuttaa koulutusvientiprosessiin.

Tutkielma perehtyy yleisimpiin market entry -teorioihin, koulutusvientiin sekä PD:seen tuotteena, peilaten empiirisiä löydöksiä näihin. Löydökset korostavat vertailukohtia pedagogisen ja käytäntöön keskittyvän PD:n välillä, sekä yksityisen ja julkisen koulutuskentän erojen suhteen. Näistä muodostuva diskurssi johtaa päätelmään markkinoiden välisten erojen vähentämisen tärkeydestä, johtaen onnistuneeseen markkina-avaukseen uudella markkina-alueella sen myötä.

Kokonaisuudessaan tutkielma pohtii monipuolista ja kompleksista ammatillisen kehityksen vientiä Yhdysvaltain markkina-alueelle, tuoden konkreettisia työkaluja kansainvälistymisprosessiin; ensinnäkin markkina-avauksen eri mahdollisuuksien ja muuttujien ymmärtämisen, toisekseen markkinoiden eroavaisuuksien vähentämisen ja kyvykkyyksien kasvattamisen, sekä lopulta strategisen tiekartan tekemisen osalta.

Asiasanat Koulutusvienti, Ammatillinen kehittäminen, Uusien markkinoiden avaus, Strategia
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Abstract

Education export (EE) has been gaining traction globally, and the Finnish education system is among the most awarded in the world. However, Finnish EE has not reached its full potential globally, partially due to lack of EE capabilities in international new market entry.

This study aims to solve this issue by combining business and education academia with extensive empirical data, providing understanding for two major themes. First, understanding the best practices for professional development (PD) EE into the US market area, and second, how education as a product alters that PD EE process.

The study uses most accepted theories of market entry, EE, and PD, and reflects the empirical findings from 22 interviews to these theories. The findings present viewpoints on PD EE, such as focusing on pedagogics rather than practicalities, private education sector rather than public education sector and on needed capabilities rather than capability development. These are examples of the differences in the market entry processes, resulting to an eventual logic that market differences between target market and home market should be decreased to conduct a successful market entry.

Overall, the study observes a multifaceted and intricate case of PD EE in the US market area, providing concrete tools for the internationalization process: first, understanding the market entry contingencies, then decreasing the market differences and developing capabilities, and finally developing a strategic roadmap based on the previous two steps.

Keywords
Education Export, Professional Development, Market Entry, Strategy
Depository University of Jyväskylä

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As I'm writing this acknowledgement, I'm working in a complimentary lounge for founders in San Francisco, on the 16th floor, overlooking the beautiful skyline of the city – with arcane thoughts. Thinking about education and its role in our modern society brings me to some core thoughts of humanity, echoed by the sheer realities of surrounding me: San Francisco has arguably one of the worst situations with homelessness and wealth inequality in the world. At the same time, this is one of the best locations for new ventures, start-ups, and business alike.

These contrasting themes make me seek a solution, yet here it is, right in front of me. Education. I'm truly inspired by the idea of exporting education to bring value not only economically, but more so socially. I see this master's thesis bridging some vast gaps in educational export and market entry literature in one of the most lucrative markets in the world. I hope this thesis can pave the way for educational visionaries and futurists to solve the problems of today with educational solutions of tomorrow. I hope one day I can return to this lounge and see the societal problems solved - with innovations of Finnish education.

I hope this study will provide value for both the academic world and the partnering company – while simultaneously allowing future scholars and students to continue research at the interplay of business and education. Completion of this study would not have been possible without great support of people and organizations around me.

I'm forever grateful to my late mother who inspired me to study education and lit the ambitious spirit to pursue great things in life, and to my father, who demonstrated that by working hard, you can achieve your dreams - no matter what they are. To my supervisors Suvi and Mari, and team at ECF, thank you for the never-ending support and feedback, pushing me through the process for the best possible outcome. To the 22 interviewees who found time to discuss the topics of education export and the US market with me, thank you for your valuable insights. And lastly, to my network of friends, colleagues, and business partners - thank you for your support during this process.

26th of May 2022
Joona Koivisto

1 INTRODUCTION

Education export has become a hot topic in the Finnish education discourse in the latest years, despite the lack of breakthroughs and success. This multidisciplinary study looks to change that and provide the theoretical means for education export to become number one export of Finland.

The study identifies the key drivers of a market entry of educational expert services and professional development in a novel market area. The study recognized the most important drivers of market entry processes in the United States education market and observed how professional development can be exported to the target market. The research drew both from educational and business literature to best analyze education as a business phenomenon of market entry.

The study focuses on the market entry processes for professional development education export from a viewpoint of startups and SME's, instead of large corporations since most EE companies fit SME or startup definition.

The study is done in collaboration with a private education export company based in Finland. The strategic findings and practical guidelines for the market entry are company specific and will be provided exclusively for the partnering company. These strategic guidelines are applicable only to select, and company specific circumstances and situations, but the study delivers a common framework to help create these strategies for all education export companies considering a market entry process. Strategic findings are discussed and presented consultatively with the partnering company, while simultaneously maintaining the academic research integrity and the University of Jyväskylä data collection and data handling guidelines.

The motivation and expected impact of the study can be classified to both practical motivations, generating impact for businesses, overall economy and individuals, and academic motivation, providing a pioneering lens combining the fields of education and business literature.

1.1 Research questions

Research questions serve the same purpose as my motivation: the first research question looks at the market entry of the specific product, and the second helps understand the role of education along the way. The first question is the following: **"What are the contingencies of a market entry for educational services to the American market?"** A contingency can be described as a future condition which is possible but not predicted with certainty. In this study, contingency refers to the possibilities of the market entry, without the certainty that they will result in a successful market entry. This question is positioned in the market entry theoretical frameworks, especially focusing on the lens of *how* to enter the market.

Second research question is this: **"What characteristics does education and professional development as a service, or a product bring to the market entry processes?"** This question takes approach to the topic from an educational viewpoint and tries to understand how education as a product effects the internationalization processes and how it should be viewed during the process.

Another way to describe the research questions is to find out the best practices of education delivery and sales, and to find out the most optimal way of internationalizing educational professional development and services. These research questions provide a further understanding of the matter and provide the academic backing to the topic researched. The conducted interviews also suit these categories to reach maximum impact.

Practically, the objective of the study is to understand the challenges related to the market entry process, and the specifics of the US market area in terms of education. On a higher level, research objectives are to provide tools for boosting Finnish educational export both on company and economy level.

Another viewpoint of the research questions is the unperfected nature of education as a product: education export (EE) is constantly developing and being restructured, and there is no standard for the EE industry. This study aims to note the best practices of EE and their relation to commercialization of education.

1.2 Practical motivation of the study

Finland has had one of the most prominent and awarded education systems globally for decades, and it does not cease to impress with its results (Hancock, 2011; Statista, 2021). One of the key attributes that has kept the education system modern, efficient and successful, has been its ability to adapt (Anderson, 2011; Strauss, 2019). The system has been improved yearly with active planning work by the Finnish education professionals, which has eventually led to international recognition.

The international praise has drawn interest towards Finnish education, but international education export from Finland has yet to reach its full potential. Reasons for this are complex, but one of the most important visions to improve educational export is the capabilities development especially in terms of commercialization and international new market entry. I would argue that the Finnish education has not been able to adapt to match the international market needs. This is exactly the challenge the study aims to solve.

The study aims not only to answer *how* to enter the new market area, but also to pinpoint the challenges of market entry, providing strategic knowledge for Finnish and European companies entering a new market area. In terms of cultural and societal impact, this study will not only aid with Finnish education export companies, but also global professional service companies looking to expand into the United States market area. The study will provide concrete steps for successful internationalization, and especially draw from having education as a cornerstone for market entry.

On top of the company level benefits of the research, this study will also help public organizations and institutions understand the education sector commercially, and eventually capture its potential commercial possibilities. All this will eventually help and encourage entrepreneurs, firms, and institutions to expand their education export, which boosts Finnish and European export growth, and will one day make education our largest export sector.

As for the target market selection, the US market area provides unique possibilities in terms of the size and impact of their private schooling system and expenditure on education. It is vital to understand the market potential of the American educational sector. By 2025, the entire US educational market is expected to reach over 1.95 trillion dollars, highlighting the magnitude of the market area (Nagel, 2021). Private schools, which can be considered as the most penetrable market segment, sum up to be over 35 thousand in number and 25% of the entire amount of schools, including 10% of all students (Rose, 2013).

The study also creates a basis for development of transatlantic relationship between Finland and United States of America, especially focusing on educational export. The relationship can provide further business opportunities and grow educational export in Finland, while simultaneously bringing novel ideas and ways to the American education field.

Even though the study is focused mostly on professional development and its export, the findings of the study are applicable to other education contexts as well. As an example, understanding the value chain and key players of the American educational sector enables educational institutes and companies to better forward their export to the area.

As a concrete example of micro-level effect, the study brings competence to expert services companies of Finland, which boosts the development of internationalization in the country and opens a path for transatlantic cooperation. Thus, the study brings both macro-level strategic guidelines, and micro-level concrete means for companies, benefiting both global and local stakeholders and actors.

1.3 Theoretical motivation of the study

The topic itself is pioneering, as existing literature combining the two fields is limited and even non-existent at parts. This new approach drawing from both

academic disciplines will bridge a gap between education and business, especially in terms of strategy making and new market entry.

The thesis merges two master's programs and is a "double thesis", with the academic depth and reach of two theses. Double thesis as a concept is rare to begin with, but especially combining the two different fields gives an impression of the ambitiousness of the task at hand. The reach of the study gives me the possibility to look more in depth at the complex relations between education and business. The crux of the theoretical motivation is to combine the two fields and create a novel discipline.

The entirety of this study further highlights the academic and theoretical motivations for the study. With only limited existing research and a viewpoint on industry experts, policy makers and target market professionals through interviews, the researcher has a unique viewpoint on the topic and a possibility to pioneer a field of academia.

For the theoretical grounding of the study, the core findings and conclusions are applicable for multiple subjects of education export, including music education. This fills the research gap also from music education academia viewpoint, combining education export and music education.

As for the conclusion of this study, two final key targets are the following: generalizability and managerial implications. First of these targets looks at the possibility to use the academic findings of the study for future research. Second target looks at how the findings of the study can be implemented into business and what lessons can be learned for management.

1.3.1 Previous research on the topic

Key concepts and theories of the study can be classified into two disciplines: business and education. In terms of the business literature and theory, research is focusing market entry theories, internationalization theories and more specifically, to answer the question of *how* to enter. As for the educational literature, the study aims to draw characteristics and definitions of education as

a product and as a phenomenon, to understand its impact on international new market entry.

Education export as a research discipline has gained traction throughout the latest years (Juusola & Räihä, 2018, 2020), but has yet to find the focus point of the academia: education cannot be understood as a singular concept, thus leaving findings and conclusions less applicable. As an example, when looking at building and operating a Finnish elementary school in Asia and comparing that exporting professional development to private schools to the United States, the differences are easy to spot.

As Juusola & Räihä (2018; 2020) look at Finnish higher education export in Indonesia, there are multiple similarities with this master's thesis and further upcoming research, but still the different landscape of phenomena remains. The researchers study export of an educational master's degree (teacher education), especially focusing on quality conventions and experiences of teachers and learners, still not from business viewpoint. The core findings are the two conventions stakeholders experienced the exported educational services through: the professional-academic convention and the civic-domestic convention (Juusola & Räihä, 2020). These conventions laid the basis for successful market entry in terms of user experience.

The first of these conventions describes the professional and academic background and reasoning related to teacher education, giving reliability and scientific backing to theoretical background of methods of these programs. In practice, for the participants of the master's programs to feel like the program is successful, the education needed to be research based and scientifically grounded.

Secondly, the civic-domestic convention saw the societal impact of the exported education as a key difference maker in success of the entry. Finnish reputation of education is substantial globally, and thus the civic-domestic convention was experienced to be meaningful.

Kantola & Kettunen (2012) study the topic of international higher education and strategic decisions and frameworks related to education export. These frameworks include building strategic partnerships and using brokers especially

in the export of higher education, especially when considering internal capabilities of higher education providers (Kantola & Kettunen, 2012). Limitations of the study include yet again the lack of business focus: the research paper is looking at the issue merely from higher education providers (i.e., universities) view.

Both Marginson (2011) and Schatz (2015) are looking at educational export from a broader viewpoint but including the economic and business aspect more thoroughly. Marginson (2011) observes education export as a business in the Australian market area, focusing on the tensions and drivers of success of educational export. Article also provides solutions for these tensions, but only observes these solutions in a specific market area. The focus of the paper is not on the same geographic market area, nor with professional development, resulting the topic of this study to still be pioneering.

Schatz (2015) studies the Finnish education export industry from a high-level perspective, noting all key players of the industry both in public and private sectors. The research provides a whole understanding of the industry, but does not specify the means of market entry strategies on the topic (Schatz, 2015).

Previous music education research looks at both professional development and teacher autonomy, and demonstrate the applicability of theory to music education field: the education, professional development and music education are all interlinked (Bautista et al., 2017; Juntunen, 2017; Kivijärvi & Rautiainen, 2021). However, the research still lacks the viewpoint of education export or business, resulting in a shallow viewpoint on the collective topic of the study.

Looking at these examples of previous research, the scarcity of research combining both educational export and business is imminent. In-depth research on educational aspects of commercialization of education is available, but completely lacks the international new market entry viewpoint. Research on new market entry and internationalization strategies is available as well but has no connection to education. This is where the study comes together and forges the two disciplines together.

2 EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This chapter outlines education theories applicable for the study by first looking at the historical roots of Finnish education, its current state, and then observing professional development theories and their applicability to the study.

To begin, it is vital to understand the current state of the Finnish education industry and its history, by providing background with previous research and primary sources. After that, comparisons between the target market education systems are drawn, ending with a discussion on the comparisons between the two.

As for professional development, persistent understanding of the literature and the phenomena related to professional development market is gained through the theoretical literature review, finding common adaptations to both education and business frameworks.

2.1 Key educational concepts

In terms of educational concepts, the key definition is the educational export. Schatz (2015) defines by drawing from Adams (2007) to forge the definition of educational export as following: "an intentional business transaction concerning educational practices, services, and materials from one country to another". Although this is a broad definition, it takes into account all aspects of educational export (Schatz, 2015).

I observe the concept of teacher training and education, linking it to a product concept, and by leveraging existing definitions from educational literature. Darling-Hammond (2006) defines modern teacher education to be targeting the "vision of professional practice", and further dividing it to sub-categories looking at key goals of teacher education:

> • knowledge of learners and how they learn and develop within social contexts, including knowledge of language development.
>
> • understanding of curriculum content and goals, including the subject matter and skills to be taught considering disciplinary demands, student needs, and the social purposes of education.
>
> • understanding of and skills for teaching, including content pedagogical knowledge and knowledge for teaching diverse learners, as these are informed by an understanding of assessment and of how to con- struct and manage a productive classroom.
>
> (Darling-Hammond, 2006)

This definition by Darling-Hammond (2006) still lacks the viewpoint of business, and the viewpoint of education as a product, reinstating the need for more specific concept definition drawn from the thematic content analysis further on.

In conclusion to concept and theory definition in both disciplines, existing models and frameworks provide an excellent lens for specific disciplines but lack the common ground between education and business. A novel framework will be formulated after the literature review and reinstated later in the conclusion, to develop the framework further.

2.2 Finnish education

2.2.1 Brief history of Finnish education

Finnish Education starts its journey to success in early 16th century as the religious Reformation begun to shape the country's schools, still largely based on Latin schools of the time (Sinnemäki et al., 2019). As Sinnemäki et al. (2019) present, the objective of religious parties was to spread literacy and culture especially for the people of Finland to be able to read Sacred Scripture in their own language. This in turn opened an avenue for the spread of Finnish education nationwide, eventually entitling girls to attend school and creating a basis for equality in the Finnish context (Sinnemäki et al., 2019).

Reformation did not have only positive effects on the Finnish education. As the role of the Swedish King Gustav Wasa changed as per the reformation, the King confiscated much of the church resources such as cathedrals, parishes, and monasteries (Sinnemäki et al., 2019). This further enabled the separation of church and education system in Finland, laying the foundation of independent development of education.

After the early years of Reformation, Finnish education took its next major steps toward its modern success when it implemented so called "kansakoulu" and "oppikoulu" into the system in the 19th century. These are roughly translated to "people's school" and "learning school". Finnish language become the official language of the country and was adopted into the education system, followed by a larger educational transformation in the 1970s (Sinnemäki et al., 2019).

Rapid societal transformation from agrarian society to a developing industrial society required fundamental changes to the education system (Kupiainen et al., 2009). Quickly expanding economy needed higher educated professionals and political landscape of Finland was finally ready for the major changes in the 1960s and 1970s (Kupiainen et al., 2009). At first, centrally led system of education was advocated to ensure an equal and high standard nationwide system for education, but later replaced by a more decentralized system allowing more independence for municipalities and teachers (Kupiainen et al., 2009; Välijärvi, 2002). Teacher autonomy has since been one the most prominent attributes to the success of Finnish educational system (Juntunen, 2017; Kivijärvi & Rautiainen, 2021).

The ongoing and continuing trend of Finnish education in its history is its ability to adapt continuously and courageously. This ability has developed the educational system as it has not remained stagnant even amidst success, creating perhaps the largest advantage for Finnish education, especially from the 1960s onwards (Juntunen, 2017; Kupiainen et al., 2009; Sinnemäki et al., 2019).

2.2.2 Difference-makers of Finnish education

As Kupiainen et al. (2009) argue, the Finnish education system has separated itself from traditional Western systems as demonstrated in Figure 1. Flexibility and diversity relate to autonomy, constructing a foundation for the first major difference when compared to the more traditional and general Western educational models. The autonomy is also seen in curriculum and school level, as each school has the resources, capabilities, and the permission to develop and adapt the curriculum to match their needs (Kupiainen et al., 2009; Välijärvi, 2002).

Another key feature presented in Figure 1 is the emphasis on broad knowledge versus the literacy and numeracy emphasis. This creates a wider base of understanding for Finnish students and develop life skills such as morality, creativity and personality, instead of more core sciences in traditional Western system (mathematics, science, reading and writing) (Juntunen, 2017; Kupiainen et al., 2009). Drawing from these acknowledgements on top of the historical founding, the Finnish educational system prior to the 1960s-1970s transformation was similar to the traditional Western system but has been able to adapt according to societal needs and developments in the following decades (Juntunen, 2017; Kupiainen et al., 2009).

Finally, trust in the teacher's capabilities is yet another string to the autonomy of teachers. Finnish education professionals are trusted in their decision making processes on the best pedagogical methods for teaching, and the teachers are given more responsibility compared to general Western model of consequential accountability, followed by inspections and tighter regulations (Juntunen, 2017; Kupiainen et al., 2009; Wei et al., 2010).

Standardized educational requirements, such as seen in other Western countries, do guide the work of teachers, but are simultaneously limiting the autonomy of teachers, eventually leading to an imbalance of national assessment and teacher autonomy (Juntunen, 2017). Juntunen (2017) states that the imbalance of national assessment and teacher autonomy threatens successful

education, emphasizing one of the first key features of the success of Finnish education.

Differences in educational systems are presented in the Figure 1, where the main distinction was the role of standardization and the emphasis on literacy and numeracy, in contrast to Finnish emphasis on broad knowledge.

For the emphasis on literacy and numeracy, the Finnish ways of teaching both reading, and mathematics are relying on complex processes benefitting multiple subjects. In the Finnish national curriculum, combining subjects is one of the main targets of the curricula (Juntunen, 2017).

The standardization is connected to the larger concept of teacher autonomy and is especially seen in the processes of evaluation. The role of standardization needs to be acknowledged in EE, as the new market being entered might rely on a certain evaluation standard, which the educative product needs to match. On the contrary, the different standardization practices can be implemented partly to EE; but cannot command the export process.

GENERAL WESTERN MODEL	THE FINNISH SYSTEM
Standardisation Strict standards for schools, teachers and students to guarantee the quality of outcomes.	**Flexibility and diversity** School-based curriculum development, steering by information and support.
Emphasis on literacy and numeracy Basic skills in reading, writing, mathematics and science as prime targets of education reform.	**Emphasis on broad knowledge** Equal value to all aspects of individual growth and learning: personality, morality, creativity, knowledge and skills.
Consequential accountability Evaluation by inspection.	**Trust through professionalism** A culture of trust on teachers' and headmasters' professionalism in judging what is best for students and in reporting of progress.

Figure 1. Differences between Finnish & general western models (Kupiainen et al., 2009)

Another important difference-maker of Finnish education is its constant adaptation: the system has been aggressively and proactively developed, and even during its successful years, it has been actively revamped. This phenomenon of constant development matches market entry processes well. Adapting and developing capabilities and systems of EE during the internationalization increases the likelihood of success both for education, and business (Zachary et al., 2015).

In terms of education, the latest decades of the Finnish education system demonstrate the success of continuous development despite finding success. As for business, multiple theories look at internal and external capability development during internationalization and find that simultaneous capability development (adapting the capabilities on the go) increases the likelihood of success for companies internationalizing (Zachary et al., 2015).

Finnish consensus and discourse on education is quite polarized: Finnish education system is seen as an evergreen and sensational solution for all, both domestic and global discourse. However, in global education the successful systems often have completely different paths to success: many top-rated educational systems have the educational basics vastly different, despite similar success both in PISA-scores and education reputation (Kupiainen et al., 2009; Välijärvi, 2002). This leads to the conclusion that different education systems can lead to as good learning results, or in other words, there are multiple paths to the same finish line.

2.2.3 Teacher autonomy in Finnish education

Teacher autonomy has been found to be one of the key contingencies in forming a successful educational system, and to especially emphasizing assignment construction and assessment balancing (Juntunen, 2017). Especially in liberal arts, such as music and art education, evaluation and assessment of students is more heavily reliant on the teachers decision making than other subjects (Juntunen, 2017; Kivijärvi & Rautiainen, 2021).

However, Kivijärvi & Rautiainen (2021) argue that teacher autonomy is a double-edged sword as the autonomy enables teachers to apply reasonable means that develop equity, but simultaneously contributes to discrimination because of the lack of standardized evaluation methods. Teacher autonomy's effect on equal evaluation is particularly applicable for liberal arts and music education and it serves the Finnish education system well because of the societal setting (Bautista et al., 2017; Kivijärvi & Rautiainen, 2021), as according to OECD (2018), the Nordic countries including Finland are among the most equal and least discriminating societies in the world. Teacher autonomy also benefits student inclusion and in-class participation to an extent that with environments with less teacher autonomy, there is less interaction and participation (Kivijärvi & Rautiainen, 2021).

Hence, the societal equality boosts the effectiveness of teacher autonomy in the Finnish education system: in an equal society, fair teachers give out rather unbiased evaluation for students (Kivijärvi & Rautiainen, 2021; OECD, 2018). This begs the question of differences in social and cultural contexts: United States can be considered as a more diverse society with complexity in equality: how is this seen in the perception to teacher autonomy?

Value base of education as a societal function, rigidity and strictness of the curricula and the professionalism of the educators are the drivers for applicability of the teacher autonomy success (Kivijärvi & Rautiainen, 2021). In other words, the societal factors determine the success of teacher autonomy as a practice. This means that when these factors do not support teacher autonomy, implementing teacher autonomy does not directly result to positive effects.

As both Niemi (2008) and Toom et al. (2010) find, the need for status and competence improvement of teachers is high. Teachers are drivers of economic, cultural, and social change, but, are not as appreciated in most countries than in Finland. Finnish education system is one of the reasons behind longing appreciation of teachers (Niemi, 2008), and if this attitude can be exported along education, it will have long lasting effects in business.

Understanding the relation of teacher autonomy and further teacher education is crucial: autonomously acting teacher are more like to seek out further teacher education and to increase their professional skills (Niemi, 2008; Toom et al., 2010). Thus, the Finnish market for external and further teacher education is ready and quite easily penetrable, whereas the American market with less autonomy of teachers, standardization, and a poor attitude towards education and teachers.

As teacher autonomy is one of the keys of success in Finnish education, how can it be implemented into the American professional development system, or does it need to be adapted?

Teacher autonomy and its success is heavily reliant on the societal support from the entire education system. If a larger transformational curriculum development project was underway, implementing teacher autonomy could be a realistic goal, but in the case of EE to a novel market area, transforming the entire education system is out of the reach of EE activities.

Hence, teacher autonomy can and should be implemented to educational products to a carefully selected extent, but the EE activities cannot be reliant on teacher autonomy.

2.3 Professional development

As the study looks at the market entry processes for the US market area from the viewpoint of educational export, and more specifically from a viewpoint of further teacher education and professional development, these concepts are to be discussed next. In terms of the study, it is vital to understand the factors of professional development effecting EE, as this enables us to understand the relation of professional development education as an export product/service.

Next, the background of teacher training and professional development is analyzed and the relation to other theories discussed. As professional

development includes multiple simultaneous concepts, their relation to each other is analyzed and most fitting definitions applied.

2.3.1 Teacher training and professional development of teachers

In Finland, teacher training before the educational reform of the 1970s was segmented and differentiated, and was lacking unification and a single degree (Välijärvi, 2002). Välijärvi (2002) argues that the reform initiated the shift from collegial degree into higher education degrees, a shift still missing from multiple comparable Western countries education systems.

As legislation was put in place in 1971, and most teacher training and education in Finland shifted to the universities, giving the Finnish teacher education its push towards success in the later years. As Malinen et al. (2012) find, nowadays most teacher education degrees in Finland lead to a master's degree, and further studies are mostly conducted in high level education institutes. These high level degrees are highly competitive in admission rates and host two-step entrance exams (Malinen et al., 2012). Teacher education in Finland is an academically advanced degree when comparing to other degrees in Europe and around the world: focus is on developing future teachers' pedagogical capabilities along with the research studies and optional studies (Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen, 2011; Toom et al., 2010).

Toom et al. (2010) observe Finnish teacher education and professional development and conclude that the master's degrees of Finnish teachers guarantee a high conceptual level understanding of the topics studied, especially when compared to criticized US education system offering "weak academic qualifications" and "low intellectual demands" of teachers (Toom et al., 2010, p. 337). These key differences can be argued to be exaggerated, but there is evidence of this both from national and PISA results (Schatz et al., 2017; Wei et al., 2010).

Another key finding Toom et al. (2010) highlight is the future cultural and career impact of having a master's degree as a teacher. In the Finnish educational system, most teachers hold a master's degree, and all graduating students are

required to have one upon the entry to their working life. The higher degree enables people shifting from a field of work to another, which further makes the teacher work force not only more efficient, as unmotivated teachers leave the duty, but also more competent as a whole (Toom et al., 2010).

Work life requires constantly more from teaching professionals, and the implications of pedagogy are ever more long lasting in the modern work life: lifelong learning and corporate learning are increasing the value of pedagogy in the worker skillset (Toom et al., 2010). Hence, teacher training is more than just further training for educators, but instead an avenue to pursue further professional development on top of the previous academic skillset.

When analyzing their results, Toom et al. (2010) find that adapting the teacher training capabilities to everyday work is not merely learning new tips and tricks to solve ready problems, but instead creative problem solving, for which the teachers need holistic understanding of theory along with conceptual knowledge of education.

In other words, it is apparent that the goal of further teacher training is the following: instead of teaching teachers' new tricks, the education providers aim for teaching teachers how to think and adapt their conceptual thinking. This is what Toom et al. (2010, 339) quotes as a "pedagogically-thinking, reflective and inquiry-oriented teacher".

2.3.2 Professional development, CPD and CPL: concept definition

Teacher education and further teacher training are concepts that tie in with professional development (Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Webster-Wright, 2009; Wei et al., 2010). Usually, teacher education is referred to as the primary method of educating future teachers prior to graduation, and further teacher training (or education) is referred to further education after teachers graduation (Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen, 2011).

Professional development (PD) is the concept of "comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement" according to Wei et al. (2010). There are multiple

definitions to professional development, but at the end the concept can be described as arranged and further education for teachers and other professionals alike (Borko et al., 2010; Webster-Wright, 2009). The concept includes heavily subject related studies, such as IT-training and language skills, whereas further teacher training (education) is guided more towards pedagogical skill (Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

In this study, professional development is intended to mean all education aimed for educational professionals during their professional career. Continuous professional learning and continuous professional development are concepts related to PD and further teacher training, with the following, somewhat reciprocal viewpoints.

Continuous professional learning, or CPL for short, is the concept of overall learning as a graduated and practicing professional, as Webster-Wright (2009) states. This concept is an umbrella concept for all learning, whether formal, informal, or learning that occurs through both professional development courses and everyday professional growth (Webster-Wright, 2009). Thus, concepts of PD, CPD, and further teacher education all fall under the concept of CPL.

Continuing professional development (CPD) is the concept of developing teachers' capabilities in the professional context. In other words, the concepts refer to continued studies after graduation from the actual degree, or further studies to advance professionalism. The concept of CPL is often opted for in education research, as CPD and professional development (PD) is thought to be everyday professional growth rather than aimed learning.

In this study, I will use the concept of 'professional development' for continuous professional development (CPD) and continuous professional learning (CPD) interchangeably in different contexts, as it (PD) covers both aspects of continuous professional development: which can later be connected to the US market area. When analyzing complex learning, CPL is the more fitting concept, whereas CPD is more focused to the education export the study is about. The topic is studied from multiple viewpoints, but I would like to draw three key resources for the study (Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Webster-Wright, 2009).

2.3.3 CPD & CPL in theory

Toom et al. (2010) look at CPD as an avenue for pedagogical development and academic growth (i.e., licentiate or doctoral studies), not focusing on the complexity of CPD, ranging from academic field to separate training and education arranged by private institutions. On the contrary, Opfer & Pedder (2011) look at CPD as a large concept instead of an event: teacher learning is a complex and multidimensional system, affiliated by mechanisms such as biological, normative, historical, and institutional systems. The authors argue that the focus of current research is underplaying the complexity of problems related to the micro context (Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

On a larger scale, Opfer & Pedder (2011) shed light on the history of CPD research, and explain that before the turn of the millennium, researchers argued that teacher learning was a situational, contextual, or ecological concept. However, this changed as research begun to look CPD and professional learning as a complex system with multiple mechanisms (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). In other words, previously CPD was an event concept, instead of a large entity and now it seen as a holistic and complex concept and entity.

Drawing from the complexity theory perspective, Opfer & Pedder (2009, 388) highlight "the simultaneity of the knower and the known". In other words, knowledge-producing-system, i.e., the knower (education providing system), and information itself, i.e., the known (knowledge itself), *cannot* exists with each other. What this means is that as learning is an constant transformative process, teacher learning is a simultaneous process where both the teacher and the learning system is transformed (Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

Opfer & Pedder (2011, 388) summarize this well:

> *As teachers learn, new knowledge emerges from the interaction of the teacher learning systems, and this new knowledge then recursively influences future learning and also what is to be known about teaching.*

What reader can derive from Opfer & Pedder's (2011) paper, is a conceptualization technique called dynamic conceptualization. Dynamic conceptualization assumes that there are multiple ways of gaining the same learning effects, coming back to the complexity theories: all aspects of learning affect each other. Thus, picking out one causal phenomenon from CPL and CPD theories is not academically sound way of operation. The researchers suggest to use a complex system theories to analyze the topic (Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

When comparing the two contrasting theoretical viewpoints, I argue that they are applicable to different contexts. Opfer & Pedder's (2011) more complete and complex way of looking at CPL and CPD offer a better overall viewpoint on the topic, whereas Webster-Wright's (2009) viewpoint is better for analyzing separate events such as a single resource of learning (i.e., an online course).

As when Opfer & Pedder (2011) offered a system centered view on CPD/CPL, Webster-Wright (2009) aims to understand all the possible viewpoints on the topic, especially highlighting that the concept should be more about learning *holistically*, rather than development *atomically*. What this means, is that instead of developing or training the professionals in a transmission model (information is being delivered to the learner), the research looks at the teachers as active learners, focus point being in learning instead of teaching (Webster-Wright, 2009).

Continuing on the shift to holism rather than atomism: holistically, CPL is seen as a combination of multiple interrelated factors, instead of the idea of CPL being a sum of multiple parts, each acting individually (Webster-Wright, 2009). The main argument of Webster-Wright's (2009) thorough research is a paradigm shift in professional development, from a situated and atomic viewpoint on CPL to more holistic and **experienced based** view. What this means is that professional development and learning is seen more and more through practice and experiences, instead of theory.

The learning per se in PD cannot be controlled, as in no one can force an individual to learn, but it is vital to understand the processes of learning to understand the role of education as an export (Webster-Wright, 2009).

2.4 Professional development in the context of the study

The key takeaway of understanding these educational concepts **is trifold.**

First, continuing professional learning and development (CPL and CPD) are complex and interrelated systems, which cannot be causally reasoned. This is a major difference to earlier research on the topic, which looked at the concepts as atomistic and unrelated to each other.

Second, as teachers are constantly learning, new knowledge is being generated simultaneously of the learning systems and adopted to future learning and teaching. In other words, CPL and CPD learners are continuously learning how to learn more, also effecting their ways of teaching.

Third, the learning curve of teachers is experience based: instead of transmissive information forwarding, modern CPL and CPD are more often based on experiences and events. Opfer & Pedder (2011) acknowledge the role of events in CPL and CPD but have contrasting view on studying them: they claim that continuous professional learning and development should be studied merely from complex and holistic view, where are Webster-Wright (2009) notes the event-based approach in their study.

Applying these three findings to EE frameworks gives us a comprehensive realization of their effects in EE. These points of professional development need to be acknowledged in the development of educational export for teachers in the US market area.

2.4.1 Key features of professional development

Bautista et al. (2017) studied professional development of teachers more specifically from music education perspective, recognizing key features from a literature review. The researchers identified 5 features of successful professional development in education, and their aftermath on the teaching processes (Bautista et al., 2017).

Kennedy (2016) looks at the success of professional development and its relation to teaching: how does it improve teaching? Similar concepts and ideas are presented in both Bautista et al.'s (2017) and Kennedy's (2016) literature, forging the five following key findings. These findings can be implemented into the development of education export to achieve the best practices for the business.

First, content focus: for successful and transforming professional development, the PD processes need to be specific to the subject being taught and the activities needed for helping learners (Kennedy, 2016). In other words, PD cannot be too generic and broad, but instead subject matter content specific, and including instructional practices and student learning (Bautista et al., 2017). PD focus on student learning and thinking has not only shown improvements in learning, but also to gain teachers "knowledge about students' preconception and intuitive ideas, which enables them to design better teaching and learning activities" (Bautista et al., 2017, p. 460).

Second, active learning opportunities: in learning situations where the PD learners (i.e., the teachers participating in PD) are active and engaging, the effectiveness of PD is improved. Hence, by using active learning methods instead of transmissive teaching, the results for professional development on the teachers side are increased (Bautista et al., 2017; Kennedy, 2016).

Third feature highlights that the success of PD is reliant on collective participation, meaning that more teachers from the same school or level participate in the PD training, the higher level of success they gain (Bautista et al., 2017; Kennedy, 2016). This is due to collaboration and sharing ideas, which significantly benefits professional development.

Fourth, duration of the PD is key for determining its effect and impact on the teachers. When PD training is spread out on a longer time span, it proves to be more effective, despite the whole amount of training to be the same (Bautista et al., 2017).

Lastly, coherence of curricula and teacher preference was found to increase motivation for PD. Particularly the match of interest between subject matters

indicated in the curricula, e.g., topics and methods of teaching, and personal interests of teachers indicated higher success of PD (Bautista et al., 2017).

Despite the article focusing specifically on music education and professional development in the said context, the findings are generally applicable professional development of teachers, as the phenomena is based on learning and skill development instead of music education in specific (Bautista et al., 2017; Creswell, 2014). On top of that, Kennedy's (2016) study further emphasizes the implications to all teachers.

Key takeaways of the two articles are the relation of *how* teachers learn in professional development, and *how* the PD should be arranged. The first feature emphasizes that the PD needs to be subject specific. The second and third feature look at teacher participation, where the learning processes active (instead of transmissive), and the peer groups from similar teaching levels of schools to achieve better PD results. Fourth feature looks at the duration of PD, giving indication that PD spread out on a longer time frame gives out better results.

When acknowledging these takeaways to the context of the study, educational services conducted in the new market area need to match these key contingencies.

2.4.2 Professional development value chain – the Finnish perspective

In terms of this study, understanding further teacher training and professional development in Finland, is important for the creation of the theoretical framework. Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen (2011) note the further teacher training opportunities to be much less organized and centralized than actual master's degree, and usually organized by employer of the teacher. These employer organizations are tasked with organizing training and sending their staff to be trained elsewhere (Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen, 2011).

Most of the Finnish further teacher education organizers are education centers of universities, and the funding comes from employer of the teacher. However, state money is often used for substance skills and learning crucial for

"implementing acute education policy" (Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen, 2011). This is to say, that Finnish teachers rarely acquire further professional development by purchasing the training with their own money.

The value chain of further teacher training in Finland can be simplified to three steps: the education provider, teacher, and employer of the teacher.

First, education provider arranges and constructs the further education, and eventually offers it through professional organizations. Education provider is often a higher education institution, but the facilitation of teaching is not governed or regulated as tightly as bachelors or master's degree teaching (Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen, 2011).

Second, teacher is the subject *and* the client in this value chain, even though the teacher rarely pays for their own training. Teachers often decide whether to participate in these trainings or not and are able to choose which trainings they prefer (Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen, 2011). Thus, the education providers need to come up with as enticing and appealing courses as possible. Due to this, one could argue that the Finnish value chain for further education is a free market, as teachers act as consumers of training, but only to the extent of training offered, as teacher's employers and the state have an important influence over the funding of the training.

Third, the employer of the teacher is the financial support of teacher training in Finland. This means that while education providers compete with different course offerings and materials, price is rarely the issue, as the employer organizations take care of the bill (Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen, 2011). For training that the state considers important, state funding is often used.

2.5 Professional development in the USA

2.5.1 Applications to the US educational system

Albeit the educational systems in the United States and Finland are different, the pedagogical theories are as applicable in both contexts. It is vital to note that USA is comparable to European Union both in size and population, which tells a story of how vast the educational system and its expenditure is.

Differences in Western educational systems and the Finnish systems are highlighted in the Figure 1, and the general examples of the Western system are applicable to the US market: the US curricula is focusing on the standardized system with high teacher accountability. The focal points of the educational system will not change upon market entry processes into the market, but entrants can look to match the focal points. In action, by adapting educational tools and policies of Finnish education, the US educational system can achieve better results from their own system.

2.5.2 Current PD services in the US market area

In the American market area, majority of the teachers are currently engaging in professional development, and there is a concurrent push for more PD opportunities nationwide (Borko et al., 2010). Borko et al. (2010) argue that current academia focuses on developing and adapting existing theories about professional development, rather than observing their adaptation. The authors state that "advances in the design, implementation, and evaluation of PD programs" are going to change the landscape of professional development to a more research-based and modern in the following years (Borko et al., 2010, pp. 551–555).

In the summary for the National Staff Development Council of the United States of America, Wei et al. (2010) observes the American professional development thoroughly, looking at its implications on the teachers, students, and the economy. The validity of the report is acclaimed especially through

results from the "Schools and Staffing Survey" which is a major data set including three national surveys from three administrations (Wei et al., 2010). Despite the study being over a decade old, similar study on the American professional development has not been published, making Wei et al.'s (2010) study the foundations for practical PD research in the American market area.

The report acknowledges the increased demand and supply of PD throughout the years, and a shift in teacher attitudes (Kennedy, 2016; Wei et al., 2010). The attitude shift is seen as teachers are more eager to develop their professional skills and competences, which can be due to more PD being available or that the teachers are interested in personal development (Wei et al., 2010). The shift in attitudes is especially associable for beginning teachers, who are more and more often seeking PD and a mentor, over 80 percent reporting having a mentor (Wei et al., 2010).

Participation and attitude towards professional development was not centered only around young teachers, but also both geographically and socio-economically. Wei at al. (2010) find that teachers with higher minority enrollment had higher attendances in professional development, and vice versa for lower minority enrollment teachers not taking part in PD. The results of the report state that lower the socio-economic status of a school or a teacher, more likely they were to attend PD sessions (Wei et al., 2010). This is partly since professional development also includes computer skills learning, i.e., how to use a computer.

However, one troubling finding in the study was that despite increased interest and participation in professional development, the opportunities for professional development had been lacking, especially in contents and duration of the development (Wei et al., 2010). Changes to the PD lower the overall quality and effectivity of PD, resulting not only in limited capability development of teachers, but also having a negative effect on students (Bautista et al., 2017; Kennedy, 2016; Wei et al., 2010).

One indicator from the survey was that most professional development was conducted as short and individual workshops and trainings, proving to have little to no long time effect on teacher development (Wei et al., 2010). Some of

these trainings were funded with public money and large investment projects, seemingly wasting the resources in ineffective PD of teachers (Wei et al., 2010).

The following key qualities of professional development was found to be the basis for effective and high-quality professional development:

- Focused on specific curriculum content and pedagogies needed to teach that content effectively
- Offered as a coherent part of a whole school reform effort, with assessments, standards, and professional development seamlessly linked
- Designed to engage teachers in active learning that allows them to make sense of what they learn in meaningful ways
- Presented in an intensive, sustained, and continuous manner over time
- Linked to analysis of teaching and student learning, including the formative use of assessment data
- Supported by coaching, modeling, observation, and feedback
- Connected to teachers' collaborative work in school-based professional learning communities and learning teams

(Wei et al., 2010)

These key qualities have strong connections to other models of successful PD, highlighting the similarities of the systems (Bautista et al., 2017; Borko et al., 2010; Kennedy, 2016).

The trends of professional development in the United States are the following: PD is getting less intensive, content centered and sustained.

> "For professional development to have a significant impact on teaching practice and on student learning, it needs to be intensive; sustained over time; embedded in teachers' day-to-day work in schools; related directly to teachers' work with students; able to engage teachers in active learning of the content to be taught and how to teach that content; coherent with district policies related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and structured to regularly engage teachers in local professional learning communities where problems of practice are solved through collaboration."
>
> (Wei et al., 2010)

3 EDUCATION EXPORT

Understanding the value proposition of education and professional development in the US market area brings us to education export as a grand theme. Education export (EE) has been one of the core themes of Finnish export incentivizing and a target for Finnish economic development in the latest years.

Education export as an academic concept includes both education and business literature, and definition of education export varies from scholar to scholar. The academic discipline is young, and still lacks unified definitions, especially when comparing to PD or market entry literature. However, as Schatz (2016) fittingly defines education export as "an intentional business transaction concerning educational services, practices, expertise and materials between countries" (Schatz, 2016), I adopt this with a notion of education export not needing to be happening between countries, but instead with any entities.

3.1 Commercialization of education

3.1.1 Brand and reputation in education

The positive attitude towards education has created a foundation for building the brand of Finnish education. Suomi (2014) explores the dimensions of brand reputation in education, focusing on Finnish education and more so on a case study of a master's level degree. Educational brand as a concept was thought to be multi-faceted and complex, still consisting of pieces that could be extracted from within the case (Suomi, 2014).

The findings of study aim to stress opportunities of co-branding (i.e., bundling brands together) and use of high quality services to speak for themselves along with the spread of word of mouth (WOM) (Suomi, 2014). These findings are inducted from a single Finnish case study master's program, and therefore not completely generalizable (Suomi, 2014; Yin, 2014). Yet, as for the

context of Finnish educational export, *Finnish Education* as a brand is one of the cornerstones of the educational export activities.

Co-branding in the context of a Finnish master's degree program is merely related to branding the education in terms of future professionals' careers but expands to new dimensions when applied to the context educational export. The use of other brands when entering a new market could leverage the market entry to be more efficient and profitable (Kupiainen et al., 2009; Suomi, 2014). This in turn is related to the business concept of partnerships, further elaborated in the market entry theories.

High quality of service and experience is extremely important in all professional services, but especially in education (Kupiainen et al., 2009; Schatz et al., 2017). Attitude towards education is built on trust and rapport, which is to be emphasized in successful education branding (Suomi, 2014). High quality of education leads to positive snowball effect, where the word of mouth begins to spread, yet again even more beneficial in a new market entry situation (Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1992; Suomi, 2014).

The two key brand dimensions I wish to apply in this study, are firstly the co-branding aspect, or leveraging existing brands and known entities during the market entry process; and secondly, the high quality of services and education, which further increases the market reach through word of mouth (WOM).

3.1.2 Education as a product

The differentiation between a product and a service is thin, but in this study, product includes services, as education can be seen as resources, courses, and services: all forming an educational product. These are different from the economic terms "goods and services", where goods can generally be stored, and services are consumed immediately.

Education has been thought to be both commodity and a specialized and subjective good (Cambridge, 2002). International education as a high-level concept, ranging from early childhood to universities is thought to be quite

unified in terms of its metrics and standardization: each educational system aims to gain somewhat similar results, as in high PISA scores, low dropout rates and high student enrollment.

However, as for individual educational services and products, such as a specific degree, course or an education resource, the education value is seen as "emergent, unstructured, interactive and uncertain", with a hedonic dimension (Ng & Forbes, 2009). What this means is that education is seen as a subjective experience in limited settings, rather than a commodity (Cambridge, 2002; Ng & Forbes, 2009). Educational services lacking a unified and common counterpart are subjective, whereas common educational packages more so a commodity.

All education customers, be it students, professionals, or traditional consumers of education technology, are not homogeneous in their wants and needs (Ng & Forbes, 2009). Thus, educational product theories and frameworks are not generally applicable to all extents of education, which calls for development of novel frameworks (Ng & Forbes, 2009; Yin, 2014).

As for marketing education, the emphasis is once again on brand and trust, especially for outstanding service and product quality (Ng & Forbes, 2009). EE and education industry are one of the most quality sensitive industries, which puts more pressure on the brand of education.

3.2 EE in theory and practice

Education export is a relatively new academic field, looking at education as a product or a service being exported. The distinction between commercialized education and governmental goodwill activities needs to be noted, as both Adams (2007) and Schatz (2016) show.

Education export is a new concept, but it has existed as a phenomenon for centuries (Adams, 2007; Schatz, 2016). Previously, the goal of education export was not economical, but instead to educate people in a certain geography, i.e., during colonialism. However, one can hardly argue that modern education

export relates to colonialism, but instead the industry forms a modern and rapidly growing section of education.

The global powerhouses of EE include Australia, New Zealand, England, Canada, and the USA among others (Schatz, 2016). As education export includes tuition fees of international students and collaboration between universities, this boosts the total global revenue generated by education export, making market analysis more difficult.

When comparing the biggest education exporters in the world with Finland, and the education scores, such as PISA, there is a clear distinction: Finland's high learning scores do not correlate with success in EE (Schatz, 2016; Schatz et al., 2017; Statista, 2021). Multiple scholars agree that part of Finnish education success has been due to avoiding neo-liberal trends of education (e.g. Schatz, 2016). On the contrary, the impact of PISA and OECD evaluations has transformed Finnish education to match the needs of the standardization: perhaps the Finnish system has moved to the wrong direction merely because of external pressure (Schatz, 2016). In other words, the Finnish education system was successful to begin with, but pivoted in the latest years to match the needs of the evaluation system.

Regardless, the Finnish system has stayed sovereign in terms of its educational practices, and especially when considering its relation to neo-liberal trends, the lack of success in EE is partly explained. Societies and economies with more economical capabilities and resources have more success in educational export, even though their educational systems are lacking in comparison to the Finnish system (Schatz, 2016). In other words, a successful economy combined with appreciation to education equals more educational export. Also, the recent adaptation of Finnish system due to external auditing has not resulted in a shift towards more economy centered model, but instead to hybrid model not suited for education centered nor business centered approach.

As Adams (2007) defines education export as complex public-private partnership, Schatz (2016) argues that education export includes all education, deriving from educational technology (EdTech) to continuous professional

learning, including informal education as well. When comparing to the concept of learning, education export can be seen as any activity, whether conscious or unconscious, where learning is commercialized (Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Schatz, 2016).

Globally, education export is most often connected with public-private partnerships in a sense, that usually educational institutions, universities and other higher education institutions are conducting EE (Marginson, 2011). Schatz (2016) offers a contrasting viewpoint on educational export in Finland: as the small nation does not yield tuition fees and is acknowledged for the public system, it is an arduous task to conduct economically viable business with a traditional EE framework.

This is why in Finland, EE has begun to focus on other educational products, such as tertiary education, EdTech and others (Schatz, 2016; Schatz et al., 2017). This shift is notable, and has increased both public expenditure and private investments over the years (Camacho-Miñano et al., 2020). The relation of public and private partners have an effect on the EE industry: the involvement of public funds increases bureaucracy and slows down the market processes of the industry (Camacho-Miñano et al., 2020; Schatz, 2016).

In conclusion, the Finnish education export activities have been looking for the right direction in the overall economy and shifted from education-first mentality to a somewhat unsuccessful hybrid of focusing both on education and on business, eventually failing in both.

3.2.1 Current models of EE and market entry

Maringe et. al (2013) study international education and see three models of internationalization for EE organizations: commercial-value driven; cultural-value driven; and curriculum-value driven. Even though these models are created for understanding internationalization processes of higher education institutes, they are applicable to teacher training since they hold geographical relation as well (Maringe et al., 2013).

Commercial-value driven universities and education providers are especially seen in North America, i.e., target area of this study. Overall the attitude towards education in North America is seen as a positivistic, pro globalization and as a force of good: international education is seen as a concept improving society and globalization constantly (Maringe et al., 2013). Overall, this is a signal of an open market approach for new business in the US Market area.

Maringe et. al (2013) state, that in wealthy Western nations, higher education is becoming a commodity and it is being more commercialized along with economic growth. Simultaneous and connected trends are towards aggressive marketing and privatization of education providers (Maringe et al., 2013). Hence, this is a key signal that with economic developments, the privatization and commercialization of education increases, along with EE.

Entering new markets as an education provider, creating partnerships with local and global education organizations, i.e. universities is most often the preferred method (Maringe et al., 2013). Educational literature shows signs of previous market entries, supported especially with partnerships and aspects of co-branding (Maringe et al., 2013; Suomi, 2014).

Cultural and curriculum value driven internationalization are seen more in education providers aiming for heavy brand focus, building trust and rapport through an external brand, or a curricula brand (Maringe et al., 2013). These types of internationalization are mostly seen in public projects aiming for educational development of a region, rather than pursuing economic growth. The types can be leveraged for commercial value driven internationalization, to arrive at an internationalization process focused not only on economic benefit, but also on a public goodwill of spreading quality education.

In conclusion, EE in the US market is mostly relying on commercial-value driven category, with notions of both cultural and curriculum driven EE. This is because the EE is conducted for the purpose of economic and financial growth, rather than for the reason of extending the reach of education, which could be the case with public parties conducting EE. Due to the lack of education export

frameworks, the framework by Maringe et al. (2013) is used as the cornerstone in this study, and EE is seen as a commercial target.

3.2.2 Globalization and internationalization in export industry

As Maringe et al. (2013) find, internationalization as a phenomenon is complimenting globalization in a mutual way: these reciprocal concepts benefit from and are reliant of each other. As globalization increases, it becomes easier to conduct international business, and as international business increases, globalization effectuates even more (Maringe et al., 2013). As a ground level example, if transatlantic relations between the USA and Finland improve and increase over years (globalization), it makes it easier for Finnish companies to conduct international business in the said market (internationalization). On the other hand, when international business is boosted via e-commerce (internationalization), it enables people to get new jobs around the world and move around freely (globalization).

Finnish education export industry is poised for internationalization in many extents. In the Finnish context, educational export is often viewed in a broad setting, and wrongly connected to tangible goods related to education, such as schools, equipment or teachers traveling to teach (Juusola & Nokkala, 2021). However, modern educational export is more focused on abstract education, such as online platforms, software and pedagogical services, more often than not as replicable products: education export has experienced a digitalization of its own (Juusola & Nokkala, 2021).

Roots of Finnish education are heavily tied with the government and thus, taxpayer money. This has given the public sector an incentive to increase educational export and to make it one of the country's top exports (Juusola & Nokkala, 2021; Välijärvi, 2002). Extensive and numerous programs have been implemented to boost Finnish educational export, but consistent results have yet to be seen, as estimated revenue of the industry is 385 million euros as of 2019 (Juusola & Nokkala, 2021).

In a larger scheme of things, educational export seeks both external and internal legitimation, which connects to the concept of attitude and brand discussed earlier. Therefore, legitimation does not only offer certitude for the individuals inside the EE organization, but also provides a key selling point when entering a new market. In EE, legitimation is both the sought principle through certificates and laws, and a more abstract concept related to conceptions about a certain education actor (Healey, 2018; Juusola & Nokkala, 2021). In other words, the WOM and brand play a significant role in regulations of EE industry.

Internal legitimation is formed from leveraging internal stakeholders, creating credibility and assurance for both internal and external participants (Juusola & Nokkala, 2021). In practice, internal legitimation is created with professionals and capabilities inside the EE organization, reflecting the competence outside the organization: as an example, qualified and awarded teacher can bring legitimacy to the organization (Juusola & Nokkala, 2021).

External legitimation is more related to organizational politics, as the idea is to create legitimacy outside the organization. In practice, this could mean assuring external stakeholders, creating lasting relationships, and networking (Juusola & Nokkala, 2021). As an example, a competent salesman can network with relevant customers and policy makers of the industry.

In conclusion, legitimation of EE should be used as a tool to gain competitive advantage in exporting education. Legitimation can be sought either purposefully, or gained simultaneously with other business development (Juusola & Nokkala, 2021).

4 MARKET ENTRY

4.1 Defining the concept – What is a market entry?

As a concept, "market entry" is difficult to determine holistically, and scholars disagree on a specific definition (Andersen, 1997). A common argument is between the difference of market entry and internationalization. Andersen (1997) states that internationalization and market entry are closely related and draws from Calof & Beamish (1995) for a common definition. Internationalization is a "process of adapting firms' operations to match new markets", which includes entry mode strategy and choosing international markets (Andersen, 1997; Calof & Beamish, 1995). Market entry, on the other hand, is one of the key means of internationalization.

Market entry strategy is a process of selecting the most suitable internationalization and market entry mode, as stated by Agarwal & Ramaswami (1992): "Choice of a foreign market entry mode should be based on trade-offs between risks and returns". Successful market entry strategy aims for "highest risk-adjusted return on investment" (Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1992). These definitions explain the concept and the meaning of strategy in a new market entry: to create profits either through formal or informal actions.

These different concept models and definitions are all defining market entry, giving complementary but also completely different viewpoints on the topic. This emphasizes the difficulty behind clear concept definition. I draw from multiple theories to form the most thorough academic framework to study the topic, giving basis to continue research through these definitions.

As Bruneel and De Cock (2016) state, we know very little about how change in the SME's operational environment forces them to adjust their entry mode strategies. They call for further research to analyze the impact of environmental changes by making a distinction between the home country and the home base,

which is the combination of countries in which the SME is active and has accumulated operational experience.

4.1.1 Market entry as a high-level concept: defining the setting

Strategy as a concept talks about a vision for company's long term plans, while implementing actions that should outperform other firms (Porter, 1997). Market entry strategies more specifically aim for a successful market entry, trying to reach a set market share of a novel market.

Upon entering a new market, an entity needs to consider multiple aspects that effect the situation and the decision. Five contingencies theory by Zachary et al. (2015) names five key considerations of the entering decision: when to enter, who are the players in the market, where to enter, what type of entry, and how to enter?

From these contingencies, this study is looking specifically on the *how* and *what* -contingencies, as they look to understand the entry type most suitable for the US market area, as well the characteristics the export activities bring (i.e., role of education) (Zachary et al., 2015). This framework is most often applied to case examples and companies, and not to theoretical models, but these two contingencies are applicable when analyzing market entry phenomena (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014).

These two contingencies form a high-level umbrella, under which the more precise market entry strategies (i.e., exporting, joint ventures etc.) slot into, and form an understanding of the market entry literature in the modern academia.

Overall, there are multiple concurrent strategies that can prove to be successful in a new market entry (Buckley & Casson, 1998), as well as theories related to the phenomena. Most of the theories were originally centered around the comparison of foreign *direct investment* and *exporting* in the 1960s and 1970s (Buckley & Casson, 1998). In the 1980s, the mergers and acquisition (M&A) theories emerged, and talks of international joint ventures (IJV) and born global (BG) begun (Buckley & Casson, 1998).

Nonetheless, the cornerstones of the literature were predominantly written in the 1990s. These include the work of Buckley & Casson (1998), naming the strategies of market entry, Andersen (1997) and Calof & Beamish (1995) noting the relation of internationalization and market entry, and lastly Agarwal & Ramaswami (1992) discussing the market entry selection processes.

Despite these theories being decades old, they hold academical ground still today, disregarding the changes the internet and increased globalization has brought. However, these modern changes by the technological advantages are quite minor in terms of the theory, as the same functions of internationalization still exist (Shaver, 2013).

4.2 Overview on market entry theories

Market entry theories often boast similar themes, observed from multiple viewpoints. Most recognized market entry theories, such as the Uppsala model (Vahlne & Johanson, 1977, 2017) and FMA theories are prime examples of traditional market entry frameworks. The model understands internationalization activities as processes rather than individual investment decisions (Vahlne & Johanson, 2017). Another example is the entry timing theory as Zachary et al. (2015) present. In terms of that theory, I will specifically focus on how the theory projects strategies of entering, and positions the first mover advantage (FMA)(Zachary et al., 2015).

First mover advantage (FMA) is a core question in entry timing research, but as this study is focusing on the *how* question of entry timing, the FMA literature is unapplicable to this extent, as it focuses on the *when* contingency. However, some contingencies provided by the FMA literature are important to note: in fast-paced industries (tech, SaaS), first mover advantage is rarely a decisive factor (Zachary et al., 2015). In terms of this, EE industry is not fast paced,

nor is it product centered. Thus, FMA is not a theoretically relevant condition to analyze.

Zachary et al. (2015) discovers an interesting relation between cyclical timing of capability development and market entry: firms with simultaneous internal and external capability development are more likely to succeed in a new market entry. In other words, if the firm is still in a development process of their internal capabilities, and they begin a market entry process, the firm is more likely to successfully adopt the new capabilities needed for entering. On the contrary if the firm holds existing capabilities that they have operated with previously, there are less likely to successfully adapt to the needs of the new market (Zachary et al., 2015).

4.2.1 Traditional modes of new market entry and their relation to EE

Market entry mode is a critical strategic decision in modern business literature (Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1992). As Agarwal & Ramaswami (1992) present, four models of new market entry are exporting, licensing, joint venture, and sole venture. These models form the basis of traditional market entry literature, conceived in the 1990s. Some of the models are not fully applicable to modern online centered international business field, but the key contingencies remain.

Exporting is considered a low resource and low risk/return option, where companies can conduct their internationalization with their own operational control, but lack marketing control (Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1992). Sole venture mode, on the contrary, gives out potential for higher risks and returns, with higher costs. Sole venture also gives high degree of control to the parent company.

Joint venture involves lower investments and cost, simultaneously with lower risks, possible returns, and lower control. Lastly, licensing model is equipped with low investment, low risk/return, and no control of the firm.

For EE, licensing is a viable option only in a case where there are complete materials the firm looks to export: as an example, if there is a course or a package

which can be licensed to another party. However, licensing provides a risk for EE operations: the important brand of Finnish education can be lost or misused upon licensing, especially if the licensing partner is foreign.

In terms of joint venture, the model holds similar threats to success as licensing, in terms of the misuse of the brand. Exporting and sole venture are more traditional market entry modes and reflect more the risk-taking willingness of the company.

As an example, Sapienza et al. (2006) emphasize the fact that relation of risk and expected return from internationalization is the lens for projecting internationalization success: when firms with low internationalization capabilities commit to an early new market entry, they are more likely to achieve high growth and increased risk of failure. This finding could be summarized as following: the earlier you internationalize, more growth you are likely to achieve, at the expense of survival (Sapienza et al., 2006). The theory about simultaneous internal and external capability development compliments the idea of success without existing capabilities (Zachary et al., 2015).

Upon new market entry and despite the entry model, entrants need vast resources to compete with local competitors (Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1992). These resources are needed for example for marketing, juridical actions and to achieve the economics of scale (Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1992). The size of the firm has a correlation to success of gaining initial market share. Bigger firms with more resources are more likely to survive the initial tight cash flow situation.

Thus, as Sapienza et al. (2006) found that early entrants to international markets have a tendency for high growth, Agarwal & Ramaswami (1992) look at the realism of survival in a new market, pointing out that firms with higher initial resources have higher probability of survival. This leads to a conclusion that depending on the firm's internationalization strategy, they should either choose to wait and gather resources before a new market entry or act fast to reach both simultaneous and upcoming capabilities development.

4.3 Comparing theoretical models chronologically

4.3.1 Vahlne & Johanson (1977) – Uppsala model

The process theory, or the Uppsala model of internationalization is one of the most traditional market entry theories. The Uppsala model looks at market entry as a series of decisions that formulate a process of internationalization (Vahlne & Johanson, 1977, 2017). The authors of the model saw the *psychic distance* between home and host country as the decisive factors influencing the new market entry process. This distance meant the language, culture, business practices and educative differences between the countries: comparable differentiation that is also found in Buckley & Casson (1998) framework presented later.

Psychic distance means a condition that disturbs or prevents the flow of information, as an example, a language barrier (Vahlne & Johanson, 1977, 2017). Companies conducting new market entry try to look for as low psychic distance as possible (Vahlne & Johanson, 1977, 2017): in the case, the US market area shares the common features of a Western society, and the society operates in English. Model is surrounded around understanding market entry, which is what psychic distant eventually is: knowledge about the market culture and differentiating factors.

Knowledge plays a key role in the Uppsala model. First and foremost, knowledge about the challenges, issues and opportunities of a market, is believed to initiate market entry decisions (Vahlne & Johanson, 1977, 2017). In other words, knowledge about a certain market area is the foundation for the decision of entering the market or not (Vahlne & Johanson, 1977, 2017).

Secondly, evaluation of alternative options is knowledge based too. This knowledge is classified to two categories, objective knowledge and experiential knowledge (Vahlne & Johanson, 1977, 2017). Objective knowledge is seen as knowledge that can be learned and gained from studying a topic: a current example of this type of knowledge is the theoretical frameworks of this study,

which can be learned by reading the cited material. Experiential knowledge refers to knowledge gained from experiences of life, such as new market entry and internationalization (Vahlne & Johanson, 1977, 2017).

Limitations of these knowledge options are especially in gaining them: experiential knowledge cannot be gained by learning, but instead through experiences (Vahlne & Johanson, 1977, 2017). As Buckley & Casson (1998) state, gaining the needed market entry experiences in this context can prove to be not only expensive in terms of resources but also in terms of the brand and reputation effects.

According to Vahlne & Johanson (1997, 2017) experiential knowledge is critical in terms of its scarcity, as it needs to be gained through internationalization. This means that previous international experience and experiential knowledge is of aid during a new market entry. Experiential knowledge provides the basis for building a framework of the certain market area, instead of only developing theoretical opportunities (objective knowledge) of a market area (Vahlne & Johanson, 1977, 2017). This is also the aim of my study, as I create an objective foundation (theory and literature review) and build from that by using experiential knowledge (interviews).

Limitations of the Uppsala model include its relation to traditional industries, and thus lack of adaptability, and lack of taking complex relations into account. Uppsala model is usually adapted to traditional industries, such as manufacturing and production, and looks the steps of internationalization linearly: from no export to sales representatives, to sales subsidiaries and manufacturing subsidiaries. This path is taken step by step, and thus is limited in terms of application to multiple industries.

The model has been questioned especially in the past decade, as it fails to match the needs of current business world, especially do to online business and e-commerce taking a larger and larger role in modern business (Håkanson & Kappen, 2017). Emerging models, such as the casino-model aims to take into account the existing flaws of one of the most cited articles in international business literature, and form a competitive model (Håkanson & Kappen, 2017).

Even though the model operates at the level of an individual firm, it fails to consider all aspects of the firm, as stated by the authors: that is, the micro-level, macro-level, and mille-micro level (Vahlne & Johanson, 2017). Naturally, the theory cannot include all aspects and small details, but for EE adaptation, these micro- and mille-level details can be crucial.

Conclusively, the Uppsala model is relevant for understanding one of the key models of new market entry, despite its downsides in EE adaptation.

4.3.2 Agarwal & Ramaswami (1992) model for entry mode selection

As Agarwal & Ramaswami (1992) demonstrate, usually market entry theories are related to production and manufacturing industries but are still applicable to service industries. They look at a leasing industry, observing the findings of entry mode selection criteria both from the viewpoint of the investor and the company itself (Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1992).

The researchers claim that three factors are influencing the entry mode selection: ownership, location and internalization, as seen in the Figure 2 (Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1992).

First, ownership presents an advantage in term of the firm size and experience, i.e., what resources the firm has for new market entry, both financially and in terms of capabilities (Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1992). For capabilities, Agarwal & Ramaswami (1992) include experience of previous market entries, ability to develop products and services, and ability to adapt.

Secondly, location presents an advantage in terms of cultural fit: if the location is attractive because of the market potential or familiarity, this is a lever for market entry decision (Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1992).

Third, internalization advantage is the ability for internal development when comparing to external forces (Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1992). In other words, how much is the company willing to adapt and focus on the market requirements, or will they want to rely on internal development instead.

When considering these three levers, they all influence market entry decision in terms of the market entry mode: licensing and joint venture offer more

internalization, whereas ownership advantages drive to exporting or sole ventures. Location advantage helps set the risk – reward ratio: if the market potential is high enough, the risk of a sole venture is worth it.

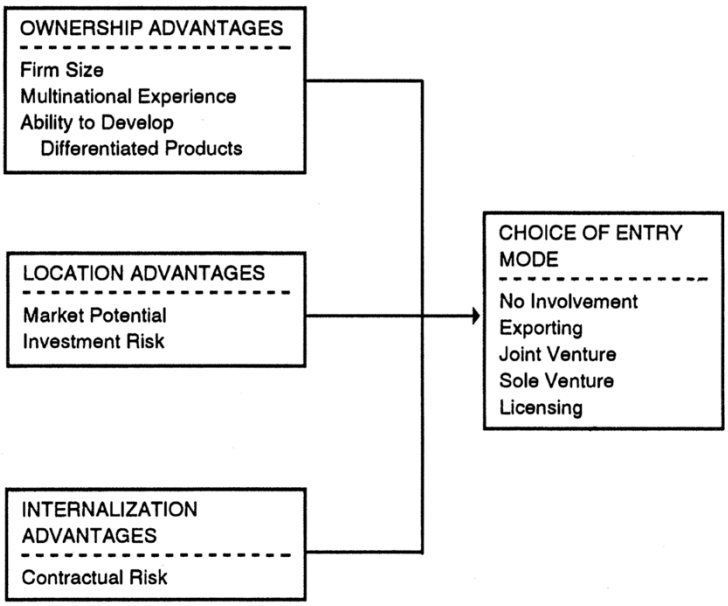

Figure 2. Factors influencing entry mode choice
(Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1992)

4.3.3 Calof & Beamish (1995) – market entry theory on attitudes

Since Vahlne & Johanson (1977) identified sequential process of internationalization, the dynamic views of the process have become one of the key academic studies. These dynamic means cover the adaptation to internationalization, which companies experience after initial internationalization activities (Calof & Beamish, 1995).

Calof & Beamish (1995) also find that *attitudes* of executives drive internationalization processes and shifts in internationalization modes, instead of objective information, such as information of the business environment. This has resulted and can result in a delay in international success and a failed ventures (Calof & Beamish, 1995).

The attitudes of executives can be improved through thorough research, such as conversing with business experts, competitors, suppliers and trade officials (Calof & Beamish, 1995). This is exactly the experiential information needed for successful market entry, further highlighting the point by Vahlne & Johanson (1977, 2017). In this study, I incorporate both objective and experiential information gathering, to conduct research and form a conclusion on the levers of successful internationalization.

4.3.1 Creating a hybrid model from Andersen (1997) framework

Andersen (1997) compares different schools of entry mode academia and drafts the following Table (Table 1). In this table, we can see four different theories explaining entry modes from different viewpoints.

In this study, the choice of academic lens for the study is a hybrid comprised of the "Entry mode as a chain of establishment" and the "Eclectic framework". For the chain of establishment framework, the study looks at the key trade-offs and relationship between growth and risk, and drafts insights from firms existing competences.

An example of this theoretical bucket would be theories looking at the firm knowledge and capabilities effecting the market entry process, such as Sapienza et al. (2006), Zachary et al. (2015) and Vahlne & Johanson (1977, 2017) present. They see the mode of entry as a part of an establishment chain, creating the model of Chain of Establishment (Andersen, 1997).

As Andersen (1997) notices, the two frameworks selected for this study hold many similarities and are often used interchangeably. The key difference is that chain of establishment model sees market entry is a time dependent process and thus focuses more on the *when*-contingency.

The eclectic model is best highlighted in Agarwal & Ramaswami (1992) study, where they pinpoint the differences Ownership, Location, and Internalization advantages in a new market entry process. This theory also looks at the risks versus the potential rewards, but takes in the role of control and resources to the equation (Andersen, 1997).

The eclectic framework includes strategic variables of control and resources and is said to be more complete in terms of looking at levers of successful market entry, when compared to the first framework. The combination of the frameworks leads to a hybrid model, consisting of levers of control, resources, risks, rewards, and growth. This hybrid models aims to draw from both theoretical fields to combine findings in a model.

	Entry mode as a chain of establishment	Transaction cost approach	The eclectic framework	The organizational capability perspective
Basic theory	Resource-based theory	Transaction cost theory	Transaction cost theory, international trade theory, resource-based theory	Resource-based theory
Unit of analysis	Firm	Transaction	Firm	Firm
Explanatory variables	Firm's knowledge (i.e., experiential knowledge)	Transaction characteristics (e.g., asset specificity, uncertainty)	Ownership, locational, and internalizational advantages	Firm's capabilities (in particular, know-how)
Behavioral assumptions	Bounded rationality	Bounded rationality and opportunism	Bounded rationality (and opportunism)	Bounded rationality
Decision criteria	Trade-offs between growth and risk	Transaction cost minimization	Trade-offs between return, risk, control, and resources	Trade-offs between value and cost
Modes of entry	Entry mode according to an establishment chain: a) No export, b) Export via independent representative, c) Sales subsidiary, d) Manufacturing abroad	Several classifications; e.g., Contractual transfer, Joint Venture, Wholly owned operation	Several classifications; e.g., Independent mode, Co-operative mode, Integrated mode	Internalization vs. collaboration

Table 1, Andersen Framework - adapted with red rectangles (Andersen, 1997)

4.3.2 Buckley & Casson (1998) model applied to EE

New market entry is one of the core concepts of internationalization (Andersen, 1997). Namely, the Buckley & Casson (1998) article set the foundations for modern market entry model literature: complex model including and combining the previous market entry literature and novel inductive findings.

As Buckley & Casson (1998) present, there are multiple strategies and means of new market entry. They provide a theoretical model to analyze the best decision to be made in different situations. This model is divided into three different segments: first, it aims to understand all the related market entry strategies, second, it distinguishes between production and distribution, and lastly it takes into account the roles of foreign entrant and the host-country (Buckley & Casson, 1998).

With this model, the authors are able to conduct comparative analysis and combine the data and findings from these categories, and eventually come to conclusions about differences in entry models, ones more suitable for services export and others for goods export (Buckley & Casson, 1998). Applications to modern education export are found by analyzing the theoretical findings of the study: EE does not need production facilities, transportation of goods nor a lengthy supply chain all the way to consumers. Instead, EE requires increased trust, brand, and knowledge about market in order to operate successfully (Buckley & Casson, 1998; Suomi, 2014).

The findings of Buckley & Casson's (1998) study include multiple "more obvious" results, that have been stated by multiple researchers previously, and that were confirmed from Buckley & Casson's (1998) data. From these, two are extremely applicable to modern education export.

First, the increased costs related to building trust in the market discourage the choice of acquisition and instead favors greenfield investments or contractual arrangements (Buckley & Casson, 1998, p. 555). However, these options of entering an EE market via some sort of acquisition are not as applicable, as the services are not commodities, but instead expert services. Also, the characteristics

of education and PD services provide a further understanding of education as a product or a service: education is subjective experience differentiating from education provider to another (Cambridge, 2002; Ng & Forbes, 2009).

Second, the increased costs of learning about the foreign market through beginning operations is once again encouraging acquisition, licensing or franchising (Buckley & Casson, 1998). More so, these options hold same issues as the previous strategies, and their applicability to education export can be questioned.

Especially considering the role of brand, trust, and attitude, as discussed previously in chapter 3.1.1., the key takeaway of these two findings is the role of trust and learning of the market (Buckley & Casson, 1998; Ng & Forbes, 2009). If an EE firm is conducting a new market entry, it is vital for it to learn during the process, as learning capabilities during the market entry process increases the likelihood of success (Buckley & Casson, 1998; Zachary et al., 2015).

Buckley & Casson (1998) finalize with novel and partly unprecedented findings, from which further emphasize the role of trust and rapport building. The authors push the understanding of market structure, and its relation to market entry success: if the firm understands and can adapt to the market structure in the target market, success in new market entry is increased. The similar idea is covered by Zachary et al. (2015), from another perspective: Zachary et al. find that capability development should be simultaneous for internal and external capabilities.

When comparing the theoretical findings of Buckley & Casson (1998) to educational export, common ground is trust and knowledge of the market. Considering the role of education as a product, partnerships with existing players in the market can be considered as logical steps for new market entry.

4.3.3 Elia et al. (2019) Framework of Market Entry

Elia's (2019) framework (Figure 3) on deviating market mode situations presents the modes of entering a market, starting from compliant market &

hierarchical modes, where the vertical axel is the market imperfections, and horizontal axel is selected entry mode (hierarchy/market) (Elia et al., 2019).

The model represents two major risks in the new market entry processes. First, with high market imperfections, and exporting as the selected market entry model, the risks include hold-up situations and inappropriate contract costs. Second, if the market imperfections are low, the risk of inefficiency and not-invented-here (N-I-H) syndrome increases (Elia et al., 2019). N-I-H syndrome is the lack of interest from the public as the service is foreign (Elia et al., 2019). However, the role of N-I-H syndrome is low in the context of Finnish EE, as the reputation of Finnish education brand has greater influence on purchasing decisions.

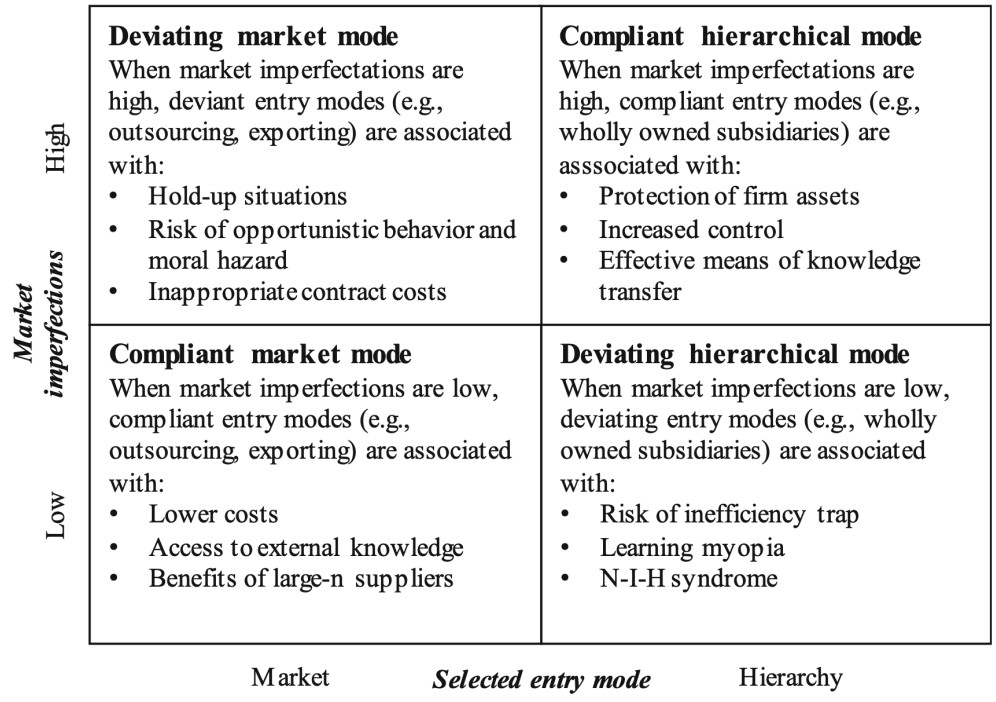

Figure 3. Framework of deviating market situations (Elia et al., 2019).

4.4 Criticism on the modern market entry theories

As there are multiple different entry modes, they can be grouped with different metrics. Most of the current market entry and entry mode studies are battling with the question of what is the correct scope to observe market entry modes from (Shaver, 2013). Shaver (2013) argues that this scope and restriction of different categories is merely the choice of the researcher, instead of an academic question.

Shaver (2013) provocatively examines the question of market entry theories already over eight years ago with a self-explanatory title: "Do we really need more entry mode studies?". The article argues that entry modes have been thoroughly studied and the main modes have been found and categorized: these modes are echoed throughout the topic literature also present in this study. Thus, in terms of market entry theories and modes, the modes initially conceived in the previous millennium, are still applicable and widely used.

There are counterarguments for Shaver's (2013) somewhat provocative output, but nonetheless, market entry and entry mode research has mostly focused on the scope and restriction of entry modes, rather than developing new ones after the initial market entry literature of the 1990s and 2000s.

One argument against the preset internationalization and market entry theories composed decades ago, is the relation of pre-existing knowledge and capabilities. Elia et al. (2019) observes the antecedents of entry mode decisions, using the internalization theory, or in other words, look at the deviations of entry more selection. More specifically, the researchers are looking at the role of international experience in successful new market entry: previous experiences of internationalization help the processes of internationalization to the extent that firm with existing capabilities can leverage these capabilities to multiple geographical areas and help with organizational difficulties (Elia et al., 2019; Zachary et al., 2015).

As Axinn & Matthyssens (2002) find, traditional market entry theories focus often too much generalization and fail to note the specifics of each industry. They

argue that the traditional theories fail to be useful for business research in a niche segment, such as EE in this case (Axinn & Matthyssens, 2002). In other words, the theories often lack details and are not applicable due to their genericity (Axinn & Matthyssens, 2002). This ponders the question of theory focus: how generalizable these market theories are if they indeed lack the focus of a certain industry.

Often, researchers see previous international capabilities as a "more is better" concept: i.e., more history, the better result. However, Elia et al. (2019) explain that future projections should be based on past success. As an example, with recent failures (vs. older ones) in new market entry, and failures with high consequences (vs. low consequences) are more likely to lead to failures in new market entry (Elia et al., 2019).

Elia et al. (2019) confirm the notion of executive attitudes relation to the choice of market entry processes: the decisions are not based on objective facts and external information, but instead cognitive biases, opinions and attitudes of decision makers (Calof & Beamish, 1995; Elia et al., 2019). Multiple biases and previous ideas have a direct effect on the selection of a market entry model, and hence, the success of internationalization (Calof & Beamish, 1995; Elia et al., 2019; Vahlne & Johanson, 2017).

Thus, firms should opt for objective and conclusive decisions not affected by previous attitudes or biases, to maximize the predicted potential of a market entry. Both Calof & Beamish (1995) and Elia et al. (2019) state that market entry success is possible without objective outlook on decision making but is then uncontrollable and dependent on personal behavior of an executive.

5 SUMMARIZING THE THEORY

5.1 Overview

Academic literature review creates the foundation for the empirical part of study. Crucial concepts and theoretical frameworks have been defined, and key takeaways have been noted: the underlying issue with the novel field of research has been the lack of applicable theory.

As Bruneel & De Cock (2016) demonstrate, the market entry theory literature is still immature and it fails to provide answers to complex and industry specific challenges, providing inconsistent results. Thus, it is fruitful to structure and present a novel framework exploring the new industry (Bruneel & De Cock, 2016).

Finnish education history has shown its key ability to be constantly and rapidly developing, leading to long periods of success in international standards. This same adaptability and courage to pursue new solutions for avenue for action can be also implemented to education export in terms of experiential and practical capability development.

For the theoretical framework, the existing models from both education literature and market entry research must be combined and hybrid models formed, to fully understand the topic of EE market entry in the US market area. Using only existing literature was limited as most of the studies were conducted with a focus lacking the EE lens. This leads to one of the key contributions of this study: to expand the theoretical reach of the literature to novel segments with unique characteristics.

The following four frameworks are modeled to establish a basis for academic foundation on the topic: **target market contingencies, PD characteristics, experiential and practical information,** and **capability development.**

5.2 Crafting new theoretical frameworks

Not only does this study aim to understand the relation of traditional market entry models to the EE context, but also what other factors drive the success of a new market entry. These factors include i.e., attitudes, knowledge, learning and past contingencies, which can be applied and observed through a common theoretical framework.

Theoretical findings support the claim that EE industry is notoriously dependent on trust and image of education. Buckley & Casson (1998) note that collaboration in the market can lead to a faster success as the trust and rapport are partly built already. The researchers touch on concrete means of market entry as they weigh in on the most potential ways of entering a market: be it through collaborating on a joint venture, or through an acquisition (Buckley & Casson, 1998). In the modern and global online world, one potential avenue for market entry is a completely remote operation without a subsidiary or an external entity in the target market (Zahra et al., 2000).

In terms of education's role as a service, it is seen as commodity, but in singular events, resources, and educational services, it is rather seen as a subjective experience. Thus, in EE market entry, it is vital to focus on limiting and narrowing education into certain building blocks rather than incorporating large entities into EE, i.e., comprising entire Finnish education system into EE. As quality of EE services is one of the fundamental selling points of education, retaining the high quality in EE, and highlighting it in marketing are key factors of successful EE market entry.

Educational export to the US market area should leverage and incorporate the difference-makers of Finnish education, such as teacher autonomy and role of broader knowledge, but not to build the EE processes on top of these contingencies, since they can be difficult to implement to the US market.

In terms of individual education packages, such as online courses, they act as an online service being sold. In these cases, there is little to no need of having a subsidiary or even a business entity in the target country, but instead operations

can be conducted from the home country. Furthermore, the operational needs in the target country are limited, and most of the operations can be conducted online (Zahra et al., 2000).

This has transformed the EE landscape, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, as most of the business has moved online. In terms of traditional educational services, the role of traditional market entry metrics is higher. The notions of local professionals, subsidiaries and relatively high fixed costs of operations are among the greatest risks of these operations.

These indications of the industry being more flexible, agile, and fast-moving lead to a faster pace of market entry, where time becomes increasingly crucial resource. Matching the needs of the market and competences of the internationalizing venture are blueprints for successful market entry.

5.3 Four frameworks of the theory

The following four main frameworks of the theory form the understanding of the theoretical discourse related to the practicalities. After elaborating on the theoretical framing of each, visual demonstrations present the core ideas in a brief overview.

5.3.1 Target market contingencies

Most market entry theories look at the differences between the home market and the target market and look to find an effective way to combat the differences. This phenomenon is called the *psychic distance* in some contexts, and *a learning process* in others, but the same core phenomena remain.

Drawing from both Buckley & Casson, as well as from the Uppsala model, the role of cultural differences and specifics of a certain market, are few of the cornerstones of my framework of EE and PD services in the American market area, that combines the "psychic distance" with cultural and societal difference. At a high level, the cultural differences include education, attitude, and cultural

landscape: this theory connects to the teacher appreciation in these countries and attitude towards education (Wei et al., 2010).

Social setting in the target market area (USA) is one of the key differences between home and target market. Social setting is either enabling or disabling the use of core educational and pedagogical tools of Finnish education: teacher autonomy, flexibility and emphasis on broad knowledge are applicable to societies that value education and trust their educated teachers (Kivijärvi & Rautiainen, 2021; Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen, 2011). This is depending on differences between states and parts of the country: some parts are more closely resembling the Finnish system in terms of attitude and openness for education export, whereas others have higher barriers of entry.

Despite the areal differences and its readiness for EE, the macro scale reasons for EE in a new market are not only to create economic growth for the EE companies, but also increase the quality of education in the target country: teachers are drivers of economic wellbeing, reflecting their capabilities and views onto the youth of the society (Niemi, 2008; Toom et al., 2010). The economic development also drives the privatization of education, leading to an increases market for private education export players (Maringe et al., 2013).

To sum, countries with high capabilities in business and internationalization, tend to succeed the most in educational export. The correlation between educational success and success in EE is non-existent, whereas business capabilities of a company or a country predict success in EE.

5.3.2 Professional development as a product in market entry

Current professional development market in the US is growing and is showing signs of increased need for PD service providers. PD services are lagging demand, leading to fruitful market setting even discarding the contingencies of entry, which means that the market is looking promising and ripe for market entry.

In practice, the PD and teacher training is not about teaching new tricks to educational professionals, but instead developing their learning processes and thinking. In other words, successful professional development aims to change the core behavioral processes of professionals, instead of teaching concrete skills.

To further continue about PD, teaching teachers how to learn is a complex concept: as teachers learn, they adapt their teaching process in the meantime. Thus, there is a twofold effect from PD focusing on teacher learning and teaching practices, instead of focusing on education of mere tricks and skills (Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

As presented in CPD/CPL 2.3.3., the two fields of view on the theory are the following: first, the view of professional development as an event or a singular happening, and second as large and complex entity including other means of learning outside a certain learning resource. First is more applicable to more easily restricted learning resources, such as online courses, IT-courses etc. Second includes both informal and formal learning settings, such as learning through work, hobbies, and life outside work, including PD resources and thorough learning resources. To sum, the first theory is more applicable to analyzing simpler and narrowed down resources such as single courses, and the second is more applicable for large and complex resources, such as pedagogical training (e.g. Toom et al., 2010).

Thus, this theory of PD as a holistic concept is the more applicable for the context of this study, and even shares resemblances of market entry theories, looking at holistic processes rather than singular events. This is relevant to the market entry theories, where market entry is comparably seen as a process rather than a single event. The framework used for the study is thus holistic and process based, looking at EE new market entry as a complex process instead of a single event.

In the end, the question this framework will try to solve with empirical data is the following: what kind of PD would be best during a market entry process? In other words, as the second research question states: what characteristics education and PD bring to the market entry processes?

5.3.3 Experiential and objective information

Combining Vahlne & Johanson (1977, 2017) and Calof & Beamish (1995) theories, objective information (environmental factors, data etc.) can provide a theoretical basis to begin new market entry operations, but experiential information provides the practical knowledge. The risk in experiential information is its subjectivity: especially in the case of attitudes effect. Executives and managers failure to acknowledge their own attitude and attitudes effect of experiential information risks the new market entry process. All in all, this study aims to generate experiential information through expert interviews, creating a basis of data to conduct findings from.

Learning about the new market area is resource consuming (objective information), which brings the experiential information into the equation. Individuals with experience and capabilities of international business and the target market, and a pedigree of success in previous internationalization processes, have a higher likelihood of success in market entry the future. Learning about the market includes understanding market structure, competition, and existing processes. Luckily, these market learning capabilities can be developed, which leads to capability development and objective capabilities.

5.3.4 Simultaneous capability development

Finnish education exporters face a dilemma of adapting their services to selected market needs, but simultaneously keeping the Finnish brand of the education (Juusola & Nokkala, 2021). As Juusola and Nokkala (2021) observe, the value of the Finnish education brand is high especially in terms of creating legitimacy, but if the target market does not match the framework of Finnish education, the implementation of EE can prove to be impossible.

What this means is that educational services need to be tailored to match certain geographic or economic region, and for the EE providers to try to find the

best balance between using authentic Finnish educational tools, while adapting them to match market needs (Juusola & Nokkala, 2021).

This dilemma of adaptation is also seen in business literature, as Agarwal & Ramaswami (1992) study the relation of developing internal capabilities in comparison to adapting existing capabilities. In short, it takes more resources to match services and products to a new market, but increases the likelihood of success during the internationalization process (Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1992). For this adaptation process, the goal is to decrease the differences of the target market and home market. The concept used in this study will be "decreasing differences".

Similar process is also brought up in Zachary et al.'s (2015) article, which states that internationalizing firms that develop both their internal and external capabilities simultaneously, are more likely to succeed in the market entry process. Combining these two business frameworks and the education export framework leads to the conclusion that a firm should develop their capabilities simultaneously and be willing to accept market contingencies on the go. This is also applicable to EE, as the educational services and products need to adapt to match market needs in the target market.

Drawing from Elia et al.'s (2019) framework on market imperfections and their role to success in the market entry process, the US market area can be seen as a one with high market imperfections comparing to the Finnish market area. This means that the risk of inefficiency is high, along with the chance of a negative attitude towards foreign service providers, i.e. the N-I-H syndrome (not-invented-here)(Elia et al., 2019). I argue that the role of Finnish education brand contradicts the negative effect of the N-I-H syndrome, as the positive association of Finnish education increases the likelihood of adaptation.

However, the risk of inefficiency is especially related to the capability theory presented previously: as the market area is new compared to previous markets, with high imperfections, simultaneous capability development upon entry can increase the likelihood of success. Hence, solution for success in a new

market entry for EE actors, is their ability to leverage resources and be in a constant state of capability development both internally and externally.

5.3.5 Visualization of the framework

The summary of the theories is presented in the following two frameworks, first (Figure 4) that looks at the dimensions in PD EE in the target market, and second (Figure 5) that observes the phenomena that is related to the PD EE market entry. These visual frameworks are drawn from the theoretical review and are upon inspection in the conclusion after understanding the empirical data.

First of the two, Figure 4 demonstrates PD EE as a central concept, and the five dimensions that most effect the process from the market and societal standpoint. These describe the things that effect the PD EE process and form a product-market-fit viewpoint on the topic. Understanding the market and the product-market-fit is necessary for a successful market entry, and thus relevant for the study (Andersen, 1997; Zahra et al., 2000).

Figure 4 can be thought to represent the upper right corner position of Figure 5: professional development as a product. Figure 4 provides the dimensions that effect the product and eventually the product-market-fit for education export in the US market area. As Figure 4 is eventually adapted in the Conclusions, the outcome of Figure 9 is seen as the explaining the dimensions of PD as a product during market entry process.

Figure 4 dimensions are the theoretical crux of the study, as they combine the dimensions of EE, PD, and market entry into one framework. This framework then plays a larger role in Figure 5, which observes the market entry process from the viewpoint of the common literature of education and business.

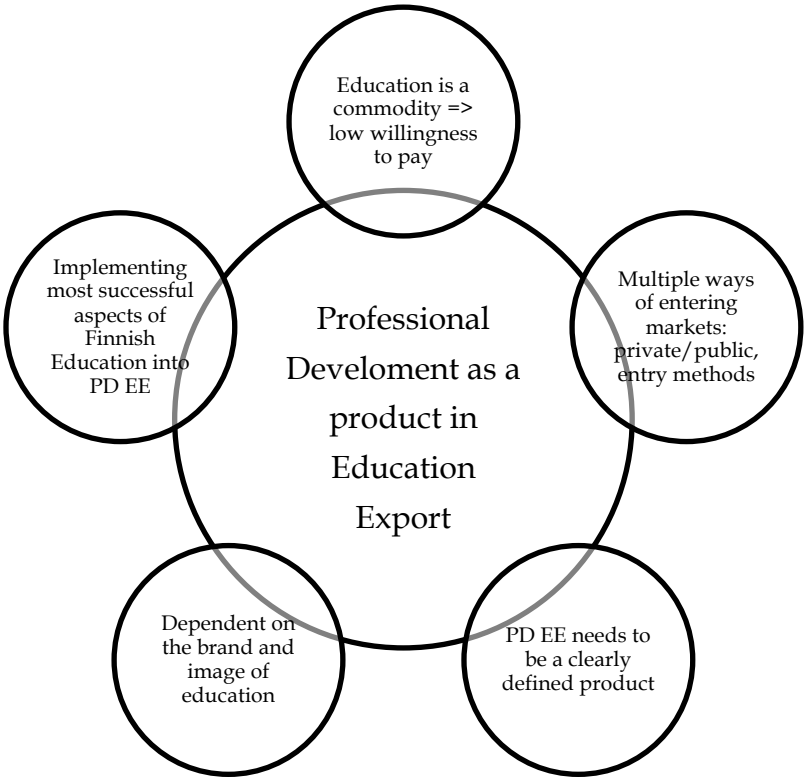

Figure 4, Framework of PD as a product in EE

Second of the two main theoretical frameworks, Figure 5 below, is related to the four main elements from the theoretical review that draw the PD market entry process to different directions, as the arrows help understand. In practice, these are the overarching themes that influence the process, and all details can be categorized between these four themes. E.g., the purchasing process of US education goes into Target Market Contingencies, whereas understanding the needs of private education go into PD as a Product.

The two figures are interlinked in a sense that the dimensions in the round Figure 4 effect the phenomenal elements of the Figure 5. More specifically, the Figure 4 can be seen as the top right corner of the Figure 5. The effect of PD as a Product dimension and can be considered as a product-lens in the latter figure, while it is seen in detail in Figure 4.

All in all, it is crucial to understand and observe these interlaying dimensions and elements simultaneously, instead of observing them separately. What this means in practice is that both figures demonstrate the elements and dimensions effecting the PD EE process, and thus relate to the practicalities. These figures are reflected upon in the conclusion of the study once the findings of the study are rooted to the theoretical literature review.

Figure 5. The four elements of PD EE Market Entry

6 RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA

Both disciplines of this study combine multiple concepts from different research fields: both education and business research draw from social sciences, economics, and organizational theories, to combine them to reach conclusions. This combinatory research ethic calls for the use of qualitative data, as it enables open ended questions and gives the researcher the possibility of exploring avenues of interest in interviews. Defining the role of context and to finding meaning from data is enable through qualitative research, giving the best means for this study.

6.1 Qualitative research

In terms of research design, the research theory of the study is qualitative. The qualitative basis provides a lens looking at the logic and concepts of the issues instead of numerical facts (Creswell, 2014; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Qualitative research is most often conducted through interviews from stakeholders that are thought to be meaningful for the subject studied. There is no single definition for qualitative studies, but one way of successfully defining it is its clear distinction from quantitative data (Creswell, 2014). Among greatest differentiators, approach to causality and causal explanations, generalization and equifinality separate qualitative from quantitative research (Mahoney & Goertz, 2006).

In terms of qualitive methods in business and education research, the case study method is employed, focusing on the market entry to the United States market area for a specific case of educational export. The case study method is useful for situations trying understand complex problems and issue, which makes it suitable for the strategic research questions of *how* to enter the novel

market area (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Thus, the method is especially useful for this study, as the key research question is answering the *how* question.

As the study aims to understand the factors effecting the phenomena of new market entry for educational services, qualitative research serves this cause better. With a qualitative research design, insights and information can be better drawn from the interview data and the theoretical framework (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Yin, 2014).

Interviews in a qualitative study are more open and their aim is to fully understand the perceptions of the interviewee (Creswell, 2014; George & Bennett, 2005). Naturally, these perceptions are mere personal experiences and memories affected by the individual's subjectivity, but focus of the qualitative study relies on causal relations: what is the cause of the effect? In quantitative research, the primary research setting is looking at the other way around: what is the effect of the cause?

Equifinality, where the theory accepts that causal relations can be complex and include multiple causation, is often present in qualitative research. This means that there are multiple ways of reaching a certain effect. Overall, open ended qualitative research is best suited for new theory formulation, whereas quantitative research works best with large amounts of data, when the goal is to understand causal relations (Pratt, 2009).

The key challenge with the case study research is the scope of the case: the researcher has nearly hegemonial power when identifying and narrowing the case (Creswell, 2013). The researcher needs to choose a fitting scope and suitable candidates for the interviews. This power of the researcher makes case study quite dependable on the researcher, decreasing the objectivity of the study method. If the researcher understands this challenge of the study and takes it into account, the negative effects can be mitigated.

Qualitative data collection methods range from informal to structured interviews, informal being closer to casual chit-chat and structured interviews following closely to a preset of questions (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In this study, semi-structured interviews will be used, and so, the interviewer will have

the right to ask further questions and have a more open conversation compared to structured interviews (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

In qualitative research conducted with interviews, the interviewees can share and converse about their thoughts, experiences and findings within themes guided by the researcher. From these qualitative interviews, researcher can form new theories, concepts and eventually findings (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

Open questions of the qualitative semi-structured interviews will show the dimensions of each case in question: industry, target market and firm specifics can be gained from open ended interviews.

6.1.1 Selecting the qualitative research approach

Scholars have yet to agree on a single definition of the different types of qualitative research, but most classifications hold resemblances of each other (Hollstein, 2011). As an example, Hollstein (2011) acknowledges that some of the major and more recognized approaches include interactionism, sociology of knowledge, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and constructivism.

On the comparison, Flick et al. (2004) note that symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and constructivism are the main types of qualitative research. Most scholars agree on this definition to the extent that ethnomethodology and constructivism and highlighted, but some scholars see case study as a type of research, instead of a research design (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Flick et al., 2004).

Of these, my study classified as a constructivist study as it aims to understand novel phenomena, as in PD & EE in a new market area. Using multiple participants and having different roles of the interviews, and constructing and generating new theories to observe educational export all add to the constructivist approach (Creswell, 2014).

One of the most theoretically founded approaches classification is Creswell (2013) classification: narrative, phenomenological, grounded, ethnographic, and

case study research. Of these, the **case study** research approach is applied in the study as it involves a real life setting (market entry), and a setting in a bounded system (bounded by place, in the US market area)(Creswell, 2013).

As Yin (2014) notes, case study is always tightly related to a certain situation with limits: i.e., a market entry situation, rather than an abstract concept. Case study approach explores a real-life bounded system, forming the case or cases, and applies data gathered both from theoretical and academic sources and from interviews (Creswell, 2013, 2014; Yin, 2014).

How and why questions are best answered via case study, with a focus on contemporary events. For these contemporary events, the researcher should have only little or no underlying control over (Creswell, 2013, 2014).

Case study is especially fitting when analyzing a certain situation (market entry) in a certain context (US market area). This study is centered around the concept of successful market entry and role of education in it. Hence, multilevel analysis is suitable to understand both issues.

As George & Bennett (2005) present, case study research can be divided to three steps: first, designing and planning, second, carrying out the study and finally, the analysis of the results in comparison to the theoretical framework.

For the first step of the case study research, emphasis is on research design, structure and objective (George & Bennett, 2005). From these, especially research objective is crucial to determine, which George & Bennett (2005) give out six concrete theory-building research objectives. These are atheoretical/ configurative idiographic, disciplined configurative case, heuristic, theory testing, plausibility probes and building blocks objectives (George & Bennett, 2005).

For this study, the hybrid model of both atheoretical and configurative idiographic and building blocks objectives was chosen, since it best suits the complex research questions in a novel field of research. The topics need comprehensive answers, which eventually aid in constructing the theories and analyzing the data through the theories. The building blocks give more in-depth

information to help define and narrow down the aim of the research (George & Bennett, 2005).

Inductive approach to data analysis is used, in which data and theory are analyzed simultaneously during the data collection (interviewing) process. Thematic content analysis is applied to understand and interpret the research data (Creswell, 2013; Eisenhardt, 1989).

In conclusion, the underlying goal of the research is divided into two. First, to understand how a successful market entry to a novel market area is conducted, and secondly, how does education as a product or service affect the internationalization and market entry. In terms of the research objectives, the aim of the study is to develop theories first through a comprehensive theoretical literature review, and finally through the semi-structured case interviews.

6.1.2 Case study method

History of the case study method is extensive, and it has been used in multiple disciplines, such as medicine, psychology and political science (Creswell, 2013). It has been used especially in observing distinguishable real life events, where theory can then be inducted from (Creswell, 2013). Unit of analysis in the case study is interviews conducted with industry experts, policy makers, and target market professionals. These interviews are analyzed through a coding process, further elaborating the qualitative process.

Creswell (2013, 2014) has defined seven key features qualitative case study should encompass. First, there should be a distinctive case in play, which is bounded by parameters. These parameters can be e.g., time or place, and in this study, the parameter is place (US market area). In this case, the scope of the case is vast, which means that just one case is enough for the study. These boundaries are a distinctive need for case studies and they determine the research method (Creswell, 2013). In a qualitative case study, the researcher must obtain contextual information about the case in question, in order to form a complete basis for analysis (Creswell, 2013).

Second, the intent of conducting a case study needs to be present. In practice, this means that case study needs to be the selected method from the get-go, instead of applying it on the go, after beginning the research with another method.

Third and fourth feature are related to the data analysis, as Creswell (2013) calls for in-depth understanding of the case, which is gained through comprehensive qualitative data, and for thorough data analysis with the correct scope for analysis. What this means in practice is that the interviews are conducted within the same group, i.e., data set is comparable among itself, and that the data is analyzed with the correct focus points, i.e., correct scope of analysis.

Fifth and sixth, Creswell (2013) emphasizes the thematization and description of the case: clear and comprehensive themes should be recognized, preferably in a MECE way (Caillaud & Flick, 2017). This means mutually exclusive, collectively exhaustive, i.e., each theme is not conflicting with others, but themes comprise all aspects of the case. Creswell (2013) highlights that these themes should be arranged chronologically.

Finally, the seventh feature of case studies is the conclusions formed by the researcher about the meaning of the case. In other words, case studied often conclude in theory and result building: patterns and explanations are the "lessons learned" from the case study.

The case study method used in this study is a **single, instrumental case study** (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). This study observes a collective case of the entire market entry strategy process in a specific geographic market area, instead of a single company or a single phenomenon. Thus, a single, instrumental case is the complex phenomenon of an EE market entry strategy, instead of a narrow action or a company.

Selecting the case study method for the case proved challenging, as a multiple case study could have been used if there were enough comparable existing cases (Creswell, 2013, 2014). Instead, there are no concretely comparable cases of PD in EE, especially to the certain market area. Therefore, the single,

instrumental case study portrays the empirical data collected from multiple industry professionals in a single, extensive case.

The single-case study is conducted by combining the theoretical framework and the in-depth empirical expert interviews from relevant stakeholders. By focusing on industry knowledge from multiple experts and even possible customers gives the study a comprehensive data set to induct theory from. In other words, the case used in this study observes the strategic process of entering the US market area with educational services, and more specifically with professional development education.

6.2 Generalizability

The multidisciplinary study provides a pioneering viewpoint combining two existing but separated fields of research in international business and education. The research topic of market entry strategies to the United States market area will provide concrete information not only for firms of educational export, but also for other professional services firms looking at internationalization through market entry.

Thus, the results of the study are analytically generalizable to multiple extents and offer academic insights from a viewpoint previously unavailable. From the case examples of the study, theory can be crafted through combining existing frameworks and drafting novel frameworks.

The innovative and unique study will create lasting impact on a macro level: it enables Finnish exports to shift towards professional services and education export and provides key findings for European companies to enable better entry to the new market area in North America.

My personal desires to combine both education and business through studying two distinctive masters' programs have come together to serve the researcher's goal: to make educational export the number one export in Finland. Much have been done to progress this goal, but concrete means are still scarce.

Hence, this study aims to create a concrete theoretical framework and toolkit for educational firms to use.

6.2.1 Generalizability of a case study

Generalizability of a case study is often questioned as the method is relying on a single case, which can be as brief as one event. For this often-repeated question, the answer is not simple (Yin, 2014). How case studies and qualitative studies in general differ from quantitative studies is the method of generalizability (George & Bennett, 2005; Yin, 2014).

Whereas in quantitative studies, the results look to be *statistical* and *extrapolatable* generalizations, such as population or nationwide effects, in qualitative case studies, the results are *analytically* generalizable, in other words grounded in theory (Yin, 2014).

Analytical generalization is one of the key building blocks of a successful qualitative case study: the theory forms a foundation for the study's findings, Yin (2014) explains. The researcher continues to state that in case studies, the theory can be derived and inducted from the data itself. When categorizing, analytic generalization can be based either on advancing, modifying or rejecting the initial theoretical concepts, or on new concepts and theories arising from the case study itself (Yin, 2014).

Another way of determining the generalizability of the case study is the approach to analysis: conducting generalizing analysis enables the finding of generalizable results, instead of merely focusing on particularizing analysis, drawing from particular examples (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014).

6.3 Data collection

Data collection of this study is based on qualitative research conventions: data is collected through in-depth interviews with focal focus groups, each consisting multiple single interviews (Creswell, 2013; Miles et al., 2014). In this study, a focus group means a set of individual interviews, each interview with one interviewee (except for one interview with three individuals). The groups are formed based on the interviewees background. From these, the researcher is able to draft a more complete understanding of the study, especially when compared to a quantitative study (Miles et al., 2014; Patton, 2015). Inductive nature of the study was adopted from Miles et al. (2014) theory, as the theory is being refined during the data collection process, description process and lastly the concluding process. This approach uses data from multiple sources to increase rigidity and reliability of the data (Eisenhardt, 1989; Patton, 2015).

Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewees to be more honest and elaborate on topic they find meaningful, forming a basis of open-ended data to be used. As Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008) state, semi-structured interviews give answers especially to *how* questions, making the method most suitable for the study. This will provide a fruitful base to analyze data with the thematic content analysis, which recognizes themes from the vast basis of material. The honesty and openness of data is available through semi-structured interviews, and further information can be gained as the process progresses (Eisenhardt, 1989; George & Bennett, 2005). Simultaneous inductive analysis of data during the interviewing process allows for observation of both theory and data, giving the possibility of inductive data management (Miles et al., 2014).

In addition to best academic practices, I have experience of interviewing, giving me an excellent starting point in terms of leveraging existing capabilities. Also, my experience from export consulting gives me first-hand knowledge of internationalization and market entry, hence making the open-ended conversations and interviewing the ultimate method for the study.

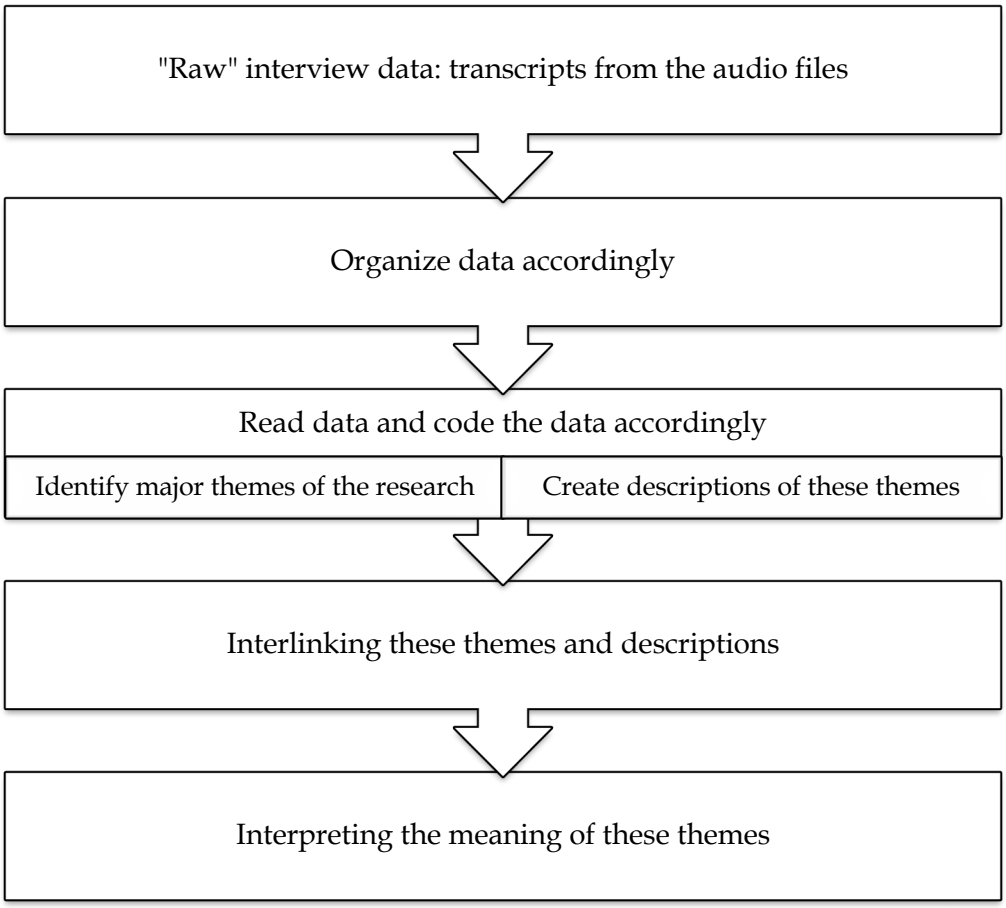

Figure 6. Data Collection and Analysis Process

6.3.1 Practicalities of data collection

As the study will use data from semi-structured interviews, the interviewees selected need to be suitable for the cause. The interviewees will include stakeholders from three different categories:

1) EE Industry experts (stakeholders with experience of education export and from market entry processes)
2) Policy makers (stakeholders with broad understanding of educational policies and goals of different curricula in different contexts)
3) Target Market professionals (stakeholders with experiential knowledge of operating in the US market area)

In terms of selecting these interviewees, it was vital that the interviewee had experience of education and knowledge about the characteristics of educational export, understood the contingencies of EE market entry processes and was active in their field with current information. Based on these qualifications, 22 interviewees were selected. The interviewees included industry experts, policy makers, and target market professionals, which in practice meant buyers, suppliers, and users of the education export services.

After selecting the interviewees, the interviews were arranged online, to be conducted with video conference platform Zoom. Due to the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were online. At the beginning of each interview, verbal acceptance of recording the interview was granted, along with the permission or refusal to use interviewees name in the data analysis. As presented in the University of Jyväskylä GDPR Guidelines, I as the author of the study was the only person with the access to these voice recordings of the interviews, and they were only to be used data processing.

The intended interview meeting length was chosen to be 45 minutes total, including 10 minutes for the introductions, questions, and other activity before the actual recording, leaving 35 minutes for the targeted recording time. I did not have limitations for the length of the interviews, and allowed them to continue longer, but the 45-minute timeslot was easier to accommodate with often extremely busy individuals I was interviewing. The targeted 35-minute recorded length was close to the average length for interviews, ranging from around 20 minutes to all the way to nearly 60 minutes.

The interview length seemed appropriate as I manage to schedule interviews with the most fitting individuals with meaningful roles in the industry and the target market and managed to get data that eventually saturated to fulfill the questions the study presented.

All interviews were conducted in English, also with Finnish speaking individuals. Thus, all the data was unified in terms of language, output, and method. Transcriptions of the textual data were conveyed subsequently to the interviews, after which analysis and comparison of answers begun. Based on

these analysis results, the finding and conclusion of the study was formulated. After that, a thematic content analysis was done to analyze the data from the interviews.

6.3.2 Data collection criteria

As I aimed to completely understand the professional development and educational export markets in the US, I carefully selected interviewees with the best possible experience from multiple different positions and industries. In order to ensure scientific reliability and validity, there were three focus groups chosen to use triangulation as a theme (Caillaud & Flick, 2017). The groups consisted of individual interviews conducted with singular interviewees, except for one interview (FCG) with three participants.

These three focus groups create a base for scientific triangulation not in terms of using multiple methods in a traditional sense of triangulation, but instead as the three interview groups provide different viewpoints to the topic of PD in EE in the United States market. The groups provided me with the most current, comprehensive, and realistic understanding of the market and the industry, as Caillaud & Flick (2017) find in their study.

6.4 Data analysis

Inductive data analysis is a process where the collected data is reviewed, analyzed, and coded with the main concepts and themes related to the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework originally developed and created during the literature review is projected to find commonalities in the data.

The theories in the existing literature were chosen based on their academic integrity, by the publication they were originally published and by the citations they had received since. As the current theories of educational export are not integral to the market entry processes, and market entry academia lacks

education focus, many of the theories have had to be developed during this research process.

As presented in Figure 6, the raw data collected from the interviews was first transcribed an organized for reading: this included identifying ideas, concepts, and opinions from the data. The data was divided into four main themes by an extensive coding process. The final code system and frequency is presented in the Appendix 10.4. and the differences in code frequencies of the focus groups in Appendixes 10.5.-10.7.

Qualitative analysis is dependent on the researcher's skill to recognize relevant information and how to use that information for valuable insights to create coherent further analysis (Mahoney & Goertz, 2006). As for the coding of the interview data, a hybrid model of manual coding and the use of MAXQDA 2022 software was used: the identified themes were recurring to the academic extent that signaled their significancy. All codes were detected manually, but the categorization and data analysis were made more efficient using MAXQDA 2022 software.

Coding essentially means the process of identifying and selecting themes the researcher wants to focus more on. The coding follows the repeated process of seeking categories and subcategories representing themes and concepts. Coding is carried out until the data shows no new themes or concept yet to be categorized.

Data interpretation was done using a reflective lens of the theory presented and created from the literature review. The inductive process enables the data to help create new knowledge and formulate new theoretical findings.

In practice, I used Otter.ai transcription software to create the automated software transcription, which I then meticulously checked for potential errors and corrected accordingly, two iterations to be sure of the quality. This resulted in 226 pages of transcription of the interviews, averaging around 10.3 pages per interview.

After this, I carefully went through the data with the MAXQDA 2022 software, resulting in the coded themes emerging from the extensive data. With

the MAXQDA 2022 software, I familiarized myself with data by reading, coding, and recoding it, creating categories from emerging themes and the research questions. By doing so, I ensured to create a cohesive image of the interviews.

Table 2 demonstrates the main themes and categories of coding. They are aligned with the "MECE" principle, which stands for mutually exclusive, collectively exhaustive, meaning that all meaningful data from the interviews is coded, and all codes differentiate from one another. These main themes are divided into sub themes, as presented in the Appendix 10.4., which demonstrates the frequency of the codes and the system used in the process.

First main theme is "Professional Development", which is tied to the themes of professional development in theory of what PD is, how is it organized, what is the current market like and what are the current providers. Main subcodes of the system are "Current state of PD Market" and "How is PD organized", which investigate the situation of PD in the US market area, and its current trends.

Second main theme is "Market Entry", which consists of advice to EE companies, strategies for entering the US market, and the capabilities needed for the market entry process. For market entry, six main sub themes emerge, which further explain the abilities of market entry in a comprehensive and MECE way.

Third main theme is "Finnish Education Export", which investigates the current situation of the Finnish EE market, Finnish education as a brand, and education as a product. For EE, the main sub themes are looking at education as a product and current ways of conducting EE especially in the US market.

Forth main theme is the "Key Differences of the Finnish – USA markets", which pinpoints the main differences of the two vastly different market areas, regarding education, the education market, and the keys to decrease these differences.

These four main themes consist of all the codes, bringing the total amount of coded segments to 450. On average, each interview consisted of over 20 coded segments, classified using the MECE system.

Main theme / Category	Times used (total of 450)
Professional Development	65
Market Entry	192
Finnish Education Export	44
Key Differences of the markets	149

Table 2. Categories of Codes

6.5 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are essential for the study, as they validate that the results of the study are precise enough (Andersen, 1997). As Andersen (1997) presents, reliability emphasizes the fact that conducted research would lead to identical results even if repeated for multiple times. A concept of reliability is partly flawed, as Lincoln & Guba (1985) argue, presenting a competitive model for evaluating reliability: the concept of trustworthiness. This has since become the academic standard of defining reliability and the most used method of evaluating qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The concept consists of four parts: the confirmability, the credibility, the dependability and the transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

First of four, confirmability exemplifies the likelihood of the results of the study being same, despite study being conducted by another researcher. Secondly, credibility is about the researcher ensuring that the findings of the research are matching with reality and are overall truthful. Third part is the dependability: the research much be documented in a way that allows other researchers to repeat the study with the same steps the original researcher took. Finally, transferability is the part that focuses on the results being transferred to other use cases. Also, Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008) study compliments the idea of Lincoln & Guba (1985) of transferability in terms of testing results in multiple environments.

In this study, I evaluate the trustworthiness through these four lenses. The confirmability of the study is demonstrated by the 22 interviews I conducted with a similar question base, thus giving a vast enough scope of the experts of the industry. Furthermore, most of the interviewees were executive level individuals, who hold the most information about their respective industries and businesses.

For credibility, the theoretical grounding I formed was based on publications in major business journals, including Journal of International Business Studies (JIBS), International Business Review, Academy of Management Review, as well as education journals, such as a Journal of Research in International Education, Journal of Studies in International Education, and others. Also leading online resources such as New York Times and Washington Post were used, enabling an even more comprehensive data set for use.

The articles and books used were written by individuals who hold high academic standards from their fields. I as the researcher in this study am a highly competent individual in the field of education export, as I have true interest towards changing the world through education and experience of international trade and interviewing for work. Overall, I have the best intentions to understand the PD EE market in the US market area, to help current stakeholders and organizations in a market entry situation.

The use of semi-structured interviews allowed me to gather deep insights and understanding of the industry, enabling a more thorough data collection process. As the eventual total amount of interviews was 22, the answers started to resemble one another, demonstrating the high saturation in the results. This shows that I collected enough data in the form of interviews.

For the transferability, the total findings of the study could be applicable to multiple settings, such in other market entry procedures in other industries, or in other market areas. Also, the findings of the abilities of the US market can be used for education research, education development and other education related industries.

Coding and data analysis was conducted using a MECE method (mutually exclusive, collectively exhaustive), and thus the codes included all the aspects of

data gathered from the interviews. This further boosts the reliability as the MECE method makes sure all data is in a category, but that the categories do not overlap. The clear documentation of the research process and steps taken during it concludes the reliability metrics of study.

My position as a researcher was not one of authority, as all the interviewees were in higher positions than me at the time of the study, resulting in more honest answers and no need to please me as an interviewer. My objectivity as a researcher was highlighted in the questionnaire (Appendixes 10.2. & 10.3.), where the questions were formed around carefully selected themes and did not include any pre-assumptions on the topics, but instead enabled the interviewees to voice their understanding and opinions on the topic openly and freely.

Taking all these aspects of trustworthiness in account, I determine the study to be trustworthy and reliable.

6.6 Interviewees and segmentation to focus groups

As the interviewees were segmented into three main categories, it is central to understand more practically the background and viewpoint of each interviewee. In Tables 3, 4, and 5, the further information of the interviewees is presented in alphabetical order in relation to focus groups. Complete code systems are found in Appendixes 10.4.-10.7.

1) EE Industry experts (stakeholders with experience of education export and from market entry processes)

2) Policy makers (stakeholders with broad understanding of educational policies and goals of different curricula in different contexts)

3) Target Market professionals (stakeholders with experiential knowledge of operating in the US market area)

EE Industry experts (stakeholders with experience of education export and from market entry processes) – total of 10 out of 22

#	Name & Title	Organization	Background	Date & Duration
1	A. Korhonen CEO, Founder	xEdu Accelerator, multiple others	A. Korhonen has background in founding EdTech companies and conducting market entry processes with them.	17th of February 2022; 27:50
2	M. Barratt Director of Sales	EduCluster Finland, a public/private EE company.	M. Barratt has +20 years of experience in global sales in the EE and Education sector.	3rd of February 2022; 39:34
3	J. Kajala CEO, Founder	3D Bear, EdTech, EE company	J. Kajala has lengthy career in business management and startups, especially in the education sector.	8th of February 2022; 42:11
4	M. Kasanen CEO, Founder	SchoolDay, Edtech, EE company	M. Kasanen is experienced with education both from business development and startup field.	3rd of February 2022; 30:28
5	K. Loponen CEO	EduCluster Finland, a public/private EE company.	K. Loponen is experience leader in an education export company, focused on multiple international markets.	4th of February 2022; 44:54

6	M. Kyyrönen CEO, Partner	Sparkmind VC	M. Kyyrönen is experienced finance professional who is currently a partner in a venture capital with education focus.	10th of February 2022; 21:32
7	Anonymous (Startup CEO) CEO, Founder	EE Startup	Startup CEO is a Founder and CEO with +25 years of experience in the digital education business and market entry.	4th of February 2022; 38:51
8	M. Weisburgh COO, Advisor	Academic Business Advisors, 3D Bear, advisory and EE companies	M. Weisburgh has nearly 20 years of business advisory and startup business development.	18th of February 2022; 32:48
9	P. Pärnänen CEO, Founder	MAD Partners, business development, market entry boutique	P. Pärnänen is a seasoned startup developer who has worked with over 400 companies with their market entry processes.	17th of February 2022; 43:08
10	S. Palm Lead Expert, Project Manager	EduCluster Finland, a public/private EE company.	S. Palm has international teaching background and has made the shift to EE, focusing on international projects and market leads.	9th of February 2022; 29:32

Table 3. Interviewees EE experts

Policy makers (stakeholders with broad understanding of educational policies and goals of different curricula in different contexts) – total of 7 out of 22

#	Name Title	Organization	Background	Date & Duration
1	Tuija Lauren, Marja Laine, Aki Virtanen Education related experts	Finnish Consulting Group	The three interviewees from FCG are extremely experienced in working with EE companies, creating policies for countries and companies entering new market areas. (note: the three were interviewed simultaneously in a group setting)	2nd of February 2022; 56:07
2	Anonymous (Education Counselor) Education Counselor	Large international & governmental organization	Education Counselor is an experienced policymaker especially in the international education scene, working in multiple international institutions.	4th of February 2022; 46:47
3	I. Turunen Science Counselor	Embassy of Finland, multiple locations	I. Turunen has a lengthy career in public sector, serving in many roles related to internationalization and policy making.	10th of February 2022; 35:04

4	I. Ahmed Trade Counselor	Consulate General of Finland in New York	I. Ahmed has worked with promoting education industry from a governmental and policy making viewpoint in New York, USA.	11th of February; 18:05
5	J. Kangasniemi Program Director	Finnish National Agency for Education	J. Kangasniemi has a demonstrated history of working in the education policy development in the past 25+ years.	10th of February 2022; 32:48
6	Anonymous (Senior Advisor) Senior Advisor	Large governmental organization	Senior Advisor is professional of market entry and policy making both from education and start-up viewpoint.	3rd of February 2022; 30:25
7	P. Antila Manager of Education Travel	Business Finland	P. Antila has focus on education travel and the Finnish brand of education internationally.	2nd of February 2022; 39:31

Table 4. Interviewees Policy Makers

Target Market professionals (stakeholders with experiential knowledge of operating in the US market area) – total of 5 out of 22

#	Name Title	Organization	Background	Date & Duration
1	A. Rapoport Professor	Purdue University	A. Rapoport is an awarded Professor of Social Sciences and Education.	17th of February 2022; 37:22
2	J. Ellingsworth Teacher	Public School	J. Ellingsworth is a recently retired teacher (13yo-18yo) with 40+ years of experience.	16th of February 2022; 30:29
3	M. Mikusa Head of School	Private School	M. Mikusa is a head of school with previous experience from teaching and educational leadership.	9th of February; 38:02
4	N. Ybarra Teacher, Instructional Assistant	Public School	N. Ybarra is an experienced in roles related to teaching and administrative assisting.	14th of February 2022; 18:36
5	P. VanFossen Director, Author	Purdue University	P. VanFossen is the Director & Distinguished Professor of Social Studies Education.	21st of February 2022; 45:04

Table 5. Interviewees Target Market Professionals

6.7 Successful focus group selection leads to research validity

The three different interviewee focus groups each had a separate and distinctive goal and a meaning. For the first group, EE industry experts, the needed focus was first and foremost on the market entry process, and the capabilities needed for that, and secondly on the market differences between the home and target market. EE industry experts hold the most current understanding of the struggles education companies face, the trends the industry is going through and practical tips during the EE market entry process.

For the second group, policy makers, the focus was especially on the differences between the home and target market in terms of policies and practices, as well as their broad view on advice for new EE companies. This group of individuals brought a deep insight on the bureaucratic structures behind EE in the US market area, and how to possibly overcome them. Their key findings of the differences between the market areas laid the foundations for analysis for the study.

For the third group, target market professionals, the focus was especially on the current state of PD in the target market of USA. These target market professionals were education researchers, teachers, and other education professionals, who gave an insight from the possible client or buyer side of PD EE.

For all these groups, the intended goal of the interviews was reached, as the Appendixes through 10.4. to 10.7. present. The charts present tables with code frequencies for the three focus groups. The complete number of codes per interviewee can be found from the bottom horizontal axel, and from the right-most vertical axel the total amount of each code is presented. In these charts, the brighter color intensity and larger size of the square indicate the higher frequency of any code, i.e., large, and bright red square indicates high frequency of code.

For the collective appendix chart 10.4., one can see all interviewees in an alphabetical order to form the complete code matrix for all occurring codes in the

study. This provides a great overview on the overall situation of the coding of the study, what the focus points were in terms of code frequency.

When reflecting the coding to the intended outcome or theme of interview, it is imminent that the interviewee selection was successful. As an example, the industry experts answered mostly about the current state of PD in the US market area, which was exactly the goal of that interviewee segment. This proves that the proposed target groups fit the study alignment and provided necessary results for the conclusion of the study: each interviewee and their designated groups provided the needed viewpoints for the study, creating a complete picture of the scope of the PD market in the United States.

The segmentation of interviewee focus groups also supports the idea of MECE data analysis, meaning the mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive approach. This means that the coded segments do not overlap in terms of different interviewees, but instead form standalone groups that provide insight for further analysis. Finally, this increases the reliability and validity of the study by using triangulation, and builds credibility with the interviewees fitting the intended profiles: i.e., the interview groups provided the intended data, and were not overlapping their focus points (Caillaud & Flick, 2017).

7 FINDINGS

For this chapter, I aim to go chronologically through the results of the empirical part and its relation to the theoretical data. I analyze themes in the order of the coding, going more in depth to most meaningful and most often reoccurring themes.

After displaying the findings in this chapter, I will analyze the relation of the findings and theory, finally concluding and summarizing my analysis in the conclusion of the study.

7.1 Professional development

7.1.1 Current state of PD

The professional development in the US market has been changing during the years rapidly. Previously teachers and teaching professionals were eager to participate in the PD organized, as it had a positive effect on their salary and their career progression, whereas now the incentives to participate have been getting weaker, and often teachers even must pay for PD with their own money, resulting too little to no career upside.

> *I paid for [my professional development] entirely by myself. And I was a young teacher, I was a young mother, young wife, and it was a sacrifice. (…) When the school brings in workshops and seminars and things to the school. We don't pay for that the school provides that continuing education for us. But anything you do on your own, you pay for out of your own pocket. (J. Ellingworth)*

The shift in professional development is also seen in everyday work of teachers: previously the focus was more on pedagogics and learning teaching methods, but now the goal is to manage in a teaching position in terms of care taking for the students and knowing how utilize technology.

On the contrary, it is vital to understand that the situation is vastly different with public and private schools: in private schools PD is more so relied on the interest of the individual teacher, whereas in the public sector the PD is organized from top-down. In public school systems, the PD is often basic in terms of content, including speakers, workshops and conferences related to PD. These are mostly paid in the public sector by the institutions and organizations, e.g., schools or universities. Many universities have obligations to host PD related to the amount of education studies they provide.

The underlaying finding of the PD market is the market need: public sector teachers only get the PD that is required, as external PD is often not provided and does not provide any incentive in terms of salary increase or career progression. On the contrary, the private sector teachers push for further PD and often partly pay for it themselves, which often has a more direct effect on the career progression of the teacher.

> *So, if we want it, we pay for it. And so there's a little bit more (…) skin in the game, like, I want it, I'm invested, I'm paying for it. And I can keep my job whether I do it or not. So it's, again, it's all about that personal agency. Whereas in the public school system, a lot of my teacher friends, they're only taking what is required, only taking what's paid for by the state (M. Mikusa)*

Often public teachers are not interested in the PD opportunities provided and are not willing to invest into PD as they are paid poorly: they lack incentives for PD. This is resonating heavily with the earlier findings from the empirical part that private sector is the most potential market for PD in the USA. One of the interviewees sums up the issue with lack of incentives in current situation of PD in the US:

> *So you could have 15 hours of professional development, I could have zero, and we get exactly the same rates. Right. So why in the world, would I want to engage in professional development? (P. VanFossen)*

7.1.2 PD in public education versus private education

Public and private education sectors are regulated completely different in terms of PD: public sector is required to host and organize PD, but the quality and level of PD varies between different states, districts and even schools.

> *Well, in the public schools, we are required to follow the state mandates for getting our teachers license and maintaining our teachers' license. And it's very important to our State Department of Education chairpersons, that all teachers continue to become the best that they can become as educators, so that we can really serve our students. Well, in the parochial schools [type of a private school], they don't have to follow state mandates [for PD]. (J. Ellingworth)*

Other variables in the public vs private PD discussion are the market purchasing models and purchasing pace, which naturally effects the business for EE. The business models for PD are different in the two sectors. For private sector PD is often purchased by the teachers themselves, resulting in a B2C business model, whereas in the public sector, most PD is organized with and through organizations such as schools, universities, and governmental organizations. Thus, the business model with the public sector would be either B2B or B2G.

In the private education market, teachers are often compensated by their performance, which is tracked with standardized testing. Especially in the private education market, where teachers are paying for PD themselves, it is vital to highlight the benefit the teacher gets. Since the incentive is in getting better teaching results and therefore increasing teacher compensation, pedagogics-centered PD is most likely more viable business option, as teachers would be incentivized on improving their teaching.

In the public education market, the buying cycles for professional development are long, often working in competitive processes lasting for an entire year. The buying cycle can begin during the fall months, and not end until

May. This results in resources being tied up in one public education process for nearly a year, limiting growth and other operations for that time.

> *The buying cycle in the US is a long buying cycle, all budget decisions are voted on in May. So anything that's in the budget, which is probably 96-97% of the money that the that the district is going to spend, everything that's in the budget has to be already decided but before the vote in May, which means that the Board of Education has to decide in April, which means that has to be proposed sometime in February, which means that schools are going to be trying things they have to be trying things in the fall. And it's a once-a-year process. (M. Weisburgh)*

Entering the public market would be through school administrators on a local and state level, with the systems being different in each state and each school district. Comparing to Finland, you can't directly contact every meaningful player you are looking for, but instead must work more hierarchically.

> *[Finland is an] easy to operate market, you can call anybody, you can look up a number of a principal and [contact] the principal of the biggest vocational school in Finland directly, for example, [and] in the US, you can't do that. (J. Kajala)*

7.1.3 Focus of PD: practicalities or pedagogy?

One of the key differentiators of PD is whether it is focused more on the practicalities of teaching or on the pedagogics of teaching. The trend in the US educational systems has been heavily favoring the practicalities and has shifted from pedagogics into nearly full focus on practicalities.

> *I think it's more on the practicalities for teachers because that's what we wanted, especially when technology entered the scene, we needed a lot of help in learning the technology and accessing different educational programs that we could*

implement into our classrooms. So that accessing different educational programs that we could implement into our classrooms (J. Ellingworth)

An emerging focus in the professional development has been on the technology and its adaptation to teaching in the past 20 years. As new technology has been entering the educational system in the USA rapidly, teachers have needed technical PD frequently. This also demonstrates the fact that PD is more focused on the practicalities than pedagogy.

I think overall the PD really has been focused (…) on technology because over the years last 20 years, you know, since about 2000, with the sort of the ubiquity of technology in the classrooms, money being poured into tech, teaching teachers how to use technology has been a big push. And then there's been a lot of curriculums that have added for good and bad technology to their curriculum. (M. Mikusa)

They have once or twice a year of tech, particularly tech. So, they go over things like Canvas and Flipgrid, and how to use this and how to figure out the data from that program. So that's focused completely on tech. (N. Ybarra)

Effect of the COVID-19 pandemic was also seen in the PD market, as questions of remote teaching and use of digital aids was forced upon the US educational system. Digital teaching and enabling people the access to internet and online learning platforms was one of the first things that transformed the US market upon the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to that, PD was also focused on the technological practicalities of online tools, remote teaching.

Most recently, in the last two and a half years, with COVID, of course, the huge push on being able to help teachers with PD in terms of how to teach remotely, or how to teach even hybrid between (…) platforms, really coming in and teaching teachers how to use a tool. (M. Mikusa)

Collectively, the situation of PD shifted from a focus on pedagogics in the early 2000s to a focus on practicalities, which was eventually heavily boosted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

7.1.4 Current providers of PD

Currently, the providers are PD in the USA market are mostly public organizations and institutions like Montessori, IB and others. Private companies have not penetrated the market, especially on the public education field. On the public side, the providers are often state or federal level institutive providers, instead of private organizations. Just like in many comparisons between public and private sector, the private sector providers are usually private companies, prompting the possibilities of that market for future PD EE.

> *So probably more than universities, even I think that the bigger providers in the United States are (…) licensing agents like IB, Montessori or any of those, as well as curriculum providers. (M. Mikusa)*

On a larger scale of things, more and more teachers have grown an attitude of not needing PD, especially in the STEM and higher education field. This attitude can be seen as a combination of N-I-H syndrome, and professional proudness: teachers think that they have the best skills already, and are reserved about new PD. The importance of demonstrating the added value of PD is crucial to convince this demographic of teachers to conduct and participate in PD.

> *[US teachers] really know their stuff. And so, they think, what can you teach me? What can I learn from you, in terms of my own professional development? So that attitude? Well, not pervasive, it certainly exists, perhaps more in social studies areas than in other areas. And that is hard to overcome. (P. VanFossen)*

7.2 Market entry

7.2.1 Attitudes towards market entry and its strategies

As for market entry, the findings from the interviews can be seen as advice for companies, be it practical or strategic. One of the key themes getting repeated was the need for presence in the market: creating a network of local professionals, partners, consultants, and clients is vital in opening operations in the USA market area. The physical presence in the same or at least close time zone is viewed as a must for entering a new market.

Having presented success in the home market was often seen as a step towards market success in the target market area. On the effect of lack of previous success in Finland, one interviewee argued the following:

> *In the States, it's [lack of success in Finland] also kind of a hindering factor in scaling up there. Because if you are kind of like, coming from Finland, with no previous (…) presence there. So, it takes time for you to establish yourself there. So (…) you can't really predict that that that you are having having quick wins. (A. Korhonen)*

Especially in professional services, such as PD, the two expert markets in Finland and US are not that far apart. Thus, the differences in these niche segments are not that different, despite distinctive market differences in curricula, buying processes, governmental hierarchy, and culture. However, operating in a precise and niche segment, such as PD with experienced educators in the private education system in the US, creates a fertile ground for market entry in the sector.

> *I would say that let's let's say the upskilling of people, but within the kind of the corporate learning market that is that is working pretty similarly, in Finland, and in the States. (A. Korhonen)*

Creating market interest is one of the dilemmas of market entry, and especially with EE, is related heavily on your track record. This eventually creates a causality paradox: without existing clients and schools, it is hard to find market interest, but without existing market interest, it is difficult to find clients and schools. The same goes for operating in different markets: if you succeed in previous markets with different contingencies, you need to localize and tailor your market entry process more, but you have that previous success to build from and to show to clients.

Classic business sayings of "you can't boil the ocean", tell the everlasting story of focusing your efforts and testing the market first. Experienced Silicon Valley entrepreneur highlighted that it is vital to "invest 50k before spending the first million" (P. Pärnänen, p. 8). What this means practically is that before committing, it is important do your homework in terms of understanding the market of the market.

> *And when it comes to the US, in particular, compared to some of the other countries in Europe, or let's say, you know, Nordic countries, Scandinavian countries, smaller countries, is that you have to do your homework particularly well. (Senior Advisor)*

Understanding the market and its pace is seen important especially in the early stages of market entry. The education and professional development market is adapting constantly, and the purchasing requirements are heavy and purchasing cycle is long, especially in the public system. How this can be most easily done is through networking with experienced market professionals.

> *You should use your first 200 euros in buying beer for [people who have done a successful market entry] or people who have actually made the journey and tried to milk every bit of information out of them. (I. Ahmed)*

7.2.2 Capabilities development in empirical findings

In terms of the capabilities needed for the market entry process, there was no common or shared consensus on how people see the capabilities should be built or should they be internal or external. The only shared idea was the different stages of the market entry require different combinations of teams and individuals.

> *[The needed capabilities] really depends on what the educational product or service is (A. Korhonen)*

> *The team should have all these different types of expertise, there is no single person who can handle all these expertise areas. (J. Kangasniemi)*

Capabilities development shared a similar response in terms of lack of consensus. Different teams, entrepreneurs and companies hold different values in terms of team building, resulting in a plethora of opinions. As one interviewee pointed out with the following comment, capabilities development changes as the company matures, and there is not a single correct answer in terms of the capability development.

> *Well, of course, you you have to consider what sort of stage your company is, first of all, like, as a startup, you need to be agile, and you cannot have like different departments and sort of competences and vice presidents. So that's for sure. But of course, as the company matures, you need to build like this different departments. In that sense. (M. Kasanen)*

Many of the capabilities were seen as a successor to basic business capabilities that follow the traditional lines of building businesses: networking skills, presenting skills, and knowing the market. More than having a great product, it is vital to have great team that progresses that product and idea.

Ironically, enough, like very often, like many of those critical capabilities, come down to, you know, very basic business essentials. (Senior Advisor)

7.2.3 Practicalities of a market entry process

As for the practicalities of market entry, social and geographical similarities often boost the purchasing processes. People still enjoy doing business with local and similar people in terms of social background, despite the remote connectivity found with online platforms.

I go to Virginia, and the Virginia people say, you're from New York, you don't know anything about me, (…) just go back to New York. (…) So, I have to be able to overcome that. Even in the US when I go to different states, it becomes compounded. Even more when you're (…) from a different country. (M. Weisburgh)

For the market entry strategies, business needs need to be based on market needs: answering market needs is vital for early business success. Ensuring this enables further success in the process. Ensuring the product-market fit and the need for the product or a service also ties into advice of doing proper homework. By understanding the market, you can ensure matching the market needs precisely.

There should be some kind of needs-assessment that you really see that it is something that the market needs, if it's highly new type of service, we've seen that in most markets, the markets are quite conservative, and the market penetration is very difficult, even if the product would be very high, high value and advantage (J. Kangasniemi)

Credibility is crucial during a market entry, and it is considered as the way to open early doors: if the company has enough funds, enough certificates and

name the path towards first customers is paved well. Imperative part of credibility is local presence in the market, which builds a bridge to localization: the EE efforts and the product needs to match local needs, language, and ways of operation. Also, owner and partner organizations such as governmental functions and universities are seen as providing the much-needed credibility especially during the early stage of the market entry process.

> *I think for us is the the owner organizations that if we would not have those, you know, it will be much more difficult for us to justify, you know, that we are trustworthy company, of course, references are very important that you can kind of tell all the past things that you have done. (S. Palm)*

7.2.4 Role of partnerships in a market entry process

Partnerships are another key theme of market entry strategies. At best, partners can help you avoid the early mistakes of the market entry process by sharing their knowledge and tips with you along the process.

> *There is kind of an established network of players who are who are able to help you in the partnering either by becoming partners or becoming consultants in that sense, and that that way, make it easier. (A. Korhonen)*

From the interviews, the collective theme acknowledged two types of partnerships. First, partnering with companies or organizations that will progress your market entry process top-down, and second, partner with individuals for bottom-up market entry.

For the first one, partnering needs to bring value for both sides, e.g., your innovation needs to help the partner in a way, be it financial or not. Top-down approach in this case means, that in the higher level, the partnering organization helps distribute to end-customers or their existing customers. As an example, a

partnership with a university and leveraging their network could be an example of this. These are more traditional business partnerships and collaborations.

For the second one, the strategy for opening a new market could be done through influencers, such as teachers and individuals using the product. This could be especially fruitful in the private system as the buyer profile is more often an individual, while in the public system an organization. These partnerships are seen nowadays especially in social media marketing and with startups but are just beginning to become a standard with education and EdTech startups too.

> *How we entered the US market with [the startup] was with a trusted partner, [an ivy league university]. And, and we trusted 100% about their knowledge about the market, [on] how we should actually enter the US market so that we can reach all the kids in North America within a certain period of time, and they really know their business and their own market. (Startup CEO)*

Using partnership varies a lot by the company: an established company with a proven international track record can form partnerships with established market players, such as universities, educational providers, and institutions, creating instant presence in the new market. Startups and earlier stage companies more often struggle forming larger partnerships, but instead can find grass root based organic growth by partnering with smaller institutions and influencers. Top education influencers have a high reach, more so with a niche market such as private education PD.

> *Well, a I'm in North Carolina, and I'm an independent [private] school, I have different needs. And so, understanding that those needs are different, and maybe even being able to answer or address like, how are we going to meet that market? Versus just, you know, going for the biggest market? Because honestly, that's I mean, they're companies. They're trying to make money but being able to be a little more niche [would improve the market entry process]. (M. Mikusa)*

7.3 Finnish education export

7.3.1 Current state of Finnish education export

According to the theoretical literature review and empirical data, Finnish Education Export is a small industry not only nationally, but also globally. Finnish EE players are seen to use a sort of scattergun approach in a sense that they operate globally in multiple small markets, which don't have a direct benefit of scale nor huge market upside. This further highlights the importance of USA as a market area: a vast, homogenic market area is applicable for scalability and growth.

> *I think, you know, that's part of the issue when it comes to Finnish companies is that most Finnish educational export companies are quite small. And in that respect, they're not they can't dedicate the the amount of resources that they would want to for different marketplaces. And I think that's probably the reason why most of them don't even touch the US market. Plainly, because there's, there's this scattergun approach, you know, you get all this requests from all over the world. That's one thing that keeps you busy with all those things. But I think the other thing is being able to dedicate the time and resource to actually target a specific part of the US market to actually make a market entry (M. Barratt)*

These small and separated streams of revenue keep the companies' key functions running and the companies' busy, which results in lack in growth. Another variable in the lack of growth in the industry is related to the role of public partners and governmental players the Finnish EE companies work with. Both factors limit the scalability and growth opportunities of current and traditional Finnish EE players.

This has a direct impact to the market entry process, as in the market entry, growth and high pace of action are crucial in gaining and maintaining a market share. A sort of a nail to the coffin is the current competitive landscape Finnish

EE market, where EE companies are fighting for similar projects instead of collaborating to find synergies.

There has been a recent improvement to that, as Finnish EE collaboration has begun, with early success in South Americas.

> *Excellent example is this Polar Partners (…). they have excellent network of other companies, service providers, so they can really, very quickly build up a control team to to provide all the elements which the client is looking for. (Tuija Lauren, FCG)*

Success factor in market entry processes is the effect it provides for the users, which in many interviews was clarified and emphasized: you need to highlight the difference you create. For Finnish EE players, communicating the value and conducting a sales process in a new market is often disregarded in terms of importance: Finns often think that a great product is enough, with little to no regard to the strategic market entry process.

> *So, I it's kind of a typical kind of, you know, Finnish dilemma that you focus on, [developing] a great product, and everybody will buy it (…). Unfortunately, no, I would love if that, you know, was the case. But unfortunately, it isn't. (J. Kajala)*

7.3.2 Finnish education as a brand in education export

In terms of practicalities of EE, Finnish education system has a high overall brand in terms of education industry. However, Finnish companies and brands are not recognized nor appreciated as they are in the USA market.

> *And they forget that when they come here, they're absolutely nothing, they're zero, no one knows them, no one knows their brand. No one knows who they are, as people, no one knows the, you know, schools the founders gone to, or even the companies they work with, if they worked in (Senior Advisor)*

On the contrary, the brand of Finnish education per se, is outweighing the brand of Finland outside education: despite being a small country, the highly known brand of Finnish education is expanding quickly.

> *I'm not saying this because you're Finnish, but [the Finnish education] is the gold star, it's the gold standard. It is and that is sort of the perception, I would say, at least in the arena that I'm in. (M. Mikusa)*

This controversy in terms of the Finnish image is also coherent with the institution's interviewees are working in. In a fast-paced startup ecosystem, Finnish brand is mostly non-existent, as track record, proven skills and ideas run the show. On the other front, in the slower-pace education industry players value traditional metrics, brand and background more than in the startup world.

Continuing from this controversy, also Finnish interviewees tended to be more pessimistic in terms of the brand of Finnish education and how it is conveyed in the US market, whereas the American interviewees saw Finnish education as the nearly perfect system. Naturally, the interviewees also accrued the challenge of implementing the Finnish system into US as it is, and the downsides of the Finnish system, but overall, the brand of Finnish system was nearly flawless and extremely well known. Still, the interviewees were all education professionals, which increases the likelihood of them knowing the Finnish education as the 'gold standard'.

The success of Finnish education as a brand provides a hidden threat in losing focus of the operations: with global interest, many Finnish EE companies operate in multiple market areas, losing focus of specific strategic operations. This phenomenon is seen in current EE companies in Finland, as depicted by the following Finnish EE CEO:

Well, this is this is interesting, because as the PISA results came in, we haven't really needed any marketing. So, so it has been for for 12 years, the customers have been coming to us. (K. Loponen)

This problematic structure of the Finnish EE industry is only realized if there is a shift in global demand: if these inbound customers run out, or if the company targets more ambitious growth through a single market area, the current scattergun approach begins to cause negative implications.

7.4 Key differences between the two systems

7.4.1 Differences in educational markets

First and foremost, the entire market entry process relies on understanding and leveraging the differences of two or more market areas. Thus, the differences form the core of the empirical findings of the study. These differences are plenty, and here I highlight the most influential differences related to the themes of the study.

Perhaps one of the most obvious and quite literally the biggest difference of the areas both in terms of market for educational products and education itself, is the sheer size difference. The US educational market is highly segmented, as the market is formed by over 13 000 districts, and hundreds of schools per district. The school systems have autonomy within the districts, resulting in hundreds of different buying processes and ways to operate. This further emphasizes the challenges in penetrating the US public school system.

When we look at the K 12 education, this is a system consisting of 13,500 districts. And that is a huge amount of possible customers. And they are systems [inside the US] that are close to Canadian or European education system, and that the systems that are totally different from our system. (I. Turunen)

On the contrary, US is a unified market by language and economy. This enables the market entry to be simultaneous and rapid, as the need for localization in terms of language is not needed. Therefore, EE in the US market is often considered more viable than EE in the entire European market.

Comparing Finnish educational system to the USA educational system is a biased comparison, for multiple reasons. Beginning with the size of the market, this begs the question that European education should be compared to the US, because of the size difference. If you are pooling the entire US educational system into one, that effects the results you get from analyzing the data.

> *So different states have different systems, some of them are very high quality, like public public education is of very high quality, reaching, reaching kind of top of the world standards. (Education Counselor)*

In terms of practicalities, a key difference of the markets is the willingness to pay. In the Finnish educational market, education is seen as a commodity provided by the public system, whereas in the US, education is seen a product you purchase. Willingness to pay is thus not an issue in the US market, which increases the market potential significantly. The average expenditure and largely unified market especially in terms of language, economy and culture create the basis for US market in terms of market attractiveness.

Naturally, the private education market in the US is more than 10 times smaller than the public education market, but easier market to penetrate and succeed in. Also, the willingness to pay is especially high in the private education market when comparing it to the public education market.

> *The private private education is more common and more accepted in US overall [compared to Finland]. Then if we look at the willingness to pay, (…) there are less obstacles in us to use budgets for for new solutions. (M. Kyyrönen)*

7.4.2 Differences in education practices

As for the key education differences, the pillars of Finnish education success are built on equality by many means. The system is not aimed at producing top scorers, but instead an equal system for all students alike. The Finnish system is equal and does not have high differences in educational quality across the nation. On the opposite, the US system has high variety in quality of education among school districts. Due to the property taxation and differences in federal tax models' schools are often funded based on the average income of the nearby residents. This results in rural areas having lower resources for schools, especially compared to the high-income urban areas.

> *Equality is and remains a very, very fundamental value in the system. (…). And the education is free of charge, for for finish, and now use students all the way to higher education. And that's a very, very important principle. (Education Counselor)*

The reasons behind the educational inequality can be argued, due to the vast differences in the market, but the core principle is different. In the US system, the individualistic approach aims for the success of individual students, whereas in Finland the collective progress is the key target.

> *And so, so I think the from from looking at US perspective, we see a huge inequality in their systems like that, of course, there's heterogeneity. So different states have different systems, some of them are very high quality (…), reaching kind of top of the world standards. Some not but there there are huge inequalities in the in the system. (…) that's something where there's a huge contrast between the Finnish and the US systems. (Education Counselor)*

The US model can be seen as driving educational inequality forward, creating challenges for the entire educational system. On the contrary, this proposes a challenge for innovation to solve, perhaps through successful EE.

The aforementioned issues in the US public schooling system drive the need for private education, especially for the high income and affluent demographic of the country. Private education industry is less regulated and faster pace.

7.4.3 Differences in teacher training and professional development

Teacher training is another major difference, where in Finland the teacher profession is highly valued, comparatively well paid and universities competitive. In the US, teaching is usually seen as the second-tier option where people end up in. This tie into the role of education in society: teachers are trusted and valued members of the society in European and Finnish context, whereas in the US there is a constant lack of trust in the educational system.

> *[In Finland] we trust our teachers are well trained, and they know how to educate children. And I don't think [in] the US if you interviewed 100 people, I don't think you get more than five that said that they could trust the system in the US (M. Barratt)*

> *[Finnish teacher training is] much more selective (…). This is almost the reverse to United States teacher preparation programs that often [measure with], at least by relatively simplistic measure, you know, overall GPA, LSAT scores (…). I would say, difference wise, is the esteem with which Finnish educators are held relative to their counterparts here in the United States. You know, I think generally, teachers are viewed in a positive light, but there are an immense number of criticisms and expectations placed on US teachers from, you know, state, state legislatures from the federal government from local expectations. (P. VanFossen)*

The differences in ideological approach to education differ between Finland and US, which connects to societal trust towards education and teachers. Finnish mentality on education was summarized well by an interviewee:

> *"[In] our understanding it means that if you invest education, (…) then you can see [and expect] my welfare and prosperity" (I. Turunen)*

Studying in the US is also different in terms of expectations for the students: even from a young age, students are often required to do a lot more work and homework outside school. The schools are competitive, which is driven by standardized testing which is regular and nation-wide. This is partly related to the ideological differences between the countries: US is individualistic and highly scattered in terms of opinions, culture, politics and eventually education. Finnish market could be seen as a small state or a region sized education market in the US, and completely homogenous in terms of culture, politics, and education. The core thought behind the individualistic ideology in the US is the quest to unlock individuals' complete potential.

Finnish educational system has a lot higher focus in pedagogics instead of practicalities, and the system has been successful in terms pedagogics. However, Finnish education does only limit to pedagogical skill.

> *Obviously teaching pedagogical skill is one thing, but then allowing the teacher to actually implement that is the second step, which is actually more important because you can teach all the pedagogical skill that you want. But if they've got no opportunity to implement that, then there's no point in doing it. (M. Barratt)*

> *(…) what Finland is actually actually bringing in is more about this pedagogical approach and and teaching learning methods. And so, it doesn't matter what the learning goals actually are. But there are always these pedagogical issues which a teacher can can improve. (FCG, Tuija Lauren)*

7.4.4 Teacher autonomy as a systemic differentiator

Teacher autonomy was found to be one of the main difference-makers of the success of Finnish education. However, the Finnish education system is not the only education system with teacher autonomy, and in the target market of US, the phenomenon is also visible; while much more on the private education side, rather than the public system. The implementation of teacher autonomy has been more popular among the latest years and increasing interest has been demonstrated. As an example, by taking elements of teacher-student and teacher-administrator relationships and implementing them to the PD process can bring in new tools for creating innovative PD solutions for the US market.

> *The issue that we have is the Finnish way of looking at it is that the curriculum is a guideline, and it's a kind of it's a supportive mechanism in terms of what you should do in education. Whereas in the other marketplaces that we're talking about in the US and other westernized markets, it's actually more of the Bible of what they need to do so they follow it much more straight. (M. Barratt)*

In an interesting thought on the differences of the educational models, the differences derive from the structures of the system. As an interviewee highlighted about the economics of education in the US and in Finland.

> *If you consider places like Finland, and places like the US, the biggest difference is that over here [USA], the people in the classroom pay for the education, and [in Finland] the people outside the classroom pay for their education. (I. Ahmed)*

Because of this, the incentive structure for students changes and societal motivators, such as student debt, plays a larger role in the US educational and societal system. This further demonstrates the differences of the two systems, not only on the educational, but also societal level.

7.5 How to decrease these differences

The question about decreasing the differences of the market is vital for localization and the entire market entry process but is still multifaceted. On one hand, if you localize or decrease these differences too much, the scalability of the product takes a toll, while on the other hand, if you don't localize the product, market entry becomes increasingly difficult.

Decreasing the differences comes to reality in an abstract sense, as the US market is an old fashioned one, and unlikely to adapt to changes rapidly. I.e., an organization cannot conduct a market entry by reshaping the practicalities or the system in the US, but instead try to find aspects that can either be shaped or leveraged, such as a PD course or a PD project. Many differences are stagnant in a way that a single EE effort cannot make a difference to them: e.g., cultural differences, societal difference, or the market size.

> *So so you're not going to really change the differences, I don't think you're not (…) going to affect the US market. So basically, what you have to do is, is figure out how to go with the stream. (M. Weisburgh)*

From macro viewpoint, the US educational market in both private and public fields acknowledge their current challenges, such as inequality and lack of pedagogical PD, but are not willing to adopt new major measures to fix them. This creates a paradox in a sense of the status quo continuing but opens a possibility for EE companies to take advantage from.

Especially in the public sector, understanding the market specifics and bureaucratic is vital to succeed. As the system is more complex than the private education system, it is more difficult to decrease the differences.

> *You have to know that the US administration is quite bureaucratic, and the market regulation is underdeveloped to be honest, compared to top EU regulation. (I. Turunen)*

What this means in practice is that different districts develop their new innovations and applications of technology separately, lacking common incentives and regulations. This leads into a situation where multiple education districts fall for the same traps instead of a common ground in education development. This slows market adaptation, potential growth for the entrant and the market itself, and resonates into the size of the market. In the US, there is such a heterogenic pool of education providers both in the public and private sector, that finding one way of operating in the entire market is extremely challenging.

US system is extremely egocentric: many interviewees agreed that the attitude of Americans is that their education is sufficient, criticizing the need for Finnish education. The egocentricity can be also turned into a plus by leveraging the brand of Finnish education: by demonstrating that with Finnish PD the US educational system can be improved, the added value is demonstrated.

> *Most Americans think that America is the best. So, we're, we're, we're egocentric. So, you know, who are you to think you can come into my country and tell me what to do? I'm already the best. Go back to wherever you're from and hide that hide under your rocks and do whatever you do. (M. Weisburgh)*

7.6 Summary and further analysis of the findings

The findings of the study paint a clear picture of the current PD market in the United States, the EE procedures and contingencies needed for the market entry, as well as the policies and governmental viewpoint on the topic. This summary provides an understanding of the main findings and what they mean in practice. The meaning of the findings is further analyzed in the Conclusion with its relation to previous theories and the theoretical frameworks created earlier.

7.6.1 Current PD and EE trends from the empirical data

Currently, the Finnish EE industry is not poised for strong market pull from one sector, as their customers are highly segmented around the world. This creates an issue as EE efforts are scattered and lack scalability. The US market could provide the much-needed high market growth opportunities in a lucrative market, instead of the current internationally segmented situation. However, this market entry process and strategic shift towards the US market needs many capabilities from the EE companies.

These capabilities are not company agnostic, i.e., each company and business situation are different in terms of capabilities needed. What remains concurrent is the need for simultaneous capability development. EE companies need to learn from the market constantly and develop their market entry process during the process itself.

The US Professional Development market is clearly segmented to private and public education sector, which have vastly different abilities. According to multiple interview groups such as, the public education sector is more difficult to operate in and penetrate. Thus, private segment is more viable for the following reasons.

One of the key findings from the market entry questions was the need to communicate the added value of PD extremely well: if the teachers see causal correlations with their benefits such as salary increase or higher learning outcomes, they are likely to be interested. Providing and highlighting the added value is key for the success of the market entry process. If the PD entrant can demonstrate the added value clearly and even quantify the added value, the value proposition for partners and customers is increasingly clear. This could be done with numerical metrics, such as increased salary over the years, or higher student learning scores.

7.6.2 Professional development as a product in a market entry

Professional Development in the target market is segmented into private and public education, and PD organized either by organizations or private institutions. Before going in depth with the differences and aspects of PD in the US market, it is important to understand what the stakes are.

The Finnish PD could be pioneering in the market entry process in a sense that it could bring the pedagogical approach to the USA PD market, as the market is now focused heavily on practicalities. The interviewed education professionals agreed that there is a need for more pedagogical approach to PD, and this partial market vacuum can be leveraged in a potential market entry for Finnish EE organizations.

As for the theoretical framework of capabilities of market entry, the 'experiential and objective information' concepts come to play (Vahlne & Johanson, 1977, 2017). As presented earlier in the theoretical analysis, the attitudes and preconceptions of the market entry professionals have a direct effect on the market entry process. In other words, the managers conducting market entry processes have attitudes that effect the entry process. However, the interview data did not provide a clear answer on what is the best combination of information flow in teams. The core emphasis was that there cannot be a simple and straight-forward solution for complex dilemmas in PD education export.

Similarly, no single set of skills or capabilities was found to be the one to top them all, but instead the needed capabilities and their development was company and situation specific. The concept of simultaneous capability development can be mirrored to localization. The firm, the team and the product all need to be developed during the market entry process, and the simultaneous development of both is a contributing factor to the success of the market entry.

Despite gathering a multitude of strategies and advice for the industry players, EE companies are still left with multiple decisions to make. One of the focal decisions in terms of PD EE as a product is the choice between focusing on practicalities focused or pedagogics focused PD. First, for opting for practicalities,

the concept and product is quite simple, but the market is crowded with competitors, resulting in a difficult market to penetrate.

Secondly, for opting to go for pedagogy focused PD, the concept is more complex, but there is little to no competition. The market is still difficult to operate in, as majority of existing PD is practicalities focused, despite a market interest pedagogics PD.

7.6.3 Opportunities and challenges: private vs public market

As presented earlier in the study, there are multiple viewpoints when looking at the theoretical and empirical findings: e.g. micro vs macro, singular phenomena vs holistic approach, and theory first or phenomena first. (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). In this summary of findings, I have aimed to bring forward the most fruitful comparisons that present the novel findings in a logical and easily adaptable way.

Drawing from this, one comparison is the relation of public and private education market in the US. This shapes the entire field of education into distinctive parts and is among the biggest decision EE companies need to make during the process. The following Figure 7 below demonstrates the challenges and opportunities, and what the current stage of PD in the target market is, especially in relation to the private vs public educational fields.

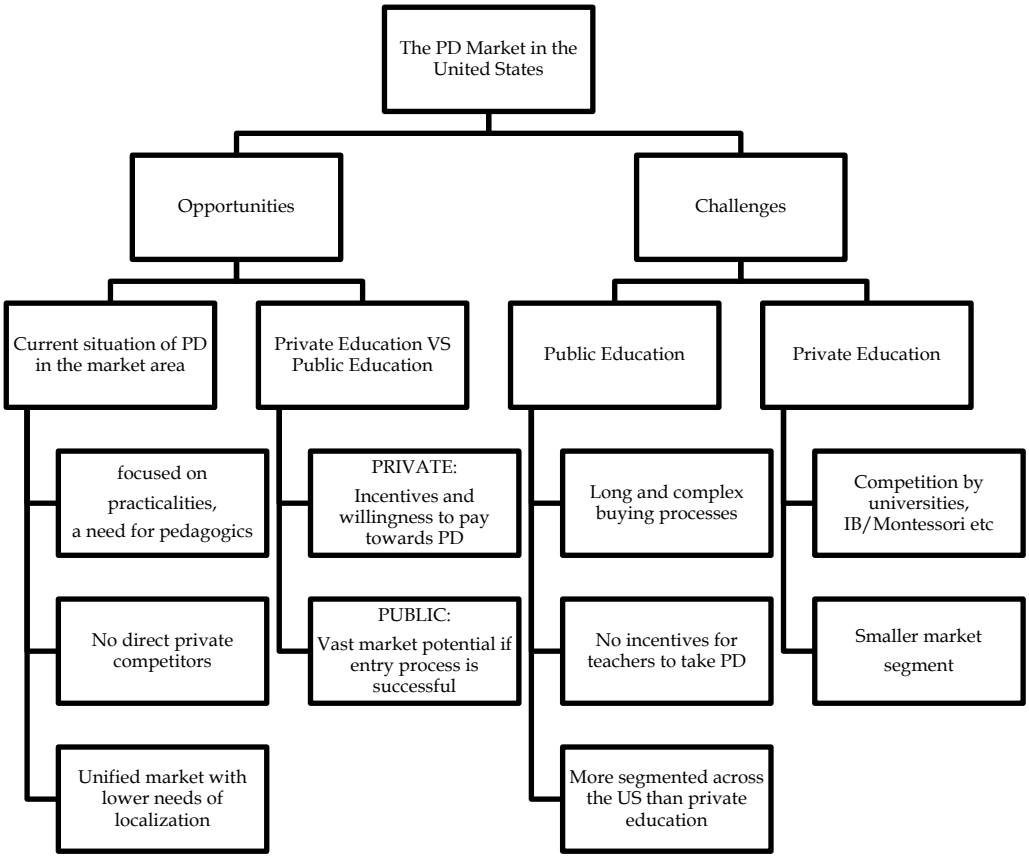

Figure 7, Framework for opportunities vs challenges in public vs private education

Despite the opportunities and challenges presented in the previous figure, there is no clear selection for companies between targeting public, private or both sectors. However, for most EE companies, the private education sector is more fruitful comparing to the public sector for three different reasons.

First, the purchasing processes of the public sector are extremely long a complex. Buying cycles can be up to a year in length, and the regulations in the industry extremely tight. Current providers are mostly public organizations and in-house professionals, making market penetration to the public sector increasingly difficult.

Second, in the private education sector, the teachers can receive compensational benefits by taking PD, leading to a more direct incentive to participate in PD. The private education teachers are also more likely to

participate and engage in PD, as they are often paying for PD themselves and thus investing into their potential career development.

Finally, the private education industry is more lucrative in terms of higher salaries for teachers, and thus higher expenditure on PD. Private education professionals are eager to develop them, as they see a direct link to better career progression and future benefit.

To sum, understanding the selection process of private vs public, and the implications it has on the business are major advantages for the companies entering the space.

7.6.4 Decreasing the differences between market areas in EE

A market entry in identical markets is simple, yet there are no actually identical markets in the real world. Naturally the EE companies conducting the market entry thus try to decrease the differences in the market itself, and in terms of the capabilities needed for the process. These differences can also be called the abilities or contingencies of the target market: by understanding these contingencies, market entry can be better planned and developed.

A common question regarding the market differences echoed along the extensive interview process: do we need to decrease these differences after all?

The empirical data suggested two responses: one that was clearly stating to decrease them as much as possible, and one arguing that they even *can't be* decreased. In Figure 8 the interplay between decreasing and not decreasing market differences is at focus. This question has different effects to companies in different stages in the market entry process, while the Figure gives a tool for analyzing the best option for market entry and weighing in options of the company.

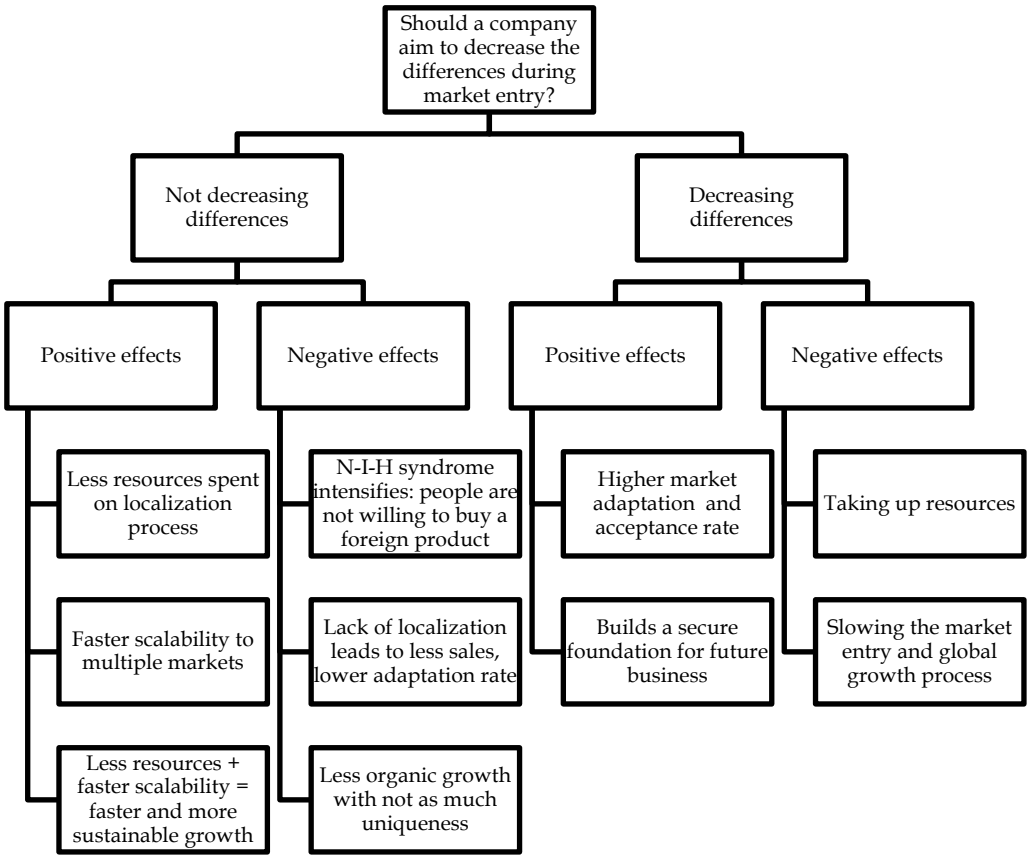

Figure 8. Framework of decreasing differences

The question of how much should a company localize or try to decrease the differences of the market area is heavily dependent on the company and industry. In terms of Professional Development, localization is extremely important as the PD practices change around the world quite heavily. However, in terms of educational technology companies conducting PD, the situation is not as clear as tech is more scalable than traditional professional services.

The size of the market area in question is another variable. Decreasing the market differences works best in smaller market areas, where localization costs would exceed the potential profits of the market. However, in the US market area this is not the case, as most states share similar cultural background in terms language. In other words, in small markets the potential is also small, and in larger markets localization is more vital.

7.7 Comparing the main differences to theoretical discourse

The key differences between the market entry theories and empirical data are the following three: lack of focus on capability development, difficulty of applying general theories to EE and multimodality of a PD EE market entry.

First, lack of focus on capability development was demonstrated especially in the empirical data and contradicted with the theoretical review. Reasons for this can be in the interviewee selection, which was focused on the EE and PD industry players and C-level personnel, and not on development managers, HR staff or development researchers. Ultimately, it is somewhat ironic, that professional development experts did not acknowledge capability development as a major theme in PD education export.

Second, the difficulty of applying general market entry theories is presented by the inapplicability of theories to EE phenomenon, listed above. Most of the theories are partly applicable, and this study draws the most applicable attributes from them to reach an understanding of their relation to EE. This even further calls the need for novel theoretical frameworks and ways to portray EE as an academic action.

Third, the PD EE market entry is a highly complex and multimodal action, that can be portrayed from an academic viewpoint with these generated frameworks and theories. However, due to its complexity, it is vital to understand that not all frameworks used are applicable to all use cases, and instead give an idea of the industry and market entry processes, to ease future entries.

8 CONCLUSIONS

Existing business and education literature lack the viewpoints on education export to the United States market area, and the viewpoint of professional development as the focal point in that education export. This study takes these unprecedented viewpoints to an academic context, using comprehensive theoretical literature review, and a set of 22 semi-structured interviews to get a complete understanding of the topics. The well aligned selection of interviewees built both a theoretical and a practical foundation for a better understanding of the topics of PD EE in the US market, and the market entry process to make PD EE work in practice. Eventually, the previously presented theoretical and empirical findings are finally analyzed and compared in this conclusion, ending in an understanding of what these mean from the managerial and academic future viewpoint.

Answers to the research questions are presented through two themes: **theoretical implications of market entry,** and **theoretical implications of EE and PD**. The first of these segments answer the first research question: **"What are the contingencies of a market entry for educational services to the American market?"**. The second segment provides an answer for the second research question: **"What characteristics does education and professional development as a service, or a product bring to the market entry processes?"**.

The answers for these research questions are multifaceted and intricate but still form an understanding of the topics related to questions. Both research questions are aligned, making both answers partially cover both questions. However, the second research question is observed from the viewpoint of educational system and market area differences between the home market and the target market of US.

The following chapters give a comprehensive perspective through theoretical implications on combinations of theory and empirical findings, leading up to managerial implications.

8.1 Theoretical implications in market entry

In this chapter, I analyze the relationship of the findings and the theoretical framework created earlier. The theoretical relationships are presented thematically, and the challenges with matching the theories to the empirical data are present, as the existing theory and frameworks are not applicable directly. These challenges are natural in a pioneering study forging novel frameworks and matching two academic disciplines (Creswell, 2014; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

For the comparison of this study to previous studies in related fields, it is important to understand the focus of this study. It is not merely in the field of market entry academia, nor in EE, or PD academia, but instead combining the three in an unprecedented way.

8.1.1 Capabilities development in theory vs empirical data

Market entry theories observe the process of entering a new market from a business academics viewpoint. In many of these theories, the role of capabilities and simultaneous capability development was noted to be one of the main keys to success in a market entry, but the same phenomenon was *not* present in the empirical data. The empirical data did not find simultaneous capability development to be a variable in interviewees experiences of market entry processes, thus disagreeing with the theoretical framework (Zachary et al., 2015). Instead, the empirical data focused on pinpointing the different capabilities and their role, disregarding the importance of capability development.

The empirical data did agree that a market entry process requires capabilities, but no common set of capabilities in a practical sense was found, but instead the overarching understanding of the market, customer and purchase process was highlighted. From a business theory viewpoint, these are basic market entry capabilities and often disregarded in business theory (Zachary et al., 2015). In other words, the empirical data found that it does not matter how you gain and develop your capabilities, but instead what capabilities you have.

8.1.2 Market entry theories: how to decrease the market differences?

Many of the market entry models are based on the phenomenon of decreasing the psychic distance or understanding the market better, which was highlighted also in the empirical data (e.g., Vahlne & Johanson, 1977, 2017). The focus of the empirical data was especially on the market differences, and how to decrease them. As a reference, the Uppsala model is looking at the psychic difference between markets, which is naturally dependent on the industry in question (Vahlne & Johanson, 1977, 2017). In this study, the details and advice on decreasing the differences in the PD EE industry were found, so the original theory was further specified with the latest findings.

The role of the created theoretical framework and the findings from the interview data are coherent: in terms of the target market contingencies, both theoretical framework and empirical data agree that the entering firm should be able to adapt to market differences (Vahlne & Johanson, 1977, 2017). This adaptation process was most seen as localization, where there was a need to balance between too much localization and not enough scalability, and too little localization and not enough market interest.

8.1.3 Market entry theories in relation to empirical data

For other market entry theories, such as Agarwal & Ramaswami (1992) theory about the selection of the entry method, were investigated and not found completely applicable to EE, as education as a product is such an abstract concept and not an industry selling more traditional goods but instead services and education as a product. The original theory observes different advantages that help with the selection process, whereas with the empirical data showed more concrete conditionals that effect the entry mode selection process (Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1992).

As an example, EE companies with more ‘startup’ capabilities are more likely to succeed with a new venture in the market, whereas established EE

players especially backed by universities and institutions are more likely to succeed with established partners, such as US universities.

For the discussion amongst the role of presence during market entry, the interview data unanimously found that a successful market would be increasingly difficult from a mere online presence, despite the research finding it to be a viable option for entering novel markets. Thus, physical presence in the target market was seen as a crucial tool for market entry (Andersen, 1997).

The market entry theories about attitudes and their use for the benefit of entering a new market try to distinguish between experiential and objective information gathering (Calof & Beamish, 1995; Vahlne & Johanson, 1977). However, the empirical data did not find concrete benefit of either mode, stating that it is vital to have capabilities for market entry, but the method of gathering these capabilities is not as relevant.

The Andersen (1997) model of observing market entry processes categorizes and can be used to reflect to the empirical findings of PD EE: the most findings align best with the eclectic framework from the Table 1 in the theory segment (Andersen, 1997). Explanatory dimensions such as locational and internalization advantages are directly correlated to the emerging themes of localization and the need for capabilities in the market entry process (Andersen, 1997). Thus, the use of eclectic model can be justified with an additional of risk vs growth analysis from the entry mode as a chain of establishment model. Finally, this forms the new theoretical framework of Andersen (1997) earlier model, to further analyze and understand the topic of PD EE.

Buckley & Casson (1998) observe market entry process as a complex phenomenon executed with multiple simultaneous strategies and methods. The core idea is that any firm needs to learn and develop capabilities while they are entering a new market, which was heavily highlighted in the empirical data: the need for 'doing your homework', learning constantly and being open to adapt your processes was imminent (Buckley & Casson, 1998).

Both Buckley & Casson (1998), and Elia et al. (2019) look at market in relation to previous actions of the company in the home market area, which ties

directly to the market differences and decreasing them. The market imperfections which create conditions for the market entry success determine the challenges the company faces in EE process (Elia et al., 2019). However, the empirical data demonstrates that these imperfections are complex and hard to analyze due to the heterogeneity of the US education market both in private and public fields.

This imperfection and challenge of applying the existing market entry frameworks to actual industry applications brings the criticism of Shave (2013) to play. These theories are not always applicable, and often describe same phenomenon in unnecessarily complex ways (Shaver, 2013). On the contrary, these market entry theories are the best theoretical frameworks to observe complex business processes, and better than the alternatives of not using theoretical frameworks at all, or always using tailored frameworks, leading to generalizability (Creswell, 2014; Mahoney & Goertz, 2006).

8.2 Theoretical implications in EE and PD

In this chapter, I observe the role of EE and PD in theory and empirical data. While both are conducted differently in nearly all market areas, the market area of the US is highly heterogenic in terms of different school districts and areas. This demonstrates the need to understand market differences and decrease them.

This can be done by altering and effecting education as a product, e.g., developing a product that best fits the market, as well as by developing capabilities, e.g., hiring new team members, partnering, or influencing policies.

An example of decreasing market differences in PD market is the case of focusing PD efforts. The current PD is focused on practicalities more so than pedagogics, and both the empirical interview data and the theoretical literature review highlight the need for the shift towards pedagogical approach.

Conclusively, the interplay between literature and theory is observed from EE theory viewpoint, practicalities/pedagogics viewpoint, and through the adapted framework for PD as a product.

8.2.1 Education export theories for professional development

In previous academic EE literature, the focus is often on the basic processes of exporting education, more so in niche use cases such as schools and university degrees, but not so in professional development. This is where international professional development literature comes to play to further understand the interplay between the two.

Education export theories match the needed theoretical understanding of the process of exporting PD in this study, and thus were used as the core theoretical foundation. However, as the framework of EE is simplistic, all the theoretical findings of the study focused on deeper and more complex phenomena than educational export is. Still, it is vital to understand how EE works and what are the drivers of EE on a global scale.

Professional Development is seen in educational theory as either a holistic pedagogical concept related to continuous learning, or a singular learning event related to practicalities (Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Webster-Wright, 2009). As an example, holistic PD can be a learning process lasting a year, whereas singular event can be a single afternoon on the topic of learning to use an IT-tool.

For this study, I first chose to observe PD from a holistic viewpoint in terms of the theoretical framework. However, after conducting the findings from the empirical data, PD was determined to be more of a singular product, especially in the current state of PD in the US market. This does not change the view of PD in education literature, but instead provides a transparent and simple understanding for PD as a product in market entry theories.

The empirical data confirms the previous understanding through the theory about the model of EE in the US market area, framework originally presented by Maringe et al. (2013). The model is most often the commercial-value driven, but partially touches also the curriculum-value driven model, from the pedagogic-focused PD viewpoint (Maringe et al., 2013). This begs the question of a hidden need for pedagogic focused professional development in the US market area.

8.2.2 Focus on practicalities and pedagogics in PD

The empirical trend of PD focusing more and more on practicalities and being less interesting for teachers was not present in the original theoretical findings of the US PD system (Wei et al., 2010). This can be due to reports not reaching the most current stage of the situation, and the fact that the report is more than a decade old (Wei et al., 2010). The lack of current PD reporting in the US target market also highlights the importance of high-quality empirical data this study produced.

Nearly unanimously the target market professionals agreed that the need for pedagogic focused PD is increasing, but the solutions for the market penetration are still lacking. The teachers need just basic practicalities PD in both private and public sector, and that industry is nonetheless lacking resources for taking the next step. The issue with industry is the structure of the current situation with PD, but the underlying beacon of hope is the pro-pedagogic attitude of the field.

Realistically, the market entry for pedagogic focused PD in the US market area is extremely difficult with current means, due to the previously mentioned reasons. This situation calls for new innovative ways of conducting PD EE and reinventing the current models of PD in the US market. From the advice given by the interviewees, that could be approaching the market through partnerships with individuals and taking a grassroots level approach instead of the traditional partnerships with large organizations (Wei et al., 2010).

Brand of Finnish education was highlighted to be a major difference maker in EE already in the theoretical review (Kupiainen et al., 2009; Suomi, 2014). The empirical findings confirmed this, with all target market professionals recognizing the reputation of Finnish education as the 'gold standard'. Thus, the role of brand and trust in education is meaningful especially with EE: with a highly touted educational brand, the EE companies can overcome the effect of the N-I-H syndrome, as presumed from the theoretical review.

8.2.3 PD as an EE product – presenting the adapted framework

The empirical data calls for the previously formed framework in Figure 4 to be updated. First, the new circle of current PD market emphasizes the empirical finding of the state of the current market: there is little to no competition in the pedagogics focused PD especially in terms of other educational companies. Only competitors are institutions which mainly act in the public sector through partnership.

Second, the 'Choosing between public vs private' is related to education being a commodity, as in private sector, education is viewed more as a *specialized subjective good* (Cambridge, 2002) . Multiple ways of entering the market are also related to this, as the market entry processes highly vary between public and private markets.

Third, finding the product-market-fit is a next step for understanding the dimensions of PD as a product: in finding the fit, it is vital to have clearly defined product as well as chosen the market entry method. This circle is not connected to previous circles as it is a separate phenomenon occurring partly individually and conditionally in relation to the previous dimensions.

Lastly, building brand is found to be one of the central actions for finding the product-market-fit, and naturally building on the dependency on the brand and image of education. This brand is built through implementing the most functional parts of Finnish education into the PD EE product. In practice, this means that by taking the parts of Finnish education most crucial for the brand has a positive effect on the PD product-market-fit.

Figure 9. PD as a product in EE.

Adapted from Figure 4 with orange colored and dashed lines representing the changes to the original figure.

8.2.4 Four dimensions – presenting the adapted framework

Upon reflecting the Figure 5 framework of four elements' effect on the PD EE market entry to the empirical findings, there are both commonalities and differences. Theoretical base focused heavily on capability development and needed capabilities as a core for conducting a successful market entry, but the empirical data saw existing capabilities and leveraging them as a more meaningful avenue of market entry.

In Figure 10, the Figure 5 is adapted with green and red colored text, presenting the commonalities of empirical data with green text, and the differences with red text. This framework forms an understanding of what parts of the previous framework correlate with the empirical findings, thus

highlighting the important parts of the study in green. Italic red text demonstrates the biggest difference between theory and empirical data, and bolded green text the adapted and highest correlation between theory and data. Black text is neutrally presented in theory and empirical data.

Bolded green text is modified from Figure 5 with more applicable details of the dimensions. PD as a product figure is emphasized with the findings of the previous Figure 9, and the experiential capabilities are highlighted in the needed capabilities both in theory and empirical data. For the most important differences, capability development was not seen as a core piece of the framework, as discussed in the Chapter 7.7 in Findings.

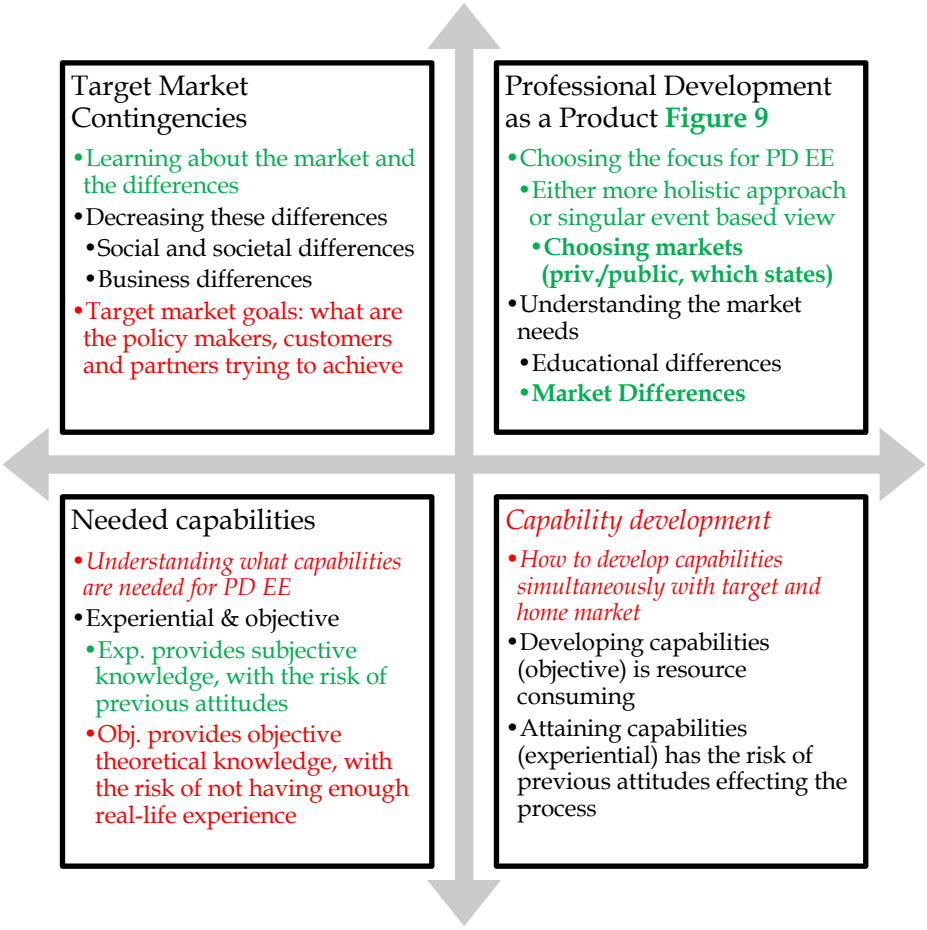

Figure 10. PD EE Market Entry. Adapted from Figure 5 with red text (least applicable) and green text (most applicable) based on empirical data. *Italic* and **bolded** text signal emphasized effect.

8.3 Managerial implications

The managerial implications of the study can be categorized into two. First, the practical roadmap for the market entry process, which consists of concrete means and strategic suggestions for the market entry process for the firm, is provided exclusively and confidentially to the partnering company. Reasons for this are trifold: A, practical suggestions are always company specific, and thus are applicable only for one company at the time, B, as the strategy and suggestions are company specific, they don't provide value for other companies, and C, the strategy contains trade secrets and thus is not public information.

Secondly, the managerial implications of the study are both abstract and practical for the common knowledge. The latter is demonstrated by the following Figure 11, which describes the practical applications for the results of the study: by leveraging the developed three step framework, EE companies can conduct the named actions to reach the end goal of a successful market entry. These actions are unique to each company, but these steps are the profound key to begin the successful EE market entry process.

8.3.1 Practical application framework

This framework highlights the three steps to implement the findings and conclusions of the study into the EE company's market entry process. The three steps can be seen as concrete tools that EE companies can leverage during their market entry process for the optimal results. These are applicable to all companies looking to conduct a market entry process and provide a framework of structuring market entry activities.

In practice, this framework is the basis of strategy formation for EE companies looking at the US market area. For most benefit for the company in question, this framework can be combined with other market entry frameworks to generate the best results.

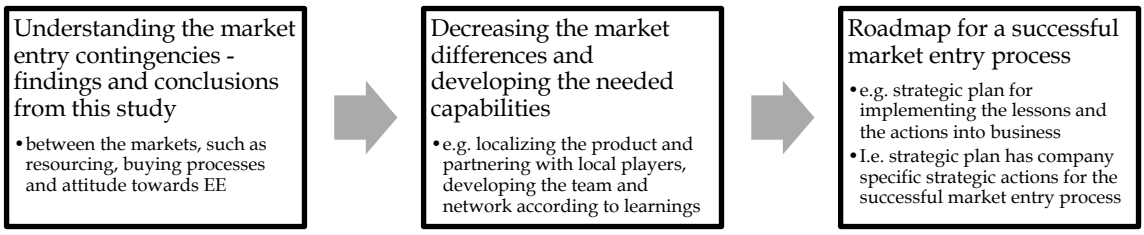

Figure 11. Practical application process framework

In this framework, the three steps identify the measures to form a company specific strategy for each firm intending to use the framework: first, the understanding of the market is a strategic push resulting in information to conduct the second phase. In the second phase, the EE company needs to understand the market differences and decrease them. This can be done with localization of the product, partnering, or effecting the policies in the market areas. Lastly, the strategic and more practical roadmap can be created with all previous information in mind. In this strategic plan more concrete steps from utilization of resources to staffing are taken into consideration and the actual EE market entry process can begin.

8.3.2 Macro level implications

As above managerial implications demonstrated first how companies aiming for a new market entry can use this study as a basis for their strategy creation, and second how to get the theoretical and academic reasoning as the core structure for their entry actions, the following macro level implications will look at the effects of the study from a broader viewpoint. Macro level implications are categorized to societal and company specific dimensions.

First, for the societal and governmental level, the study will accelerate and deepen the transatlantic relations between the US and Finland, especially focusing on building tools for educational export between the countries. This has a direct effect on economic stability and growth, positively boosting Finnish economy with international trade.

In terms of economic implications, the goal of providing tools to boost Finnish EE on economy level has been already achieved, but the results on a macro level in terms of economy and export are seen in the years to come. These results can eventually be even seen in ways that the current theoretical base nor the empirical data can so far demonstrate, which speaks for the constant adaptation of the industry and the quick pace of changes during the years.

For the company dimension, the same fast pace of the industry is imminent, indicating the need for current information about the market and industry. Understanding the contingencies of the market and the needed capabilities enables future EE companies to begin their PD market entry processes to US more confidently. One of the challenges the study provides an answer is the role of PD as an EE product, providing insights to the practicalities of the industry: the study will help industry professionals as a handbook for strategy creation in terms of the novel area and a new market.

All these impacts help not only to generate more and better educational export for Finland, leading to a macro-level effect on the Finnish economy, but also increase competence and knowledge of professionals, promoting the Finnish educational professionality to a global scale.

One way to extend and speed up these effects is to take proactive measures to help PD EE be more successful. As an example, new higher education programs focused on developing professionals and capabilities to support international export of education. Currently business professionals lack industry specific information of education, and education professionals lack the needed business skills. A new higher education program combining the two fields could be the needed societal support to take Finnish EE to the next level, and perhaps this study is the spark to the creation of a new academic discipline.

8.4 Limitations and suggestions for future research

8.4.1 Limitations of the study

The study has multiple limitations. First, the use of qualitative research method forced the selection process of suitable industry professionals, policy makers and experts. Majority of these individuals were of Finnish heritage, resulting in a geographical limitation. The results of the study cannot be generalized to all education export companies across the world, but instead provide insights from Finnish standpoint.

The selection of interviewees was based around three main categories: policy makers, industry professionals and potential end customers. Despite gaining thorough data through the interview process, the argument for a different segmentation of interviewees can be made.

Second, the industry specific limitation was guided for professional development education export, which is only a small part of EE as an industry. Finnish PD EE has been limited and even non-existent to certain market areas, including the US market, resulting in a lack of experiential data from the market entry process. In other words, the research did not manage to attain interviews from previous cases of market entry for PD services, disregarding the chance of there being none.

Third, the bias of the interviewees being education and business professionals needs to be accounted for. There is a possibility, that acting industry professionals have biased opinion towards the opportunities of educational export, despite the opinions presented in the study.

Lastly, the study was conducted by a single researcher, risking the integrity due to researcher bias. Despite the extensive interviewing background, and background both from education and business fields, there is a possibility of unconscious bias occurring in the interviews.

8.4.2 Suggestions for future research

As Bruneel & De Cock (2016) find in their study, the market entry literature is far from complete and needs further classifications and narrowing down separate processes. This study provides one scope of looking at a PD services and EE viewpoint in a market entry context, offering the needed specificity for the field (Bruneel & De Cock, 2016).

This study provided a needed deep dive on theories of EE, PD, and market entry, and combined the three in this case. This combination has never been leveraged in this context, thus opening a new avenue for further research. This study still leaves a multitude of theories untouched. This provides further research opportunities via expanding the theoretical reach to new market entry and business theories, such as more niche market entry models and modes, or focusing on another branch of EE, such as public music education. In terms of education research, the findings of the study can be observed from the viewpoint of different subjects, and the future research questions should be formed around new subject themes, such as music education and music education PD.

For future research, this study constructs a foundation to base new theoretical frameworks on, especially looking at Figures 5 and 9, highlighting the contingencies of the PD EE market entry processes. This foundation can be later adapted, or the focus point changed to a certain part of the framework. E.g., a later study can focus on looking at the market differences of public education in the US market area, shifting the view from PD favoring the private education sector to the general education in the public sector.

While this study provides firstly an overview on, secondly a practical tool for, and finally a core understanding of the market for companies considering PD EE in the US market area, this is a generalist study forging a combination on two disciplines. I believe that this study will be seen as a first step of a new discipline of studies in the future and will motivate scholars and researchers to dig deep into education export, professional development, and market entry theories, and at best, combine all three.

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10 APPENDIXES

10.1 APPENDIX: List of acronyms

Theme	Acronym	Meaning
Education		
	CPL	Continuous Professional Learning
	CPD	Continuous Professional Development
	EdTech	Education technology industry, mainly focused on organizations and startups providing technological solutions for the field of education.
	EE	Education Export
	PD	Professional Development
	PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment, international ranking for educational systems.
Business		
	FMA	First Mover Advantage, the advantage a firm gets when they move into a new market as the first among their competitors
	N-I-H	Not invented here syndrome: i.e., upon market entry, a foreign product might face negative response because of its origin.
	Market Entry	Process of entering a new market area
Common		
	OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, international organization to boost development

10.2 APPENDIX: Interview guide 1

Interview questions for the **industry experts and policy makers.**

Semi-structured interview questions with subject experts

Date:
Interviewee:

1. GDPR Agreement
2. Introduction
    a. Organization
    b. Title
    c. What is your short professional background?
3. What are the key differences between the US and Finnish educational systems, and educational markets?
    a. How can we decrease these differences between the target country and the country of origin, or do they need to be decreased at all?
        i. How should localization of the product be considered?
4. Describe a successful market entry for education into the US market area:
    a. What are the factors to consider when entering the US market area?
5. What kind of capabilities should an EE company have during a market entry process, and how should they be developed?
    a. Describe the effect of partnership during the market entry process.
    b. In what ways do you think previous experience affect the market entry process?
6. What are the key characteristics of education as a product: in other words, what makes education a successful product?
    a. What characteristics does PD bring to the EE processes?
7. What is your advice for an EE company entering the US market area?
    a. What things to do and what not to do?

10.3 APPENDIX: Interview guide 2

Interview questions for the **target market professionals.**

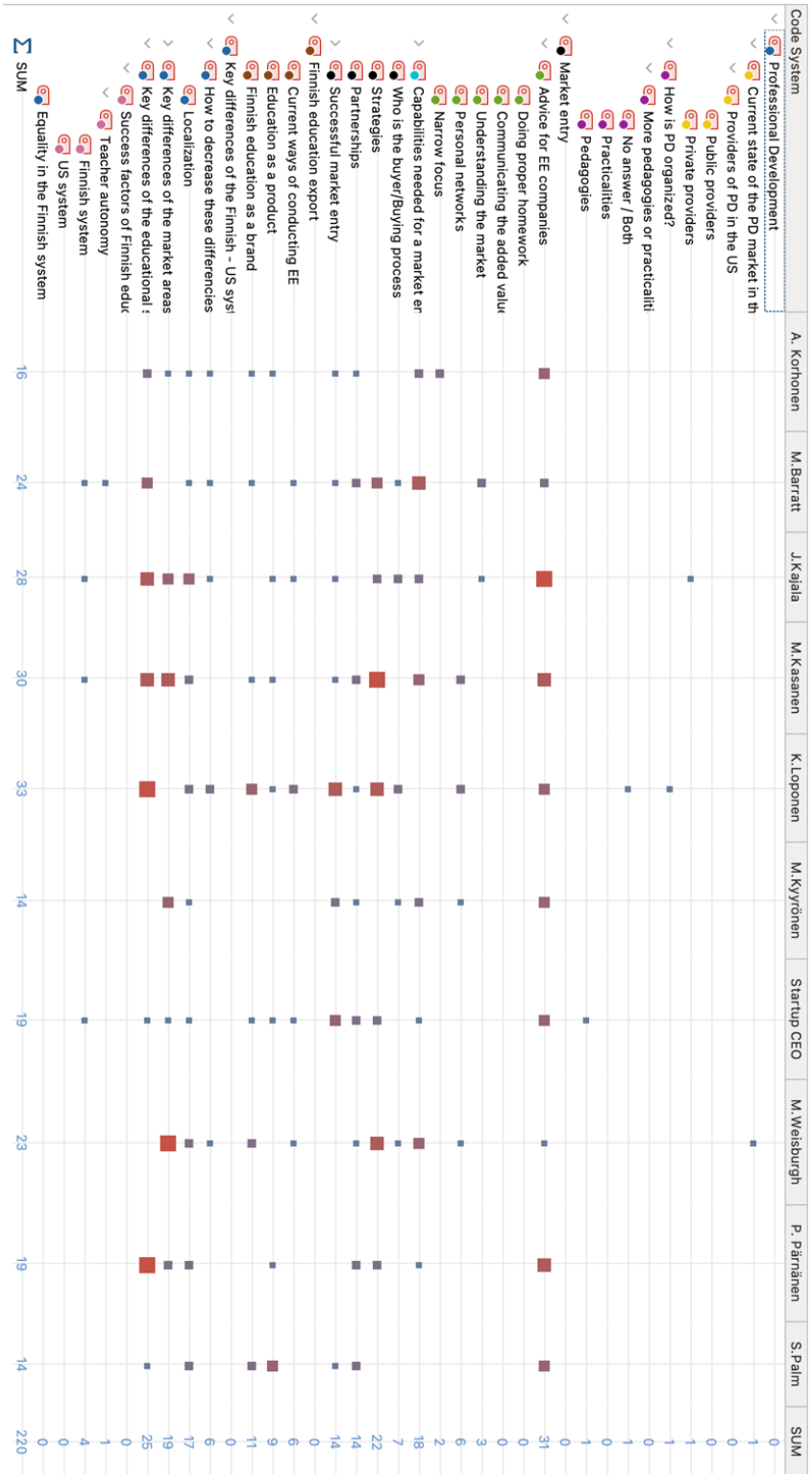
Semi-structured interview questions with subject experts

Date:
Interviewee:

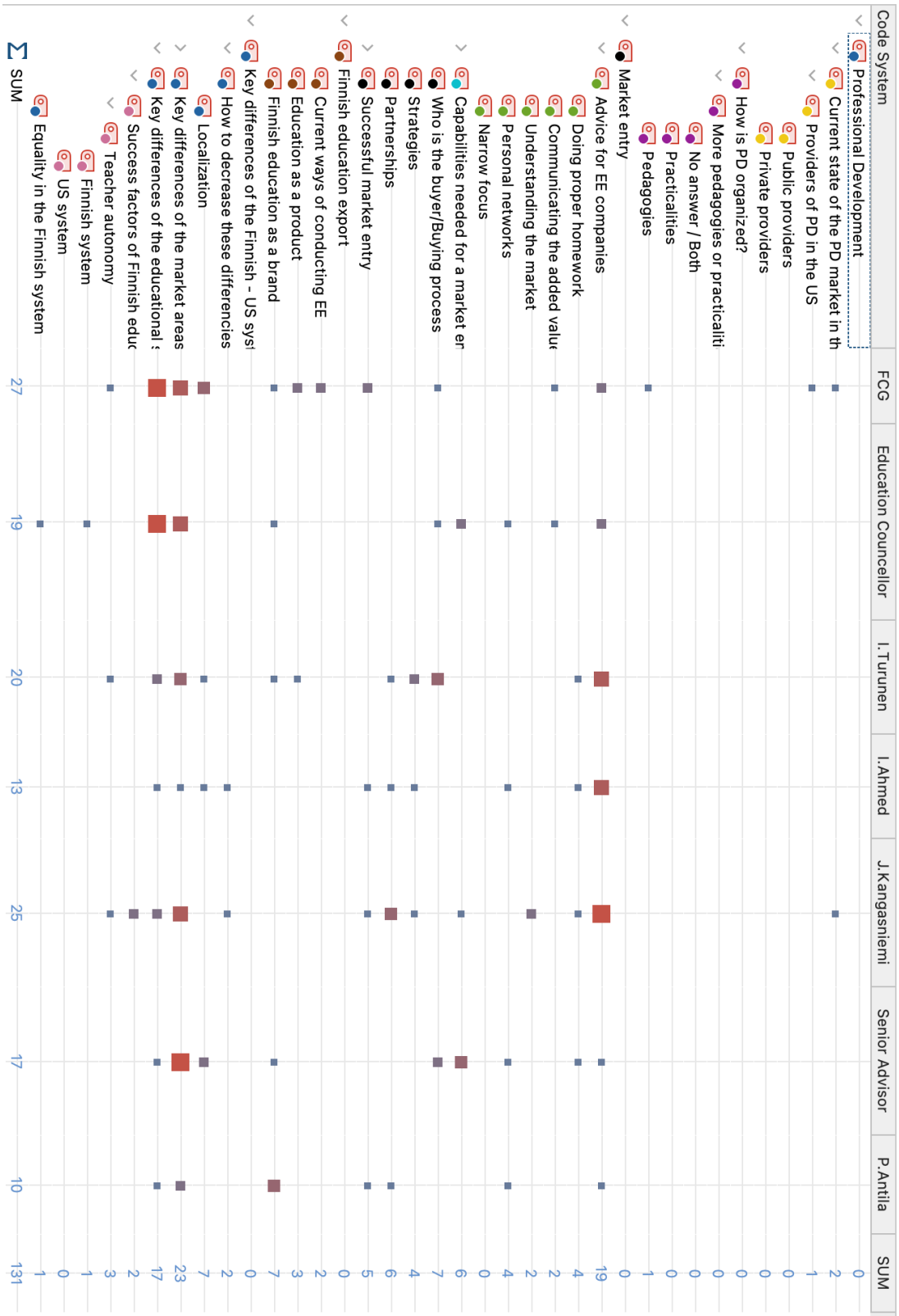
1. GDPR Agreement
2. Introduction
    a. Organization
    b. Title
    c. What is your short professional background?
3. Professional Development: Have you participated in PD previously?
    a. Where do you get PD?
    b. How do you purchase/take part PD?
    c. Who is paying for PD? Could/would you pay for PD?
4. What is the status of the current PD market in the US?
    a. What kind of PD? Is PD/should it be more about practicalities or overall pedagogy instead?
    b. What are the most recent trends of US PD market?
5. What is your advice for an EE company entering the US market area?
    a. What things to do and what not to do?

10.4 APPENDIX: Complete code system and frequency

10.5 APPENDIX: Code system & freq.: EE industry professionals



10.6 APPENDIX: Code system and freq.: Education policy makers



10.7 APPENDIX: Code system and freq.: Target market professionals