

BUILDING CAREERS ABROAD: EMPLOYABILITY PERCEPTIONS AND CAPITAL FORMATION OF INTERNATIONAL GRADUATES IN FINLAND

**University of Jyväskylä
School of Business and Economics**

Master's Thesis

2024

**Author: Paige Shannon
Subject: International Business and Entrepreneurship
Supervisor: Muhammad Sufyan**



**JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ**

ABSTRACT

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Author Paige Shannon | |
| Title Building careers abroad: Employability perceptions and capital formation of international graduates in Finland | |
| Subject International Business and Entrepreneurship | Type of work Master's Thesis |
| Date 17.5.2024 | Number of pages 84 + 2 |
| Abstract <p>International graduate employability is a highly discussed topic as more people become internationally educated. Theoretically, the employability perspective of international graduates remains relatively unexplored. To answer calls for additional international graduate employability research and to extend Bourdieu's theory of capital, capital building and employability of international graduates is studied through the Finnish context using the research question: "How is capital being formed throughout the duration of international graduates' host country degrees and how does this impact employability in Finland?" This empirical context is of interest because in Finland, there is a need for international graduates to continue working in the country after graduation. Therefore, there is a theoretical and empirical need to understand how international graduates build capital throughout their degrees to aid in their employability.</p> <p>Using 8 semi-structured interviews, the interaction between employability and capital building is studied. Three perceptions of employability in Finland are identified, including a lack of trust in the job market, network-driven hiring, and underemployability. Findings also show that cultural and social capital are the main types of capital built by international graduates. To build capital, international graduates use four different mechanisms - cultural integration, building a network, developing job-related competencies, and exerting intentional efforts - throughout the duration of their degrees. As a result of these findings, a new framework detailing international graduate capital building and perceptions of employability in Finland is proposed, and practical implications are discussed to share insights for solutions regarding international graduate employability in Finland.</p> | |
| Keywords: Employability, international graduates, skilled migrants, capital building, cultural capital, social capital, economic capital, symbolic capital | |
| Place of storage Jyväskylä University Library | |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| ABSTRACT | 2 |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | 4 |
| LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES | 6 |
| 1 INTRODUCTION | 7 |
| 1.1 Research Gap | 8 |
| 1.2 Context and Relevancy | 9 |
| 1.3 Study Contributions | 10 |
| 1.4 Thesis Structure | 11 |
| 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK | 12 |
| 2.1 Employability | 12 |
| 2.1.1 Definition | 12 |
| 2.1.2 Determinants of Employability | 13 |
| 2.1.3 Human and Social Capital | 14 |
| 2.1.4 Synthesis | 14 |
| 2.2 Employability in the Context of International Graduates | 15 |
| 2.2.1 International Graduates | 15 |
| 2.2.2 Underemployability | 16 |
| 2.2.3 International Graduate Workforce Integration | 17 |
| 2.2.4 Skilled Migrant Capital Building | 17 |
| 2.2.5 Synthesis | 18 |
| 2.3 Bourdieu’s Theory of Capital | 19 |
| 2.3.1 Cultural Capital | 20 |
| 2.3.2 Social Capital | 21 |
| 2.3.3 Economic Capital | 22 |
| 2.3.4 Symbolic Capital | 23 |
| 2.3.5 Synthesis | 23 |
| 2.4 Employability Through the Lens of Bourdieu’s Theory of Capital ... | 24 |
| 2.4.1 The “What” | 24 |
| 2.4.2 The “How” | 25 |
| 2.4.3 The “When and Where” | 25 |
| 2.4.4 Synthesis and Current Model Introduction | 25 |
| 3 DATA AND METHODOLOGY | 27 |
| 3.1 Qualitative Research | 27 |
| 3.1.1 Interpretive Qualitative Research | 28 |
| 3.1.2 Case Study Approach | 29 |

| | | |
|-------|--|----|
| 3.1.3 | Interviews | 29 |
| 3.2 | Study Method & Data Collection..... | 30 |
| 3.2.1 | Participant Criteria | 30 |
| 3.2.2 | Interview Guide and Structure..... | 31 |
| 3.3 | Data Analysis..... | 33 |
| 4 | RESULTS AND FINDINGS | 34 |
| 4.1 | Perceptions of Employability | 35 |
| 4.1.1 | Lack of Trust in the Job Market..... | 38 |
| 4.1.2 | Network-Driven Hiring..... | 42 |
| 4.1.3 | Underemployability | 44 |
| 4.2 | Types of Capital..... | 47 |
| 4.2.1 | Cultural Capital | 49 |
| 4.2.2 | Social Capital..... | 50 |
| 4.3 | Capital Building Mechanisms | 51 |
| 4.3.1 | Cultural Integration | 57 |
| 4.3.2 | Building a Network..... | 58 |
| 4.3.3 | Developing Job-Related Competencies..... | 60 |
| 4.3.4 | Exerting Intentional Efforts..... | 62 |
| 5 | DISCUSSION..... | 65 |
| 5.1 | Theoretical Implications..... | 65 |
| 5.2 | Practical Implications | 69 |
| 5.3 | Limitations | 71 |
| 5.4 | Additional Suggestions for Future Research | 73 |
| 5.5 | Conclusion..... | 74 |
| | REFERENCES..... | 76 |
| | APPENDIX A..... | 85 |

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLES

| | | |
|---------|--|----|
| TABLE 1 | <i>Participant Interview Profile</i> | 32 |
| TABLE 2 | <i>Perceptions of Employability</i> | 35 |
| TABLE 3 | <i>Types of Capital</i> | 47 |
| TABLE 4 | <i>Participant Capital Building Activities</i> | 52 |
| TABLE 5 | <i>Capital Building Mechanisms</i> | 52 |

FIGURES

| | | |
|----------|--|----|
| FIGURE 1 | <i>Bourdieu's Forms of Capital</i> | 19 |
| FIGURE 2 | <i>"What, How, When & Where" Model</i> | 24 |
| FIGURE 3 | <i>Current Employability and Capital Building Framework</i> | 26 |
| FIGURE 4 | <i>Data Structure</i> | 34 |
| FIGURE 5 | <i>International Graduate Capital Building and Perceptions of Employability in Finland Framework</i> | 65 |

1 INTRODUCTION

As the world becomes more global, the discussion surrounding international graduate employability becomes increasingly important. The number of international students has been on the rise, with OECD (2022) reporting a 70% increase of international students between the years 2000-2021. In Finland alone, the number of international students increased 54% in one year, from 4,595 study residence permits granted in 2021 to 7,060 in 2022 (Migri, 2022). However, these international students will not stay students for long, as after graduation they will transition to international graduates and will become available for employment. According to OECD (2022), international students are regarded as a group of “pre-integrated” migrants due to their host country degrees and familiarity with the host country. Due to this, this group becomes a valuable talent pool for host countries to retain and employ following their graduation as they are viewed as “ideal immigrant candidates” (Han et al., 2022, p.163) by host countries. For example, in research regarding international graduate retention in Canada (Esses et al., 2018), it is noted that Canada views international students as the “ideal source of skilled immigrants” (p.2) and has made positive policy changes in order to reflect this view. However, completing a degree in a host country does not automatically guarantee employability in a host country, as there are many other factors at play which influence an international graduate’s employability.

Employability is both an individual responsibility (Fugate et al., 2004; Hillage & Pollard 1998) while also reliant on external market demands (Forrier & Sels, 2003; Berntson et al., 2006). In the skilled migrant context, barriers to employability have been researched including liability of foreignness (Fang et al., 2013), skill paradox between skilled migrants and locals (Dietz et al., 2015), and network building (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011). For international graduates in particular, employability outcomes are impacted at micro, meso (organizational), and macro levels (Han et al., 2022). What contributes to employability has been highly studied and has resulted in employability frameworks

(Hillage and Pollard, 1998; Fugate et al., 2004; Sullivan and Al Ariss, 2019). In these frameworks, the concepts of human and social capital are included in two models (Fugate et al., 2004; Sullivan and Al Ariss, 2019) while the concepts of assets and deployment are presented by Hillage and Pollard (1998). To extend on these concepts, Al Ariss and Syed (2011) studied capital building of skilled migrants through Bourdieu's theory of capital, thus expanding on skilled migrant capital research which had primarily focused on human capital alone. Bourdieu's theory of capital brings attention to other forms of capital in addition to economic, including cultural, social, and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 2018a; Bourdieu, 2018b). However, this theory has not yet been used to study skilled migrants extensively, including international graduates. As international graduates participate in capital building throughout the duration of their degrees, using Bourdieu's theory to extend the discussion on capital building and employability would in turn extend the usage of this theory into new domains and contexts.

With nearly half of international students planning to leave Finland after graduation (YLE, 2023a), the study of employability and capital building comes at a critical time for international graduate retention in Finland. In this study, international graduate employability and capital building is examined using the research question "how is capital being formed throughout the duration of international graduates' host country degrees and how does this impact employability in Finland". This study focuses on international graduates who have completed or are in their final stage of completing their degree in Finland and have subsequently decided to stay in Finland following graduation.

1.1 Research Gap

While skilled migrant employability has been highly researched as a general group, a distinct category remains relatively unexplored: the perspective of international

graduates. International graduates are those who have studied in and continue to work in their host country. Han, Gulanowksi, and Sears (2022) provide a systematic review of international graduate workforce integration which draws attention to the different disciplines, themes, and findings of literature in this domain. However, the employment and workforce integration of international graduates has not been extensively studied (Han et al., 2022), despite its complexities as its own group. This perspective is unique as international graduates are not necessarily new to a host country, but they do not possess the same benefits as long-term residents or citizens. This group has a distinctly different experience from both international students and highly skilled migrants as they have been in their host country for long enough to build capital, integrate, and gain an understanding of employability in the host country. In addition, the distinct category of international graduate has narrow specifications of either having completed or having nearly completed their host country degrees, a distinct difference from international students who are at various, unspecified stages of their student life. By further exploring international graduates and answering calls for additional research in workforce integration, this study will research the intersection of international graduate employability and capital building.

1.2 Context and Relevancy

Using Bourdieu's theory of capital, employability and capital building of international graduates, a subcategory of skilled migrants, can be studied through the Finnish context. The exploration of different forms of capital can provide a deeper understanding of the capital building that takes place while an individual completes their degree, as well as their perceptions of employability in Finland. The Finnish context is especially relevant as YLE (2023a) reported that nearly half of surveyed international degree students studying in Finland were planning to leave the country after graduation. This conversation surrounding international graduate retention in

Finland coincides with the conversation regarding Finland's need for recruiting international talent. A study by ETLA Economic Research Institute reported that immigration in Finland needs to be tripled in order to ensure a stable labour force (YLE, 2023b). As such, studying international graduate capital building can provide a better understanding of international graduates' perceptions of employability in Finland, as well as capital building types and mechanisms throughout their degrees. By studying international graduates that have been studying in Finland for at least one and a half years, it allows for sufficient time in the country to both build capital and gain an understanding of employability in Finland. Investigating these complexities within the Finnish context provides practical insight for Finnish educational institutions, employers, and policymakers as it aids in the understanding of student efforts and perspectives, and can be used to inform future programming, recruitment, and country-wide policies.

1.3 Study Contributions

This study makes three contributions to employability literature. First, this study provides a new framework for capital building and employability which demonstrates the perceptions of employability, common types of capital built by international graduates throughout their degrees, and the mechanisms deployed for building capital. This provides an examination of how capital building and employability interact, as well as how perceptions of employability are formed in host countries. Second, it extends employability literature on international graduates, an under-studied group in skilled migrant research. This comes at a time when additional research on international graduates and employability has been called upon (Han et al., 2022). Finally, it extends the theoretical lens of Bourdieu's theory of capital by studying it alongside employability. Bourdieu's theory is used to demonstrate how capital is built throughout the duration of

international graduates' host country degrees and its subsequent impact on perceptions of employability in Finland.

1.4 Thesis Structure

The structure of this thesis is as followed. In Chapter 1, the research question and context are introduced, along with previous research, study contributions, and the research gap this study intends to fill. In Chapter 2, the theoretical framework of the thesis is introduced. The phenomenon of employability is discussed generally and in the context of skilled migrants, along with skilled migrant capital building . The study's theory - Bourdieu's theory of capital - is formally introduced and subsequently discussed through the lens of employability. The study's Finnish context is also introduced. Chapter 3, the data and methodology section, discusses qualitative research before moving into the study method and data collection specifications. The analysis and findings are presented in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, the study's main theoretical and practical contributions will be highlighted. At the end of Chapter 5, study limitations and future research avenues are discussed.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, each study section is introduced, reviewed, and synthesized. The phenomenon of employability is defined, and its various dimensions are discussed. Employability in the context of skilled migrants and international graduates is discussed through underemployability, liability of foreignness, and capital building. Following this, the study's theoretical lens, Bourdieu's theory of capital, is introduced along with each form of capital – cultural, social, economic, and symbolic. Finally, employability through the lens of capital building is discussed, including a model for exploring capital building and employability. Finally, a current model is introduced based on current literature.

2.1 Employability

2.1.1 Definition

The concept of employability has been widely interpreted by many scholars leading to various definitions and components added, ranging from the mentioning of job search (Van Hooft et al., 2021), relevant skills and abilities (Fugate et al., 2004), labour market conditions (Forrier & Sels, 2003), and its contingencies on external variables from gender, age, and ethnicity to networks, career aspirations, and job experience (Harvey, 2001). These interpretations are a result of the term employability being used and studied in various subject areas such as migration, education, economics, and public policy. However, what most researchers tend to agree on is the definition from Hillage and Pollard (1998) that states employability is “the ability to realize potential through sustainable employment” (p.24). It is important to note that employability is different and more complex than employment, as the latter refers only to having a job, whereas employability encompasses individual, organizational, and societal factors at play (Fugate et al., 2021). In addition, employability does not guarantee employment, but rather it increases an individual's chances of employment (Fugate et al., 2004).

2.1.2 Determinants of Employability

The concept of employability can be further broken down into two dimensions: internal and external. The internal dimension focuses on individual aspects such as knowledge, skills, and abilities (Fugate et al., 2004) that are in control of the individual. Rather than employability being the sole responsibility of an employer, individuals are also responsible for acquiring the specifications needed by employers (Fugate et al., 2004; Hillage & Pollard, 1998). In contrast, the external dimension focuses on employability as something outside of an individual's control, instead viewing it as a consequence of labour market factors such as current job demand (Forrier & Sels, 2003) and local markets (Berntson et al., 2006). These dimensions show how employability can be influenced by multiple factors, rather than being purely in the control of the individual or employers alone.

Hillage and Pollard (1998) presented four components of employability: assets, deployment, presentation, and the interplay of personal and external circumstances. Since then, many researchers have also developed frameworks around employability through the examination of various conceptualizations of the concept. For example, Fugate et al. (2004) has introduced a three-dimension model of employability, including career identity, social and human capital, and personal adaptability. To build upon this framework, Sullivan and Al Ariss (2019) expanded the model to five-dimensions, including career motivation, human capital, social capital, identities, and personality. Other models have been constructed to show employability as a process (Forrier & Sels, 2003), employability skills (UKCES, 2009), and employability development (Dacre Pool & Sewell, 2007). While some of these frameworks and models were built with different study groups in mind, they have all expanded the initial framework from Hillage and Pollard (1998). These frameworks have also introduced different dimensions to extend employability research, with human capital and social capital frequently appearing as key employability dimensions.

2.1.3 Human and Social Capital

In employability research, both human capital and social capital are extensively studied. Human capital is an individual's knowledge, abilities, and skills (Becker, 1994). Becker (1994) states that education and skill development are important human capital investments, especially as education is a direct predictor of financial success (Judge et al., 1995). Gaining and maintaining social networks, also known as social capital, is also important as it can promote career-related benefits at both the individual and organizational level (Fugate et al., 2004; Seibert et al., 2001; Wolff & Moser, 2009). Fostering social networks can enhance employability, especially through benefits such as advocacy, introductions, and mentoring (Van Hove et al., 2009). Even utilizing weak social ties can be beneficial, as Granovetter (1973) mentions that weak ties may have access to different information than our stronger networks. The benefits of this are especially beneficial for job information (Granovetter, 1973). However, because the mere possession of a social network is not a direct guarantee to resources (Adler & Kwon, 2002), it is up to the individual to successfully utilize their networks in order to gain from them.

2.1.4 Synthesis

The broad concept of employability has been defined, interpreted, and studied differently depending on the lens of the subject area and the context of the study. The distinction between employability and employment shifts the focus from employment to the other internal and external factors which shape and impact employability as a whole. These factors are included in the many employability frameworks, especially human and social capital. Human capital could be considered an internal factor while social capital could be viewed as a partially external factor as human capital is a product of the individual's investments, while social capital also relies on people outside of the individual's control. It is possible that the people within these social networks do not provide the employability benefits which the individual would like or expects. Despite this, the individual is still ultimately responsible for forming and

nurturing their network, making social capital a partially internal factor as well. These frameworks capture the comprehensive approach to understanding employability, as it is not one component alone that contributes to employability. While various concepts and components related to employability have been introduced, the focus of this study is on capital in the context of employability.

2.2 Employability in the Context of International Graduates

2.2.1 International Graduates

International graduates are a category of skilled migrants. Skilled migrants are people with university degrees or extensive professional experience who have left their home countries in order to seek employment in a different country (Crowley-Henry et al., 2018). For skilled migrants, the motivation behind their decision to leave home are diverse. It could be prompted by political and economic unrest, the desire for improved lifestyle, or the pursuit of professional or educational opportunities (Carr et al., 2005). Whether referred to as skilled immigrants (Dietz et al., 2015) or international migrants (Guo & Al Ariss, 2015), these terms are all comparable to studying the population of skilled migrants. Regardless of title, skilled migrants represent the movement of people who aim to contribute to their host country using their skills, knowledge, and capabilities.

In international business literature, current skilled migrant research surrounds career transitions and employment challenges of skilled migrants who have just recently arrived in their host country with the intention to work (e.g., Al Ariss & Syed, 2011; Dietz et al., 2015; Zikic, Bonache, & Cerdin, 2010; Tharenou & Kulik, 2020). However, the perspective of international graduates differs from this research and other skilled migrants due to their unique length of time in a host country before employment. This provides time for international graduates to build capital for employability, a distinct difference from other skilled migrants. International graduates are students who have

completed or are nearly finished completing their university degrees in a host country. According to OECD (2022), international students are regarded as a group of “pre-integrated” migrants due to their host country degrees and familiarity with the host country and due to this, international graduates become a valuable talent pool for host countries to employ. As such, their employability situation is unique and further research is called upon (Han et al., 2022).

2.2.2 Underemployability

One dimension of skilled migrant employability is underemployability.

Underemployability, or downward career transition, can be especially seen when comparing skilled migrant and local employability (Fang et al., 2013). Hajro et al. (2021) notes how, for skilled migrants, the increase of skills and education does not mean employment will be easier to gain. While skilled migrants are technically more employable as their skills and degrees increase, they are still less likely to find employment when compared with locals holding similar skills and qualifications (Dietz et al., 2015). This phenomenon, otherwise known as the skill paradox, is especially prevalent in Western countries in order to protect local or ‘native’ skills, and for the mere reason that high-skilled job competition is competitive (Dietz et al., 2015). Both reasons discount foreign degrees and skills, subsequently eliminating migrants from high-skilled job competitions (Dietz et al., 2015). This acts as an insurance for native degree holders as it assures the value and status that their local degrees signal in the professional world, in comparison to foreign degrees held by migrants.

A factor which can contribute to underemployability is the liability of foreignness, otherwise known as host country challenges and disadvantages faced by skilled migrants (Fang et al., 2013). Whether it be through the form of hazards of discrimination or hazards of unfamiliarity (Luo & Meziyas, 2002), skilled migrants can experience the liability of foreignness throughout their employment journey, beginning with their job search (Harcourt et al., 2008). For this reason, it can be difficult for skilled migrants to

gain new capital as well as deploy current capital available to them. Instead, skilled migrants may need to turn to support within their host countries for degree validation, mentorship, language skills, or other necessary activities in order to become more easily recognized by host country employers (Risberg & Romani, 2022), and increase employability and workforce integration.

2.2.3 International Graduate Workforce Integration

A systematic review conducted by Han, Gulanowski, and Sears (2022) identified 16 micro, meso, and macro factors that impacted workforce integration of international graduates. Cultural knowledge, social network, and work experience were amongst the eight micro factors identified which the researchers noted can impact workforce integration and employment outcomes. The meso factors included recruitment/selection practices and workplace norms/expectations. Recruitment and selection practices were identified to be significant predictors of graduate employment due to employer perceptions, while workplace norms and expectations were identified as a challenge which international graduates may face when adjusting to host country workplaces. Finally, economic conditions, one of the identified macro factors, was found to be a key influence for international graduates' decision to leave or remain in their host country. While all factor levels provide insight into employability for international graduates, an emphasis on micro factors will be considered in this present study through the discussion of capital building.

2.2.4 Skilled Migrant Capital Building

Current capital building literature (e.g., Saksela-Bergholm et al., 2019; Peltokorpi & Xie, 2023) explores how skilled migrants build, maintain, and use capital. Al Ariss and Syed (2011) studied capital mobilization of skilled migrants in the context of Lebanese migration to France. Using the research question "How do skilled migrants from a developing country mobilize different forms of capital in their efforts to undertake international mobility?" (p. 292), the study drew attention to other forms of capital

involved in capital mobilization, as opposed to other studies which had focused exclusively on human capital (e.g., Al Ariss, 2010; Beine et al., 2008). In this study, Al Ariss and Syed (2011) used Bourdieu's theory of capital to study the different ways in which skilled migrants' use their capital, while also using the theory to understand the interconnectedness of different forms of capital. Al Ariss and Syed (2011) found that all forms of capital – cultural, social, economic, and symbolic – were utilized throughout international mobility. Cultural capital was mobilized through academic qualifications, prior knowledge of the host country, and obtaining visas; Social capital was mobilized through personal and professional networks; Economic capital was mobilized through economic support personally and professionally; And symbolic capital was mobilized through the subjective and symbolic power of each form of capital (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011). Using Bourdieu's theory of capital, international mobility is understood through the lens of cultural, social, economic, and symbolic capital, and provides additional explanations on how skilled migrants from developing countries use their capital when faced with barriers throughout their international career mobility.

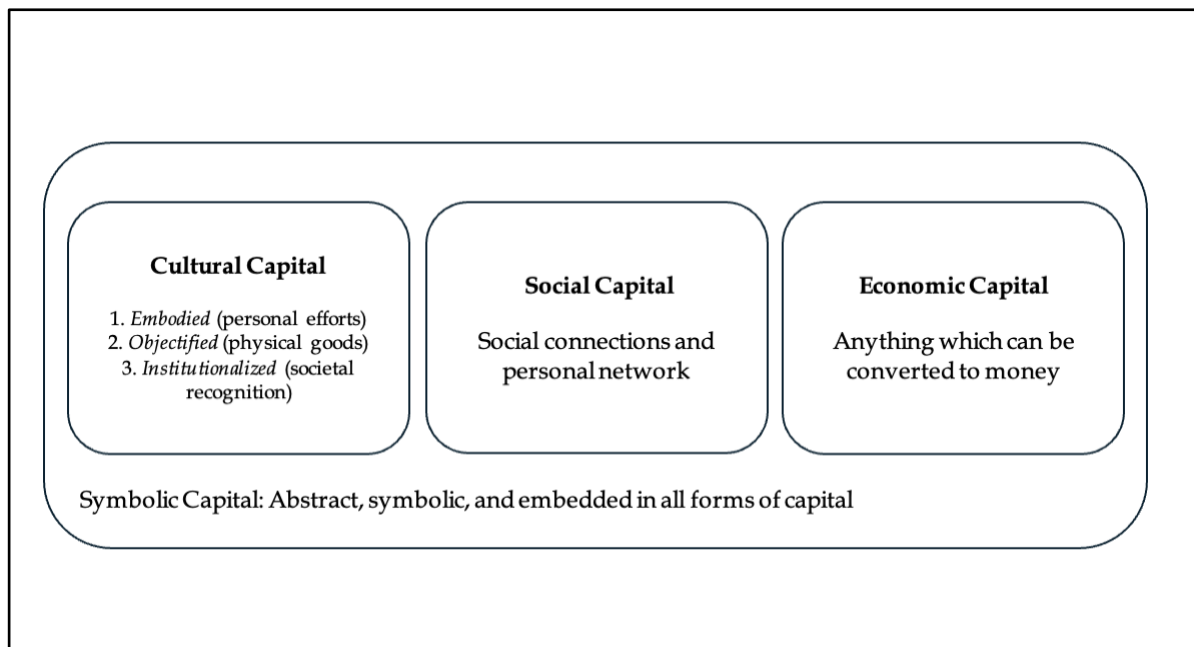
2.2.5 Synthesis

International graduates are a subcategory of skilled migrants who possess a unique set of circumstances and experiences in terms of employability. Due to their length of time in their host countries, international graduates have the ability to build capital to aid in their employability. Based on the above literature on employability, as well as the systematic review of workforce integration, different aspects of employability and capital building have been identified in the research of skilled migrants, specifically international graduates. Based on the calls for further research on international graduate workforce integration by Han, Gulanowski, and Sears (2022), this study focuses on employability in the context of capital building using Bourdieu's theory of capital.

2.3 Bourdieu's Theory of Capital

Bourdieu's theory of capital, first published in 1986, can be used to further understand and explore the intersection of capital and employability. While economic capital is viewed as the primary form of capital, Bourdieu (2018a; 2018b) also introduces the presence and effects of cultural, social, and symbolic capital, and its relative relation to economic capital (See Figure 1). In its basic form, capital is described as the result of "accumulated labor" (Bourdieu, 2018a, p.15) (i.e., time, skills, and resources) which allows both individuals and groups to control social energy. This plays a crucial role in shaping the social world, as social energy is generated through the collective force of a group, in this case being society. By understanding the different forms of capital – economic, cultural, social, and symbolic – through the greater context of society, its explanation for the structure and functioning for international graduates can be better understood.

FIGURE 1 *Bourdieu's Forms of Capital*



2.3.1 Cultural Capital

Cultural capital refers to assets such as knowledge, cultural goods, and societal recognition which can be used as resources in the social world (Bourdieu, 2018a). Cultural capital is accumulated over time and is divided into three states: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. Embodied state refers to an individual's mind and body as a result of personal investment of time and effort. The second is the objectified state, an external form of cultural capital which refers to cultural goods, objects, and media, such as paintings or books. This form of cultural capital is the only one of the three which can be passed down or acquired externally, rather than individually invested in. Third is the institutionalized state which is the formal societal recognition of cultural capital. Bourdieu (2018a) mentions that this state of cultural capital has standardized value as it provides "legally guaranteed qualifications" (p.20). An example of formal recognition of cultural capital in society is the recognition of academic titles and qualifications, such as Medical Doctor, Doctor of Philosophy, or Juris Doctor, which are acknowledged and highly regarded across various societal contexts.

The impact of cultural capital extends beyond the individual. Bourdieu (2018a) also explained how, due to individuals with higher cultural capital and thus power, cultural capital informs greater societal tastes and aesthetics, including dress, speech, education, and intellect. Due to this, Guillory (1993) argued that cultural capital plays a key role in the establishment of class status. However, regardless of how it's acquired, Bourdieu (2018a) emphasizes that cultural capital takes time to acquire and to form. Whether it be through the internal time investment of learning or through the external acquisition of cultural goods, cultural capital is noted to be an investment that only the investor can be primarily responsible for, as personal effort, learning, and societal recognition through academic qualifications and titles cannot be passed down.

Cultural capital in particular has been widely discussed and criticized. Sullivan (2002) argued that due to the concept's lack of clear definition, cultural capital has been open to

various interpretations. This creates discrepancies between subject areas in the way they define and study the concept. Cultural capital and class status has been highly discussed among scholars, specifically regarding the link between educational attainment and class status (i.e., DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985; DiMaggio, 1982; Guillory, 1993; Bourdieu & Passeron 1990). Additionally, feminist scholars have had to dissect and develop Bourdieu's cultural capital concept to align better with feminist theory due to androcentrism (Laberge, 1995; Skeggs, 2004; McCall, 1992).

2.3.2 Social Capital

Bourdieu (2018a) also discussed the concept of social capital, which sheds light on being a part of a network and the associated potential resources and benefits that come with doing so. Whether it's a practical, material, or symbolic relationship, network membership provides members with support, knowledge, and recognition (Bourdieu, 2018a). This membership gives members credibility, with even the mere mentioning of a family name, school affiliation, or political party is enough of a guarantee of capital by association alone. However, social capital is not just something that is handed to network members, but rather something that requires investment for maintaining connections through time, energy, and economic capital (Bourdieu, 2018a). Though there is a requirement of continuous effort, the benefits of social capital are instrumental in forming lasting connections which enable network members to gain valuable resources just by being a part of the group. However, network membership association does not come without its risks. As such, networks must be careful about who is allowed access to the group and the rules and conditions required for affiliation (Bourdieu, 2018a).

The functions of social capital have been viewed differently by many scholars. Similar to Bourdieu, Coleman (1988) acknowledged that social capital is utilized for a clear purpose, in which it is used as a resource to achieve goals. However, Coleman (1988) viewed social capital as something that impacts the collective group while Bourdieu viewed it as solely impacting an individual. Putnam (1995) shared a similar view as Coleman and expanded

on this definition by including the aspects of networks, norms, and trust. As social capital has been defined in many different ways, Hawe and Shiell (2000, p. 873) have commented that

Social capital is not “one thing”. It has relational, material and political aspects and it may have positive or negative effects. It can refer to both dense and loose networks and it takes on a different form depending on whether one is concerned with the individual and his or her immediate group membership or the interaction between social institutions.

According to Bourdieu’s conceptualization, social capital also has aspects of power (Siisiäinen, 2000), especially when considering the possible influence of network memberships and its subsequent credibility. Due to this, Bourdieu’s focus on individual advantages differs from later scholarly definitions, such as from Coleman and Putnam, which have a more positive outlook on social capital’s impact on the collective.

2.3.3 Economic Capital

Intertwined in the discussion of social and cultural capital is economic capital, which can be defined as anything that can be converted into money, including property. Bourdieu (2018a) draws attention to economic capital through the lens of economic theory and its limitations, namely, how it overlooks social and cultural capital in favour of purely profit-based exchanges. Fowler (2011) praised Bourdieu for bringing attention to these forms of capital which were often overlooked. Though economic capital can be considered the foundational element of other forms of capital, it alone cannot explain the complexities of the social world, which is where cultural and social capital also play a crucial role. According to Bourdieu (2018a), all forms of capital cannot be adequately reduced to economic capital, especially as some forms of capital tend not to be as instantaneous as economic capital. For example, social capital is not acquired instantly but is instead honed through long-term effort, time, and consistent development of relationships. By

emphasizing the different forms of capital in conjunction with economic capital, Bourdieu expands on the comprehension of cultural, social, and economic capital's interplay and their role in the social world.

2.3.4 Symbolic Capital

Later in 1998, Bourdieu expanded on this theory to include symbolic capital, which is embedded in all forms of capital. It is an abstract concept which is not necessarily directly observable or expressed. Bourdieu (2018b) explains that symbolic capital is any form of capital whose value can be recognized and given value within a social context. As symbolic capital is a form of cultural currency, it is significant in shaping status and contributing to individual power within society. With power and symbolic capital being closely linked, it plays a key role in how other forms of capital are utilized (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011). Legitimacy, authority, and honour are all resources found in symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 2018b).

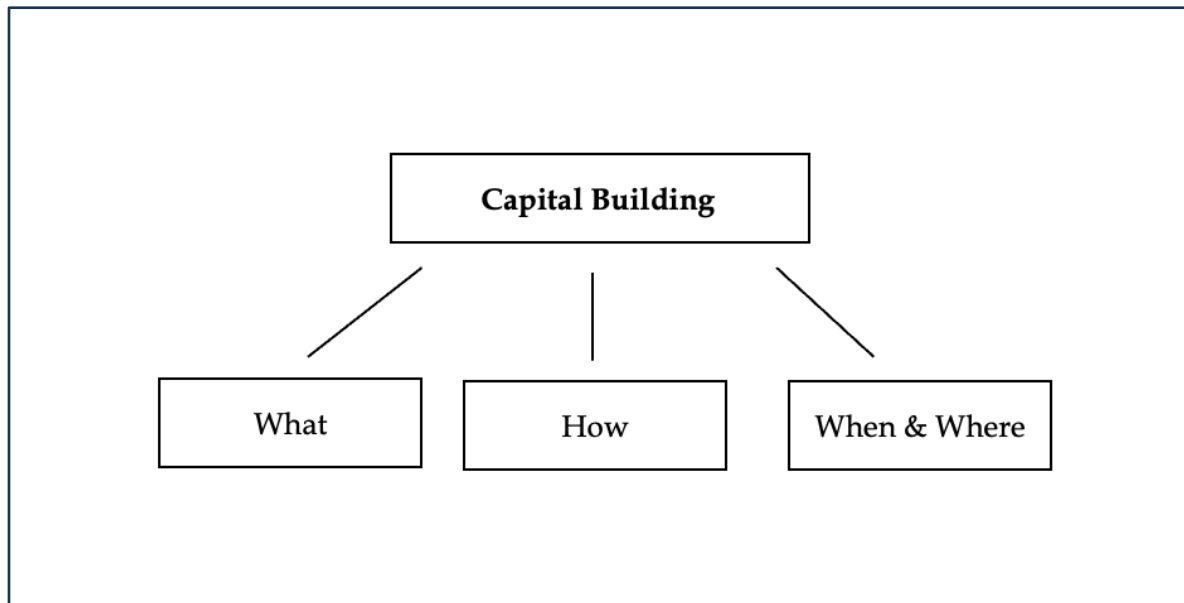
2.3.5 Synthesis

Though Bourdieu's theory suggests that all forms of capital relate back to economic capital, the introduction of cultural, social, and symbolic capital draws attention to the ways capital can be accumulated, shared, and distributed. Money, property, and other financial gains are not the sole contributor to capital; Skills, knowledge, degrees, social connections, and the abstract meaning behind the different forms of capital and their resources also contribute to capital. These forms of capital are interconnected and influence capital building in either a positive or negative way. As an example, if an individual has a lot of money (economic capital), they are likely to go to a good school (cultural capital), benefit from the reputation of the good school (symbolic capital) and have a lot of social connections (social capital), which is likely to lead to good job opportunities and thus money (economic capital). Through this example, the root of economic capital can be seen in each form of capital, as well as the significant role of each form throughout the general capital-building process.

2.4 Employability Through the Lens of Bourdieu's Theory of Capital

Various aspects of cultural, social, economic, and symbolic capital can be seen individually throughout the discussion of employability, especially through the lens of skilled migrants. By using Bourdieu's theory of capital to study employability, the "what", "how" and "when and where" of capital building can be further understood. Exploring capital building and its role in employability through "what", "how" and "when and where" provides a simplified breakdown of the abstract and oftentimes complex topic of capital building (See Figure 2 below).

FIGURE 2 *"What, How, When & Where" Model*



2.4.1 The "What"

First is the "what" which expands on what capital can be defined as. Bourdieu's theory offers recognition of non-material resources that impact employability. It is not solely money or degrees that influence employability but also cultural and social resources that provide advantages. For example, more language skills (cultural capital) may provide more opportunities for social contacts (social capital) which then provides increased

employability opportunities. By drawing attention to non-material resources, it reconsiders how employability is understood.

2.4.2 The “How”

The “how” and “when and where” of capital building and deployment is based off the study from Al Ariss & Syed (2011). In this study, Bourdieu’s theory of capital is used to understand capital mobilization of skilled migrants. Rather than isolating each form of capital and studying them individually, Bourdieu’s theory allows for a comprehensive understanding on “how” capital is accumulated and deployed (Wilson et al., 2007). It allows room for further explanation about an individual’s employability by taking the focus off education and abilities exclusively, and instead shifting it to other factors such as social networks (social capital), language skills (cultural capital), or money (economic capital). This allows for a greater understanding of how capital in all forms operates independently and interdependently.

2.4.3 The “When and Where”

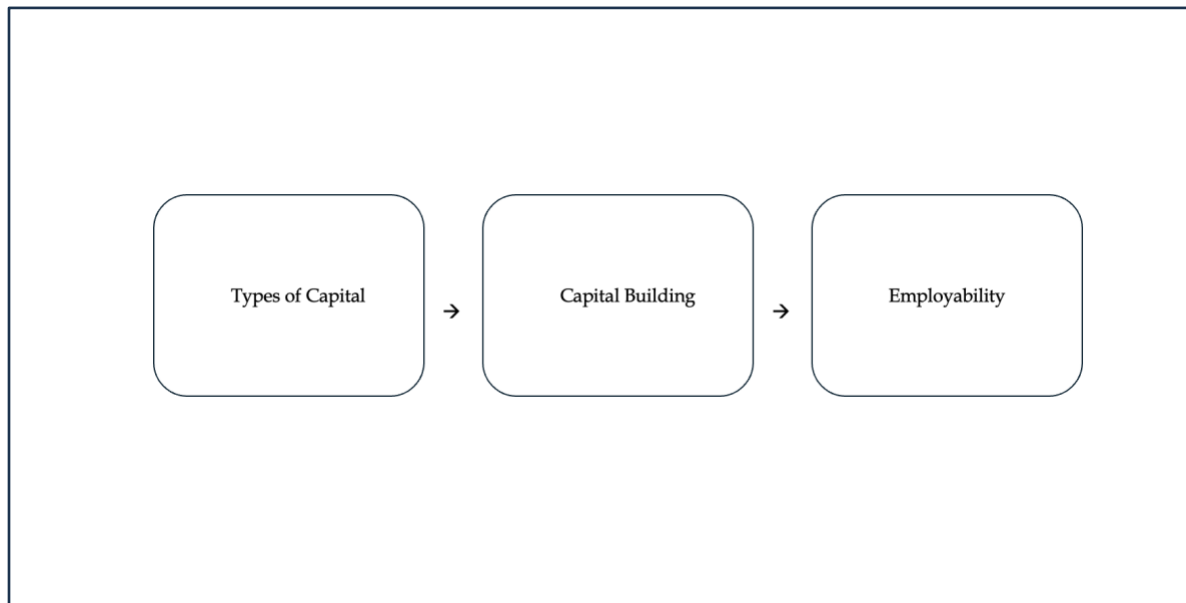
Finally, Bourdieu’s theory can provide an understanding of “when and where” capital is built and deployed. That is, when skilled migrants use their capital and at which levels (Syed & Özbilgin, 2009). The use of Bourdieu’s theory of capital in Al Ariss & Syed’s (2011) study deepens the understanding of capital mobilization and the influence of micro, meso, and macro contexts on migrant career choices. This provides a multi-dimensional understanding of capital and looks at the various levels impacting employability, rather than focusing on just one.

2.4.4 Synthesis and Current Model Introduction

Dividing capital building and deployment into “what”, “how”, and “when and where” breaks down the concept of capital further for a better understanding of how these forms of capital relate to and aid in employability. When considering employability, it is likely that education, knowledge, and skills will be considered the most important

resources. Due to this, individuals will spend time building these resources without considering that other resources and forms of capital are influential and important as well. However, the analyses of different forms of capital, especially how they co-exist and function as a whole, can bring attention to the influence and interconnectedness of capital and its role in employability. As a result, Figure 3 below shows the current employability and capital building framework. This illustrates the current relationship between employability and capital building, where the types of capital introduced by Bourdieu leads to capital building, ultimately influencing employability.

FIGURE 3 *Current Employability and Capital Building Framework*



3 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a detailed overview of the study's chosen design, methods, and data collection. Qualitative research is discussed in comparison to quantitative research and interpretive qualitative research is introduced. Throughout this section, explanations are also given as to why qualitative research was chosen for this study. The study's main data collection is discussed in terms of structure, sampling, and participants, along with the chosen data analysis, Gioia method.

3.1 Qualitative Research

One of the key differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods is the interpretation. While quantitative research is fixed and measurable through numbers and statistics, qualitative research is subjective and interpreted through meaning and social construction (Merriam, 2002). Quantitative research's meaning is derived from numbers with minimal space for additional interpretation, whereas qualitative research both requires and is built upon this interpretation. Understanding and assigning meaning to experiences and interactions is the main point of interest for qualitative researchers as they build their theories from investigating these interpretations in certain times and contexts (Merriam, 2002). However, Elliott (1999) argues that distinguishing the difference between quantitative and qualitative research as numerical or nonnumerical is not as useful, as there are more distinctive features that separate the two. These features include greater emphasis on discovering and understanding phenomena, more open and exploratory research questions, more description options, and more emphasis on learning something new and unexpected (Elliott, 1999). Additionally, applying qualitative research to studies which have previously used quantitative research can allow for more discovery, new views on the phenomenon, and new directions for research (Elliott, 1999).

Despite the many similarities to quantitative research, there are aspects of qualitative research which may contribute to the validity and reliability skepticism, such as using data that is not precise or using non-standard techniques (Neuman, 2007). To overcome skepticism, Creswell and Creswell (2017, p. 314) recommend eight different strategies to increase validity including triangulation, member checking, using rich descriptions, clarifying bias, presenting information that counters study themes, increased field time, peer debriefing, external auditing, and using qualitative reliability. To increase reliability, Gibbs (2007) recommends checking transcripts for mistakes, adhering to initial code definitions, coordinating coding among team members, and cross-checking coding with outside researchers. The quality of the research can also be increased depending on the type of analysis used in a study. To increase credibility, limitations regarding validity and reliability will be addressed in Chapter 5.2, along with the use of the rigorous Gioia method for data analysis, which will be explained further in Chapter 3.4.

3.1.1 Interpretive Qualitative Research

The interpretive qualitative approach is centred around learning an individual's experiences and interactions, and the meaning behind them in a particular context (Merriam, 2002). Patton (2014) mentions that interpretive qualitative approach and analysis is about understanding the information presented, rather than using it as a prediction for the future. This means that rather than using research to inform whether the same events, experiences, and feelings will happen again in the same or similar context, qualitative researchers instead look to get a deeper understanding of the context at hand. While understanding is at the core of interpretive qualitative research, it is not at the core of other types of qualitative research. Lather (1992) explains that there are two other overarching emphases - emancipation and deconstruction - which are at the core of critical/feminist and postmodern perspectives respectively. For this study, interpretive qualitative research is used as understanding and acquiring more knowledge on the topic of employability in Finland is the main research goal.

3.1.2 Case Study Approach

Qualitative research is often chosen when a phenomenon cannot be explained by a current theory (Merriam, 2002). This concentration goes further by choosing which type of qualitative approach is used. When a study is concentrating on one phenomenon, the case study approach is often chosen as it allows for an in-depth discovery and analysis (Merriam, 2002). This approach has been used in psychology, sociology, business, and education, among other disciplines, to gather a deeper understanding of complex phenomena (Yin, 2009). Using a case study approach allows researchers to investigate a phenomenon through real-life events including behaviours, processes, and changes (Yin, 2009), providing a more comprehensive view of the phenomenon. Through this approach, a wide variety of experiences and situations can be studied and analysed within the same context of a phenomenon. As diverse perspectives are key for this study, the case study approach has been chosen to provide deeper knowledge on employability of international graduates in Finland.

3.1.3 Interviews

In order to study the diverse perspectives of study participants, interviews have been chosen as this study's data collection method. Patton (2014) mentions that interviews are used as a way to collect data that researchers cannot directly observe, such as feelings, thoughts, or meanings attached to situations. As one of the most common methods for qualitative data collection, interviews allow researchers to learn more about individual experiences and interpretations on the study-specific topic (DiCicco & Crabtree, 2006). These interviews can be categorized by unstructured, semi-structured, and structured, with semi-structured being the most preferred for qualitative researchers (DiCicco & Crabtree, 2006). As employability and capital building among international graduates in Finland is still a relatively new topic, interviews were chosen for this study in order to collect rich descriptions of events and perspectives. Semi-structured interviews in

particular also provided an avenue for additional clarification and questioning, as well as the ability to go deeper into different themes and experiences that arise.

Given the study's topic of employability - which can be a sensitive topic for those searching for work - rapport building was viewed as an important part of the interview process in order for interviewees to feel comfortable sharing information. DiCicco and Crabtree (2006) describe rapport building as creating a safe space for interviewees to share experiences "as they occurred" (p.316). In light of this, a more informal approach to semi-structured interviews was taken in this study, where interview questions and themes are woven into the discussion as participants describe their stories of employability and capital building in Finland. Additionally, as I am an international graduate myself, the mutual understanding of experiences aided in creating a comfortable environment for participants to share their stories.

3.2 Study Method & Data Collection

3.2.1 Participant Criteria

In this study, there are four main criteria regarding participant demographics and connection to Finland. When selecting participants, an emphasis on diverse perspectives was integral to understand different experiences within employability and capital building. Investigating different perspectives on the same phenomenon is a common qualitative study method known as triangulation which can increase a qualitative study's validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 314), as well provide more evidence by strengthening the grounding of a theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). As such, international graduates from various industries were interviewed to highlight experiences from different educational backgrounds and job fields. In this study, participants were required to fit these following criteria:

1. Must have been born outside of Finland;

2. Must have come to Finland to study;
3. Must have completed or are in the final stage of completing a master's degree from a Finnish higher education institution;
4. Must have employment or are seeking employment in Finland.

In order to find participants who met these criteria, I used LinkedIn, WhatsApp, my own network, and referrals. One of the initial criteria – (3) Must have completed a master's degree from a Finnish higher education institution – was changed to include participants who were in their final stage of their master's degree. Final stage is defined as finished all course work but working on the master's thesis. This was changed as master's students may become employed or begin their job search before finishing their thesis. Additionally, these participants have lived a reasonable amount of time in Finland, at least one and a half years, allowing them time and opportunities to build capital throughout their degrees. Changing this criterion provided a larger range of participants and led to greater success in finding participants. By the end of the study, 11 international graduates were contacted and 8 were interviewed (See Table 1).

3.2.2 Interview Guide and Structure

All interviews were recorded with transcription. The duration of the interviews range from 31 to 58 minutes. At the beginning of the interview, participants are asked to share their employability experiences in Finland, along with general demographic information including home country, age, length of time in Finland, master's program, and current role (if applicable). After this, the interview moves into the capital building themes. The interview guide follows the themes of cultural, social, and economic capital (See Appendix A), all of which are in the context of employability. While not all topics may be covered in an interview, the themes provided a general direction of the interview while also allowing for additional topics and experiences to be shared. Within the theme of cultural capital, international background, educational experiences, and Finnish language skills are included. In the social capital theme, participation in networking,

mentorships, and student activities are included. In economic capital, employment and additional educational investments during studies are included. Symbolic capital was not directly included as it is an abstract concept found in all forms of capital. The participants can openly share as much detail as they choose to throughout the duration of the interview. Once I observe that all the themes have been discussed, the interview is ended.

TABLE 1 *Participant Interview Profile*

| | Home Country | Year of Arrival in Finland | Current Employment Status | Current Master's Student Status | Master's Program in Finland | Age | Interview Type | Interview Duration |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----|----------------|--------------------|
| Participant A | Greece | 2021 | Unemployed | Finishing thesis | MSc in International Business | 33 | In-Person | 35 minutes |
| Participant B | Spain | 2021 | Unemployed | Graduated / Started PhD | MSc in Education | 26 | In-Person | 33 minutes |
| Participant C | Peru | 2021 | Employed - Permanent | Graduated | MSc in Education | 25 | Virtual | 38 minutes |
| Participant D | Greece | 2020 | Employed - Contract | Finishing thesis | MSc in Education | 27 | In-Person | 58 minutes |
| Participant E | Philippines | 2022 | Freelancer | Finishing thesis | MSc in Digital Marketing | 35 | Virtual | 48 minutes |
| Participant F | China | 2022 | Freelancer | Finishing thesis | MSc in Language & Communication | 26 | In-Person | 31 minutes |
| Participant G | Bosnia & Herzegovina | 2022 | Unemployed | Finishing thesis | MSc in Mathematics | 26 | In-Person | 41 minutes |
| Participant H | USA | 2022 | Employed - Contract | Finishing thesis | MSc in Languages & Communication | 28 | In-Person | 36 minutes |

3.3 Data Analysis

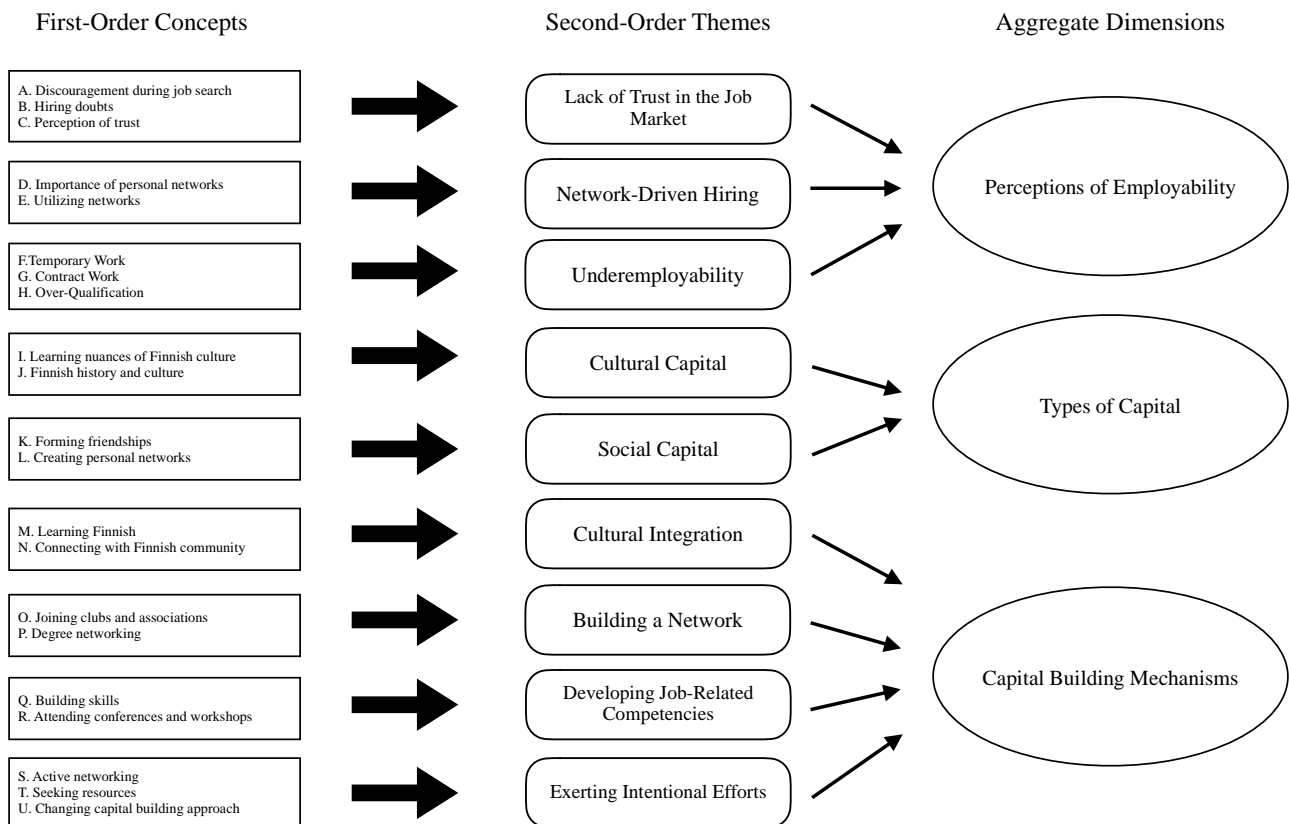
In the international business and international entrepreneurship disciplines, research is advanced through theory development (Magnani & Gioia, 2023). To develop these theories, qualitative researchers tend to use grounded theory approaches in order to gain a deeper understanding of different phenomena (Magnani & Gioia, 2023). Using the Gioia Methodology approach to qualitative data analysis ensures that rigor is being met while still allowing room for creativity to emerge in sensemaking and creation of new concepts (Gioia et al., 2013). In this study, I used Gioia Methodology to conduct an informant-centric analysis by using participants' interpretations and experiences as the basis for new concepts, connections, and theory (Gioia et al., 2013). Rather than affirming existing concepts and leading by theory, the Gioia Methodology allows for new concepts to emerge from the data based on participant experience.

In this study, the Gioia Methodology analysis coding has been conducted according to Gioia et al. (2013). In the first step, interview transcripts were coded for common themes which emerged from quotations and words. In the second step, these quotations were used to inform the 1st-order categories. In this step, over 50 1st-order categories were identified, a number which Gioia et al. (2013) mentions is not uncommon when first beginning the analysis. However, this was eventually reduced to 21, making it more organized. In the third step, 1st-order categories were organized into 2nd-order themes which are more abstract, theoretical in nature, and involve researcher interpretation. In the fourth step, these 2nd-order themes progressed into overarching themes or 2nd-order aggregate dimensions. After the four steps were completed, the data from each step was organized into a data structure (see Figure 4) which eventually informed the final theoretical framework (FIGURE 5). While as a researcher I must make sense of the data throughout the analysis, the initial coding and 1st-order terms are directly informed by participant quotations, with my own interpretations emerging later in the 2nd-order themes and aggregate dimensions.

4 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This chapter reports the results of the study's analysis. The analysis focused on identifying international graduate experiences related to the dimensions of (1) perceptions of employability in Finland, (2) types of capital, and (3) capital building mechanisms. Figure 4 is the data structure based on the analysis, while Tables 2, 3, and 5 show the progression of the data analysis for each aggregate dimension from participant quotations to 2nd-order themes.

FIGURE 4 *Data Structure*



4.1 Perceptions of Employability

Throughout the duration of their degrees, international graduates have formed their perceptions of employability and experiences of employment in Finland. The analysis reflected a lack of trust in the job market and network-driven hiring as perceptions of employability, while underemployability, including temporary employment, were employment experiences of international graduates. These are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2 *Perceptions of Employability*

| Illustrative Quotations | First-Order Categories | Second-Order Themes |
|---|--|--|
| <p>"Even though I am enrolled in a Finnish school, even though I have experience... work experience within a Finnish company, which has a pretty strong brand name, it's pretty known. Yeah, it doesn't look any easier." (A)</p> <p>"So when I saw that it was gonna be really hard to get a job as a teacher here in Finland, it was really discouraging for me in the beginning, and I was starting to lose hope" (C)</p> | <p>Feeling discouraged during job search</p> | <p>Lack of Trust in the Job Market</p> |
| <p>"I was wondering if because I'm international and that makes me international graphic designer. Sometimes I wonder if... will Finnish companies think of that? do they feel "Oh we need to Finnish graphic designer so they know what kind of designs Finns would like", something like that" (F)</p> <p>"I tried to kind of ignore all this like opinions and comments and try to, you know, stay motivated and do everything that I could to get employed until I actually got this experience myself, that it was me and a friend of mine from Finland that applied for the same position and her degree like was not even relevant on to that. But she got an invitation for interview, and I didn't... So that was for me like so, like disappointing" (D)</p> <p>"My personal opinion on that is that the average company will still select [a] Finnish native than an international person" (A)</p> | <p>Hiring doubts</p> | |
| | | |

| Illustrative Quotations | First-Order Categories | Second-Order Themes |
|---|---|------------------------------|
| <p>"I think there's a certain level of cultural expectations and competencies that they believe comes from being a Finn, which definitely, you know, you do have certain cultural competencies that come into the workplace from being a Finn, but then when they see foreign applicants, they're left in a little bit of a tricky situation because they don't know, they don't want to risk those cultural competencies that a foreign worker is gonna bring in, then leaving them a little bit messy [..]" (G)</p> <p>" I genuinely don't think [learning Finnish] would have made a big difference because just my interpretation, I don't really think it's a language thing. It's a cultural perception thing of you're not Finnish, hence I'm not that trusting of your capabilities." (G)</p> <p>"But even speaking the language, it's something that the employer was so like, more trust into that, that you know the language, you know how our culture here works. So that's already something that we can base on you that you are local and you, in a way, are integrated here" (D)</p> <p>"[The CEO was] Finnish, but they have more than 10 years' experience living abroad in Asia. So, I feel like he has more trust in international talent for example" (F)</p> | <p>Perception of trust</p> | |
| <p>"So, if you don't have some personal connection within a company as a foreigner, then it's a lot harder and the people I have met that are foreigners that have a good job, it's because they know someone there like I haven't met anyone that just randomly got a job, you know, like you have to know someone." (H)</p> <p>"At some point I was told by people [...] 'if you don't know somebody here, good luck. Good luck getting there'" (G)</p> | <p>Importance of personal connections</p> | <p>Network-driven hiring</p> |
| <p>"[Through] my LinkedIn profile I'm now linked to several, not just several, but maybe at least 10 people who are working in the Finnish community. So, I think that's a good boost for me. And then with my supervisor, so she could be like a character reference for me" (E)</p> <p>"The advice I got from [an international] was like look for jobs where like being a foreigner like that is your asset." (H)</p> | <p>Utilizing networks</p> | |

| Illustrative Quotations | First-Order Categories | Second-Order Themes |
|--|------------------------|---------------------|
| <p>“I redesigned [internship company’s] brand and the design, their flyers and well, designed a lot of things for them and which was immediately put into use... like immediately. Which was a really great experience and opportunity for me to practice and all this and that.” (F)</p> <p>“I attended, I think two or three talent boost trips. And then I came to know, the Regional Coordinator for [Company] [...] and from there flourished a conversation that eventually led to my internship” (E)</p> <p>“I explored the possibility of having some on campus jobs, I asked around teachers. And then there was this one faculty member that would need some assistance with checking off the assignments of his students. So that was my first gig with the university” (E)</p> | Temporary Work | Underemployability |
| <p>“They are trying to keep the Finnish employees much more than they try to keep the foreigner ones, okay. Even if a person doesn't want the job or doesn't like the job they will get, it's more likely that they will get like permanent contract that people that have been working like really hard and they have been proving like all the time themselves and you can see like how different their work is. And they will get like two three weeks contract and then five weeks contract and I don't know half semester contract. And you know, always, living in this kind of uncertainty” (D)</p> | Contract Work | |
| <p>“And then they hired me as a nurse, like for the nurse position you don't need the masters.” (B)</p> <p>“I think that up to a certain extent there that someone would be forced to take one of those jobs under paid jobs or short-term or or temporary or best-case scenario, traineeship or an internship, I don't know if I would personally do it because I do not share the same desire to live in Finland.... to keep on living in Finland” (A)</p> | Over-Qualification | |

4.1.1 Lack of Trust in the Job Market

The findings show that participants have a lack of trust towards the job market in Finland due to feeling discouraged during their job search, feeling doubts about companies hiring internationals, and understanding the importance of trust in the Finnish job market. Discouragement was felt during various stages of their job search and by participants of various employment levels. For some participants, this discouragement occurred while actively searching for jobs, particularly when receiving minimal replies on their job applications. For other participants, this discouragement was also felt when considering the possibility to stay in Finland. For example, Participant H noted how they recognized early into their studies that it would be difficult to stay in Finland due to lack of job opportunities for foreigners, a realization that many participants had as they began their job search.

When speaking about their feelings of discouragement, Participants A and E spoke about it in conjunction with their previous work experiences and current education. Both participants had work experience in reputable organizations which they assumed would be beneficial in helping them find a job, with Participant A noting it has not helped. Since finishing their contract work at a Finnish company, Participant A had been searching for a job for two months and had received no job offers at the time of the interview.

[...] Even though I am enrolled in a Finnish school, even though I have experience... work experience within a Finnish company, which has a pretty strong brand name, it's pretty known... Yeah, it doesn't look any easier [to find a job]. (A)

Participant C, now a full-time permanent teacher, spoke about their feelings of discouragement during their job search. They noted that they applied to approximately 10-15 jobs with only a few responses from employers, a low number compared to other

participants who reported up to 100 applications. Participant C compared it to their experience in their home country, Peru, where they received minimal rejections when applying for jobs. As they were familiar to the job search style of their home country, the job search in Finland felt difficult.

So, when I saw that it was gonna be really hard to get a job as a teacher here in Finland, it was really discouraging for me in the beginning, and I was starting to lose hope. (C)

This discouragement also came in the form of doubt, as all participants had doubts about international hiring in Finland. When speaking about this topic, participants mentioned similar opinions on the difficulties of being hired as an international including lack of language skills, companies not being ready for international talent, and hiring preferences for Finnish natives. Participant A shared their view of this preference, despite attending events where companies spoke about hiring international talent.

[...] I did go to these events, and there was a lot of talk about how companies want to internationalize their workforce. But I cannot say that I've seen that in practice, because at the end of the day, my personal opinion on that is that the average company will still select [a] Finnish native than an international person (A)

Participants B and D had experiences where they perceived employers preferred hiring Finns over internationals. For Participant B it did not happen personally, but instead they noticed a hiring change from international to Finnish preference when a new manager was hired. On the other hand, Participant D had a personal experience which they felt was unfair when considering educational credentials for the role.

I tried to kind of ignore all this like opinions and comments and try to, you know, stay motivated and do everything that I could to get employed until I actually got this experience myself, that it was me and a friend of mine from Finland that applied for the same position and her degree was not even relevant on to that [position]. But she got an invitation for interview, and I didn't... So that was for me so, like, disappointing. (D)

Not all participants had direct experiences that formed their doubts. For some participants, they felt doubt when applying for jobs or networking with employers. Participant F, who is working as a freelancer but is still looking for stable employment, considered how employers perceive their international background when deciding whether to reach out to them or not.

I was wondering if - because I'm international and that makes me international graphic designer - Sometimes I wonder if... Will Finnish companies think of that? Do they feel "Oh we need a Finnish graphic designer so they know what kind of designs Finns would like", something like that. (F)

Participant E and G shared that they perceive that Finnish companies have these hiring preferences because hiring internationals could be a potential risk. Participant G noted that this could be because of the cultural competencies that Finns share.

I think there's a certain level of cultural expectations and competencies that they believe comes from being a Finn, which definitely, you know, you do have certain cultural competencies that come into the workplace from being a Finn, but then when they see foreign applicants, they're left in a little bit of a tricky situation because they don't know, they don't want to risk those cultural competencies that a foreign worker is gonna bring in, then leaving them a little bit messy [...] (G)

Participants were aware of that finding employment as an international is difficult. The findings showed that participants were also aware of the importance of trust in Finland which, as Participant G mentioned, can come in the form of trusting cultural competencies. All eight participants mentioned an element of trust, either in Finnish society or in the workplace, and associated it with credibility. Participant D perceived that knowing the Finnish language was a sign of trust for employers.

[...] I have got like many clues from [current] job in a way that have been a sign of [proving trust in the workplace]. But even speaking the language, it's something that the employer was so like, more trust into that, that you know the language, you know how our culture here works. So that's already something that we can base on you that you are local and you, in a way, are integrated here.
(D)

Alternatively, Participant G, who made the decision to stop learning Finnish after being disappointed by their university's language courses, perceived that Finnish was not the main signal of trust, but rather what the language itself signalled for cultural competencies.

I genuinely don't think [learning Finnish] would have made a big difference because just my interpretation, I don't really think it's a language thing. It's a cultural perception thing of you're not Finnish, hence I'm not that trusting of your capabilities. (G)

Participants also recognized how trust towards foreigners can differ between companies, depending on international experiences of the employers. After completing an internship with a Finnish company, Participant F, who is from China, reflected on why they thought the company reached out to them.

[The CEO was] Finnish, but they have more than 10 years' experience living abroad in Asia. So, I feel like he has more trust in international talent for example.

(F)

In a similar way, Participant A, a Greek who grew up in the USA, commented that he noticed a difference in people's perception of them in the workplace when they mentioned they were Greek versus American. They felt that when they mentioned they were from America, they received more respect, confidence, and trust than when they said they were from Greece. While this did not happen in social circles, it was noticeable professionally, leading them to identify themselves to employers using their American background more often than their Greek background.

While findings show that participants had a low level of trust in the Finnish job market, participants also shared a general understanding of the hiring practices in Finland. Many understand that Finnish or Swedish is required for jobs in Finland, that cultural competencies of a Finn are desirable, and for these reasons, were aware that hiring foreigners could be difficult for companies.

4.1.2 Network-Driven Hiring

Findings show that participants were aware of the importance of gaining personal connections for employability and then utilizing those networks when searching for jobs. All participants talked about the importance of connections in Finland, especially in the job market, which acted as a motivator to build capital. As Participant H commented, without connections it can be difficult to find a job as a foreigner.

[...] So if you don't have some personal connection within a company as a foreigner, then it's a lot harder and the people I have met that are foreigners that

have a good job, it's because they know someone there. Like I haven't met anyone that just randomly got a job, you know... Like you have to know someone. (H)

Participant G spoke about how they did not realize that connections and networking were important for employment in Finland until after moving to Finland. Their assumption was that Finnish and international applications would be weighted equally, with emphasis on capabilities rather than connections. However, they were eventually told that it works differently in Finland:

[...] At some point I was told by people [...] 'if you don't know somebody here, good luck. Good luck getting there'. (G)

After learning this, Participant G became more active in connection building by seeking out connections from their university who were employed at the companies they applied to. For other participants, they gained these connections through other means, including through completed internships. Participants E and F completed their internship at a small Finnish company and noted that being connected to people in the Finnish working community is an asset. For Participant E, their virtual network expanded as well, and they hope to utilize this network in the future when applying to jobs.

[Through] my LinkedIn profile I'm now linked to several, not just several, but maybe at least 10 people who are working in the Finnish community. So I think that's a good boost for me. And then with my supervisor, so she could be like a character reference for me. (E)

For two participants (F, H), they utilized their networks in a different way by gaining advice from them. Both participants received advice from their international networks which encouraged them to find companies who value international experience.

The advice I got from [an international] was like look for jobs where like being a foreigner like that is your asset. (H)

Receiving this advice also gave them a different perspective on what kind of opportunities to seek out and their overall job application strategy. Overall, the findings show that participants were aware of the importance of gaining and utilizing connections throughout the job search process.

4.1.3 Underemployability

Findings show that participants perceive or have experienced an aspect of underemployability. Underemployability is employment that underutilizes a worker's skills. When speaking about their employment experiences, temporary employment, contract work, and over-qualification were frequently mentioned by participants, all of which are aspects of underemployability. Throughout the duration of their degrees, all participants had some form of employment. Participant A had full-time contract work for two years of their degree, while all other participants had temporary employment including tutoring, teaching English, freelancing, internships, working as a student ambassador, working in a restaurant, and working as a research assistant. The most common roles were university level jobs and internships, with four participants (B, D, E, G) working as tutors and four participants (E, F, G, H) currently working as student ambassadors for their university. Internships were the most common form of temporary employment with seven participants (B, C, D, E, F, G, H) having some form of internship throughout their degrees. Participant F spoke about their internship doing graphic design for a Finnish company.

I redesigned [internship company's] brand and the design, their flyers and well, designed a lot of things for them and which was immediately put into use... like immediately. Which was a really great experience and opportunity for me to practice and all this and that. (F)

Participants identified that internships provided a range of benefits including growing their network, having legitimate work experience, learning the Finnish working environment, honing their current skillset, and increasing their Finnish language skills. For most participants, the internship was required by their program, with the duration ranging from one week to a year and a half. The method for acquiring these internships differed between participants, with some having to actively seek out a company to complete their internship with and others getting approached directly with an internship offer. For Participant E, they approached a company representative during a career trip:

I attended, I think two or three talent boost trips. And then I came to know, the Regional Coordinator for [Company] [...] and from there flourished a conversation that eventually led to my internship. (E)

In addition to internships, participants also had other temporary employment. With the exception of Participant A who worked a full-time job, all participants had two or more forms of employment throughout their degrees. Participants B and D had four, while Participants E and H had five. Participant E recalled their first employment experience at the university which began in their first year of studies.

I explored the possibility of having some on campus jobs, I asked around teachers. And then there was this one faculty member that would need some assistance with checking off the assignments of his students. So that was my first gig with the university. (E)

Outside of student level work (internships, student ambassadors, tutors) and other forms of temporary work, five participants (C, D, E, F, H) have some form of regular employment. Participant C has a permanent full-time role, while the other four participants work as contract workers or freelancers. Participant D, who has been a

full-time contract worker for two years, shared their opinion on contract work in Finland.

[...] They are trying to keep the Finnish employees much more than they try to keep the foreigner ones. Even if a [Finnish] person doesn't want the job or doesn't like the job they will get, it's more likely that they will get [a] permanent contract than [foreigners] that have been working really hard and they have been proving all the time themselves and you can see how different their work is. And [foreigners] will get like two three weeks contract and then five weeks contract and, I don't know, half-semester contract. And you know, always, living in this kind of uncertainty. (D)

Participant D acknowledged that their contract position could be due to not having the exact qualifications required for their role, as every person who had a permanent role had the necessary qualifications, meaning that they were in a role where they were technically under-qualified for this role. In this case, Participant D was experiencing the opposite problem that many other participants experienced, which is over-qualification in their roles. For example, Participant B, who also worked as a contract worker at a daycare, spoke about receiving a role as a nurse which does not require a master's degree. While they acknowledged that their master's degree may have been helpful in getting the job, it was ultimately not needed for the particular role.

The findings show that, for some participants, the idea of over-qualification was complicated. For example, Participant E, who was previously in a managerial position in the Philippines, acknowledged that they could not be a manager in a country where they do not speak the language. Though they felt that all of their experience was gone when moving to Finland, they were aware that they needed to adjust to working entry-level positions again, at least until they have their master's credentials in Finland. However, not all participants shared this same opinion, with Participant A commenting

that if a foreigner were to stay in Finland after their studies, they may have to accept being underemployed initially.

I think that up to a certain extent there that someone would be forced to take one of those jobs under paid jobs or short-term or temporary or best-case scenario, traineeship or an internship. I don't know if I would personally do it because I do not share the same desire to live in Finland.... to keep on living in Finland. (A)

Though temporary employment, contract work, and over-qualification, the findings showed experienced or presumed underemployability by participants.

4.2 Types of Capital

Though four types of capital are identified in Bourdieu's theory of capital, the two types of capital which are most visible in the analysis are cultural capital and social capital, as shown in Table 3. These are the types of capital which international graduates accumulated throughout the duration of their degrees to aid in employability.

TABLE 3 *Types of Capital*

| Illustrative Quotations | First-Order Categories | Second-Order Themes |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| <p>“[With] Finnish people sometimes there is like this awkward silence and it kind of took me time to get used to it in a way. Now I'm used to it and it's something that I even do myself sometimes with other people [...] So I would say that I have learned also a lot from the Finnish society that helped me.” (B)</p> <p>“[...] every time like especially last summer in 2023, we would go to the lake, to the forest, and then do biking. So it was fine. Like you're discovering this part of the world with a whole new perspective. And it's interesting because I didn't bike much in the Philippines because it's really hot. But in Jyväskylä, I was biking. And then just exploring the nature as they say. So having the life work life balance is... it's real. It's the essence of Finland” (E)</p> | <p>Learning nuances of Finnish social culture</p> | <p>Cultural Capital</p> |
| <p>“[A] positive difference between the Finnish working culture and my culture is that my culture is because it concerns both of my cultures is the respect of the work life balance. You're not going to be pushed to work overtime. [...] There's also very low hierarchy. So there's no such boss like the absolute boss model, as it is in other cultures. Like it's more inclusive which is obviously very nice. And it's promoting communication and collaboration as well” (A)</p> | <p>Learning about Finnish work culture</p> | |
| <p>“My friends and my social context has been mostly with internationals or with Finnish people that have been internationalized, or you know, have had like an experience and they want to meet international, they want to hang out with internationals” (D)</p> <p>“I feel like coming to Finland was not just a new experience. But there are different avenues that you could go to. So, [...] I try not to restrict myself with certain things like it's not just about studies. So, it's important also to make friends, to visit communities” (E)</p> | <p>Forming friendships</p> | <p>Social Capital</p> |
| <p>“People come [to club] every Tuesday, and many people have been here for more than a year. So, I can say we're not friends. But we're '[club name]-lainen’ and then that's something that bring us together.” (F)</p> | <p>Creating personal networks</p> | |

4.2.1 Cultural Capital

Cultural capital was accumulated in two different ways: learning nuances of Finnish social culture and learning about Finnish work culture. Many participants had different experiences and approaches in how they learned to understand Finnish society. Participant B found that they learned a lot from Finnish society through socializing and began to incorporate some habits into their own socializing.

[With] Finnish people sometimes there is like this awkward silence and it kind of like took me time to get used to it in a way. Now I'm used to it and it's something that I even do myself sometimes with like other people [...] So I would say that I have learned also a lot from the Finnish society that helped me. (B)

Another participant learned more about Finnish culture by immersing themselves into different lifestyle activities that they did not do in their home countries. Participant E spent their first summer in Finland visiting Finnish nature, biking, and understanding work-life balance from the Finnish perspective.

[...] Every time like especially last summer in 2023, we would go to the lake, to the forest, and then do biking. So it was fine. Like you're discovering this part of the world with a whole new perspective. And it's interesting because I didn't bike much in the Philippines because it's really hot. But in Jyväskylä, I was biking. And then just exploring the nature as they say. So having the work-life balance is... it's real. It's the essence of Finland. (E)

In a similar way, participants spoke about learning the differences between Finnish culture and cultures where they had other international experiences. Four participants (A, F, G, H) previously lived in USA and reflected on the differences between American

and Finnish culture, as well as how their previous international experiences have helped them in Finland. Participant A, who worked a full-time job at a Finnish company for two and a half years during their degree, learned about the Finnish work culture which differed from their American and Greek cultural background.

[A] positive difference between the Finnish working culture and my culture is that my culture is because it concerns both of my cultures is the respect of the work life balance. You're not going to be pushed to work overtime. [...] There's also very low hierarchy. So, there's no such boss like the absolute boss model, as it is in other cultures. Like it's more inclusive which is obviously very nice. And it's promoting communication and collaboration as well. (A)

Through learning the nuances of Finnish culture both socially and professionally, participants learned about Finnish culture and accumulated cultural capital while doing so.

4.2.2 Social Capital

Social capital was accumulated in two ways: forming friendships and creating personal networks. Participants made friends in various contexts ranging from meeting at student events, through their programs, or by proximity. For Participant E, making friends was important to them when they came to Finland.

I feel like coming to Finland was not just a new experience. But there are different avenues that you could go to. So I try not to just restricted like, I try not to restrict myself with certain things like it's not just about studies. So it's important also to make friends, to visit communities... (E)

Participants had a mix of international friends and Finnish friends. Participant B and D both commented that their Finnish friends had more of an international mindset which made it easy for the Finns to integrate into their international friend group.

My friends and my social context has been mostly with internationals or with Finnish people that have been internationalized, or you know, have had like an experience and they want to meet international, they want to hang out with internationals. (D)

Participant F created their network through a club they started. While they acknowledged that this does not necessarily make them friends, it still provides a community and a way to network with fellow students.

People come [to club] every Tuesday, and many people have been here for more than a year. So, I can say we're not friends. But we're '[club name]-lainen' and then that's something that bring us together. (F)

By forming friendships and creating other personal networks, participants have accumulated social capital throughout the duration of their degrees.

4.3 Capital Building Mechanisms

While cultural and social capital have been identified as the main types of capital that participants built throughout their degrees to aid in employability, there are also mechanisms through which these types of capital are built. The eight participants interviewed participated in a wide variety of capital building activities throughout the duration of their degrees. All participants took part in at least three different capital

building activities, ranging from employment opportunities to attending student activities. Each participant's activities are detailed and numbered below in Table 4.

TABLE 4 *Participant Capital Building Activities*

| Participant | Capital Building Activities During Studies |
|--------------------|--|
| A | Full-time job, international student events, start-up program (3) |
| B | Summer job at car rental company, research assistant, student association board member, international student events, exercise classes, tutor, education conferences, internship abroad, additional Finnish classes (9) |
| C | Restaurant job, education conference, student association, program activities, English teacher, internship (6) |
| D | Student ambassador, tutor, internship, research assistant, association board member, additional Finnish classes, conference (7) |
| E | Teaching assistant, tutor, student ambassador, internship, freelancing, program activities, student association, career trips, student events, visiting International House, gaining certificates (11) |
| F | Internship, founding club member, student ambassador, entrepreneurship events, LinkedIn networking, additional Finnish courses, freelancing, hosting/attending workshops (8) |
| G | Tutor, student ambassador, career services, student events, seminars, city events, students' union events, integration courses, faculty seminars, internship (10) |
| H | Online tutoring, freelance teaching, student ambassador, volunteering, internship, work study, babysitting, program activities, association board member, student events (10) |

Through these capital building activities, four capital building mechanisms have been identified including cultural integration, building a network, developing job-related competencies, and exerting intentional efforts, as shown below in Table 5.

TABLE 5 *Capital Building Mechanisms*

| Illustrative Quotations | First-Order Categories | Second-Order Themes |
|---|--|-----------------------------|
| <p>“I only learned it for less than two years its impossible to to make myself sound smart and professional, but at least I can show that I'm trying. I really hope they appreciate that” (F)</p> <p>“I haven't liked the Finnish language, but I've been trying, like again and again to, to learn it and kind of have some contact with it [...]” (D)</p> <p>“I think that [learning Finnish] is a little bit more of a signal of what they understand as integration, because I think their belief is learning the language enables you automatically to understand the society and get the cultural competencies of a Finn [...]” (G)</p> | <p>Learning Finnish</p> | <p>Cultural integration</p> |
| <p>“One of the reasons why I did, for example tutoring, was because I wanted to connect a little bit both more with the Finnish community and also to understand, you know on the higher level of things, how does their thought process go when they're bringing in students?” (G)</p> <p>“I did try to integrate by going to this volunteer group where there were Finnish people in that group. So I was like, OK, I'm gonna try and put myself in settings with Finnish people” (H)</p> <p>“[...] When I think about it, especially recently, if I don't know a lot of Finnish friends, I feel kind of lonely here and I can't think of a lot of reasons to stay in a place where I don't really have connections or friends that I know locally. So it is one bond that tells me I need to stay here because I have this community here” (F)</p> | <p>Connecting with Finnish community</p> | |

| Illustrative Quotations | First-Order Categories | Second-Order Themes |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <p>“I was in three student associations [...] And that was a great place to get to know people, plan events for the internationals and join those events. So, I think that [...] really had a positive impact on my social contacts here that in a way you get to plan this event and so many people are coming internationals or not internationals, you get to meet them” (D)</p> <p>“We thought starting a [club] would be an opportunity for us to get to know people who also like art and we can draw together and least get to know more Finnish students” (F)</p> | <p>Joining clubs and associations</p> | <p>Building a network</p> |
| <p>“So, with the overalls, I feel like I belong in this subject Association, called [Name]. I attended some of its events like sits, welcoming a freshman... I'm also an active member with the photographers [...]” (E)</p> <p>“[...] [Program] also created this [program] coffee. So, it was every Wednesday so that you could go there and socialize and meet other people and know about their cultures and experience and connect with other people” (C)</p> <p>“If there are some classes from other universities that are jointly taught with JYU, I tried to go for that just so I can, you know, meet people from other universities, meet faculty members from other universities” (G)</p> | <p>Degree networking</p> | |

| Illustrative Quotations | First-Order Categories | Second-Order Themes |
|--|--|--|
| <p>“I was seeing [student associations] more like an internship. And actually, I did feel that I gained like a lot of work related skills from there like kind of even getting to know how to run an association like the administration, bureaucracy, see how those are connected, the whole communication between the stakeholders and the association. Like for me that felt like, seriously like it is a job that, you know, can be transferred [...]” (D)</p> <p>“I think it's a great opportunity also for me, for example, to use some Finnish in [club name] then also to run a club, meaning I need to have the skills to manage the bureaucracy stuff with the university because it's directly funded by university to run a club in Finland. I think that's important experience [...] Because otherwise if in the future interviews people asked me, “this is a Finnish company. What kind of experience do you have in your working with Finnish people? Can you be a part of them?” The answer is “of course I do have experience in the university where, for example, [club name] more than 95% are Finnish people” and it's proof that I can become a part of a Finnish community and actually just start to become part of it and to build a sense of community in Finland.” (F)</p> <p>I was once with [Organization] so I take open [Organization] courses and then also in digital marketing we were asked to do Google Search and Google Ads certificates. So I tried to like update because the credentials have expired already. So I tried to maintain these certificates and then from time to time I would look for online courses that are free and just to basically. Learn new things. Yeah, because right now the things that you need to learn, at least in digital marketing are just out there in the Internet and it's for free. You don't really have to enroll in a program, and the competition now, especially in SEO, is quite tough cause a lot of people are doing it now (E)</p> | <p>Building skills</p> | <p>Developing Job-Related Competencies</p> |
| <p>“I am very active. I love traveling, so I always tend to apply for conferences no matter where they are. So I guess that these kind of like for them short term mobilities and also conferences in Finland and also outside maybe has helped me with networking” (B)</p> <p>“I did like a workshop in cooperation with the university and maybe five other universities in Europe. That was held in Estonia in Tallin. That was like one week of workshop [...] Conference training maybe. I think it was training for educators how to incorporate like technology in education” (D)</p> | <p>Attending conferences and workshops</p> | |

| Illustrative Quotations | First-Order Categories | Second-Order Themes |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <p>“I tried to be active and just basically widen my horizons. Because you'll never know where you find your luck” (E)</p> <p>“I'm putting myself like doing various things like I'm doing a work study at a dance studio. I'm babysitting for families as well, so I'm trying to just put myself out there and make these connections.” (H)</p> <p>“Graphic design is a really small circle. Everybody knows each other and when they make hires they make sure to hire someone that you know. And I'm not in the circle and what I'm trying to do is to get into the circle now” (F)</p> <p>“I saw that there might be an opportunity for me in this in this organization, so I gave it a try. I asked them like, is there a room for someone like me was into marketing? And then they said, Yeah, we could talk about it. So it was about two or three months worth of exchange of emails” (E)</p> | Active Networking | Exerting Intentional Efforts |
| <p>“I moved [to Helsinki] to see if I find any like full time job opportunities in Finland and then this job... It's not what I want to do - teaching isn't what I wanna do long term - but this job lets me live there, make connections or try to make connections there” (H)</p> <p>“And whenever I see something that I think could be helpful for developing my skills and cultural competencies, if it's an online class, I jump into that. For example, there was this introduction to Finnish history and culture. I took that because I thought that was relevant thing for, you know, cultural competencies” (G)</p> | Seeking Resources | |
| <p>“I've been trying to contact [the city], but I've been also hearing this kind of experiences of friends going there the that they just have them with the CV and these kind of things that they haven't been helpful. So you kind of lose hope after a while.” (D)</p> <p>“But from those types of events, I at least got like a little bit of, you know, some ideas for networking in Finland for example, the big realization being you're never gonna find a job here through official means and official channels [.....]</p> | Changing Capital Building Approach | |

| Illustrative Quotations | First-Order Categories | Second-Order Themes |
|--|------------------------|---------------------|
| <p>So it helped me a little bit change my framework about networking within Finland” (G)</p> <p>“For me, it was really hard to to get into [sports team’s] circle. And after a point, I was starting to get annoyed. Like, in the beginning, I was feeling that that was trying so much, and you know, putting so much energy and effort to that. But after a while I was like, you know, screw you like, yeah, I don't need this. And it really makes you feel.. I think it really has an impact on your self-esteem” (D)</p> | | |

4.3.1 Cultural Integration

To build cultural capital, international graduates acknowledged that learning Finnish and connecting with the Finnish community were important for integration. Participant G shared their opinion that learning Finnish is seen an indicator of integration into Finnish society.

I think that [learning Finnish] is a little bit more of a signal of what they understand as integration, because I think their belief is learning the language enables you automatically to understand the society and get the cultural competencies of a Finn [...] (G)

All participants mentioned their experiences with learning Finnish, and many had varying interactions with the language. Three participants (A, E, H) chose not to engage further with Finnish studies as they felt it was difficult to balance with schoolwork, with participants E and H noting they would like to learn Finnish after graduating if they stay in Finland. Three participants (B, D, F) took additional Finnish courses throughout their studies, with Participant B and D noting that their Finnish improved during employment opportunities. Participant F acknowledged how

important Finnish skills are, particularly for employment, which is why they chose to continue Finnish studies throughout their degree.

I only learned it for less than two years; it's impossible to make myself sound smart and professional. But at least I can show that I'm trying. I really hope they appreciate that. (F)

Outside of learning Finnish, participants also tried connecting with the Finnish community in various ways as a method of integration. Participant H noted that they tried to integrate through volunteering:

I did try to integrate by going to this volunteer group where there were Finnish people in that group. So I was like, OK, I'm gonna try and put myself in settings with Finnish people. (H)

Three participants (B, E, G) were tutors for the university, which Participant G noted they did as a way to connect with the Finnish community:

One of the reasons why I did, for example tutoring, was because I wanted to connect a little bit both more with the Finnish community and also to understand, you know on the higher level of things, how does their thought process go when they're bringing in students? (G)

To build cultural capital, participants used the above mechanisms to integrate into the Finnish society.

4.3.2 Building a Network

To create connections and networks, key components of social capital, international graduates joined clubs and associations on campus, as well as networked within their

degree programs. All participants engaged in student events in some capacity. Seven mentioned that they had been involved in student associations, including their student's union, as a way to network. Three participants (B, D, H) became board members for various student associations, with Participant D being a part of three association boards.

I was in three student associations [...] And that was a great place to get to know people, plan events for the internationals and join those events. So I think that [...] really had a positive impact on my social contacts here that in a way you get to plan this event and so many people are coming internationals or not internationals, you get to meet them (D)

Participant F founded their own club centred around their interests to get to know more Finnish students in particular.

We thought starting a [club] would be an opportunity for us to get to know people who also like art and we can draw together and least get to know more Finnish students (F)

For participants, networking within their degree program was also a capital building mechanism. Participant E involved themselves within their program association as a way to both join an association as well as network within their program.

So with the overalls, I feel like I belong in this subject association, called [Name]. I attended some of its events like sits, welcoming a freshman... I'm also an active member with the photographers [...] (E)

Participants joined dinners, talks, and events held by faculty members as a way to get to know students within their program, meet faculty members, and gain connections for their network. One program held their own coffee session once a week for students.

[...] [Program] also created this [program] coffee. So, it was every Wednesday so that you could go there and socialize and meet other people and know about their cultures and experience and connect with other people. (C)

In a similar way, Participant G chose to extend the networking outside of their own program to other people within their same field but from other universities.

If there are some classes from other universities that are jointly taught with JYU, I tried to go for that just so I can, you know, meet people from other universities, meet faculty members from other universities. (G)

To build social capital, participants used the above mechanisms to build a network.

4.3.3 Developing Job-Related Competencies

Developing job-related competencies was also identified as one of the main capital building mechanisms for international graduates. While this does not fall under cultural or social capital, nor the other types of capital from Bourdieu, it is nonetheless an important element of capital for employability. For international graduates, these competencies were developed through building skills through their association activities or certifications, as well as attending conferences and workshops. For two participants (D and F), they viewed their involvement in student associations and clubs as a way to build work-related skills.

I was seeing [student associations] more like an internship. And actually, I did feel that I gained like a lot of work, like work related skills from there like kind of even getting to know how to run an association like the administration, bureaucracy, see how those are connected, the whole communication between the stakeholders and the association. Like for me that felt like, seriously like it is a job that, you know, can be transferred [...] (D)

The same view was shared by Participant F, with an emphasis on how these skills could be transferred in the Finnish working environment.

I think it's a great opportunity also for me, for example, to use some Finnish in [club name] then also to run a club, meaning I need to have the skills to manage the bureaucracy stuff with the university because it's directly funded by university to run a club in Finland. I think that's important experience [...]
Because otherwise if in the future interviews people asked me, "this is a Finnish company. What kind of experience do you have in your working with Finnish people? Can you be a part of them?" The answer is "of course I do have experience in the university where, for example, [club name] more than 95% are Finnish people" and it's proof that I can become a part of a Finnish community and actually just start to become part of it and to build a sense of community in Finland. (F)

Participant F directly developed their competencies through online certifications, something they needed to do considering the competition in their field.

I was once with [Organization] so I take open [Organization] courses and then also in digital marketing we were asked to do Google Search and Google Ads certificates. So I tried to like update because the credentials have expired already. So I tried to maintain these certificates and then from time to time I would look for online courses that are free and just to basically learn new things. Yeah, because right now the things that you need to learn, at least in digital marketing are just out there in the Internet and it's for free. You don't really have to enroll in a program, and the competition now, especially in SEO, is quite tough cause a lot of people are doing it now. (E)

Five participants (B, C, D, E, G) attended educational conferences, seminars, and workshops. Two participants (B and D) attended conferences abroad in connection with their programs.

I am very active. I love traveling, so I always tend to apply for conferences no matter where they are. So I guess that these kind of like for them short term mobilities and also conferences in Finland and also outside maybe has helped me with networking. (B)

I did like a workshop in cooperation with the university and maybe five other universities in Europe. That was held in Estonia in Tallin. That was like one week of workshop [...] Conference training maybe. I think it was training for educators how to incorporate like technology in education. (D)

Through joining associations, completing certifications, or attending conferences, international graduates built capital by developing their job-related competencies throughout their degrees in an effort to increase their employability.

4.3.4 Exerting Intentional Efforts

Findings show that international graduates were intentional in their capital building efforts. Many participants mentioned terms such as 'trying', 'actively', or 'putting myself out there' when speaking about capital building. All participants acknowledged the importance of being intentional for the sake of networking. For example, Participant E and F actively took steps to extend their networks within their desired fields:

I saw that there might be an opportunity for me in this in this organization, so I gave it a try. I asked them like, is there a room for someone like me was into marketing? And then they said, Yeah, we could talk about it. So, it was about two or three months' worth of exchange of emails. (E)

Graphic design is a really small circle. Everybody knows each other and when they make hires, they make sure to hire someone that you know. And I'm not in the circle and what I'm trying to do is to get into the circle now. (F)

On the other hand, Participant H intentionally pursued connections within their local community:

I'm putting myself like doing various things like I'm doing a work study at a dance studio. I'm babysitting for families as well, so I'm trying to just put myself out there and make these connections. (H)

This highlights that participants were aware of the importance of connections and were active in seeking out opportunities to build them both professionally and informally. Some participants actively sought other opportunities, such as Participant G who took courses such as Integration to Finnish Society and Introduction to Finnish History and Culture in an effort to build cultural competencies.

And whenever I see something that I think could be helpful for developing my skills and cultural competencies, if it's an online class, I jump into that. For example, there was this introduction to Finnish history and culture. I took that because I thought that was relevant thing for, you know, cultural competencies (G)

The findings also show that participants were intentional in seeking resources, with participants D and G both mentioning that doing so left them feeling unmotivated after not receiving the resources they expected.

I've been trying to contact [the city], but I've been also hearing this kind of experiences of friends going there the that they just have them with the CV and

these kind of things that they haven't been helpful. So you kind of lose hope after a while. (D)

Similar to an awareness of effort, the findings also show that participants continuously monitored their efforts in capital building. As participants encountered circumstances such as the above one, they recognized the need to pivot their efforts. Participant G had this realization after attending career opportunity events organized by their department which had many opportunities available for EU citizens, which they are not.

But from those types of events, I at least got like a little bit of, you know, some ideas for networking in Finland for example, the big realization being you're never gonna find a job here through official means and official channels [.....] So it helped me a little bit change my framework about networking within Finland (G)

For Participant D, the realization to pivot their efforts came after almost two years of being on a Finnish basketball team where they realized they felt like an outsider as an international.

So for me, it was really hard to to get into [sports team's] circle. And after a point, I was starting to get annoyed. Like, in the beginning, I was feeling that that was trying so much, and you know, putting so much energy and effort to that. But after a while I was like, you know, screw you like, yeah, I don't need this. And it really makes you feel... I think it really has an impact on your self-esteem [...] (D)

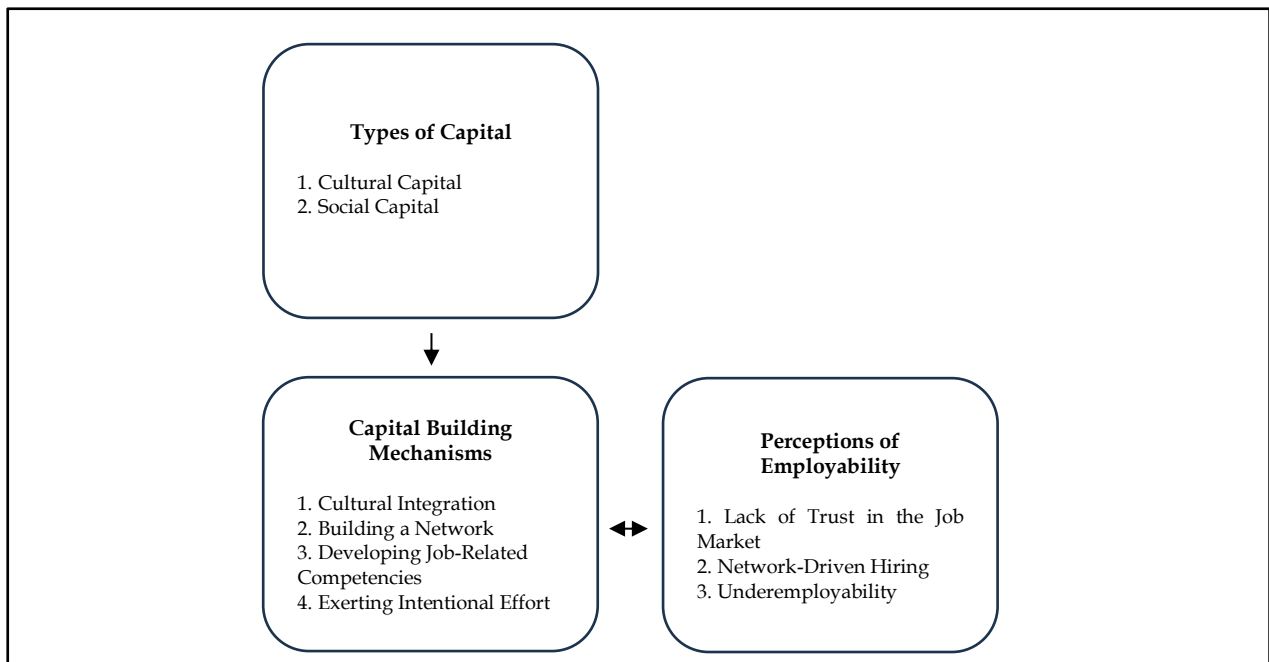
In both the active pursuit of capital building and the pivoting of approaches, participants exerted intentional efforts into capital building throughout the duration of their degrees.

5 DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the study findings in relation to the main research question. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed, and a proposed framework is introduced. Study limitations, future research avenues, and final conclusions are also discussed.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

FIGURE 5 *International Graduate Capital Building and Perceptions of Employability in Finland Framework*



This study's analysis explored international graduate experiences related to the dimensions of (1) perceptions of employability in Finland, (2) types of capital, and (3) capital building mechanisms. Using the research question "How is capital being formed throughout the duration of international graduates' host country degrees and how does

this impact employability in Finland?”, this study explores how international graduates (1) build different forms of capital throughout the duration of their host country degrees and (2) the perceptions of employability in host countries. When analyzing the findings from this study in conjunction with relevant literature, this study makes three contributions to employability literature.

First, this study proposes a framework which displays capital building processes and how capital building and employability interact (See Figure 5). Using Bourdieu’s theory of capital (Bourdieu, 2018a; Bourdieu, 2018b), this framework provides an understanding of which types of capital are commonly built by international graduates and offers four ways in which capital is built throughout the duration of a host country degree. Similar to Al Ariss and Syed (2011), this highlights the importance of studying various forms of capital outside of human capital in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of capital building. This framework also proposes that capital building contributes to perceptions of employability as international graduates form these perceptions while utilizing capital building mechanisms. The double arrow displays how capital building mechanisms and perceptions of employability act as feedback loops to each other, where international graduates will either build capital or form perceptions in response to the other. Additionally, the framework encompasses capital building and perceptions of employability factors at all levels of analysis (micro, meso, and macro) similar to Han, Gulanowski, and Sears (2022). Specifically for perceptions of employability, it displays how employability is influenced by internal and external components. This framework highlights the capital building process of international graduates while also proposing that capital building and employability can be studied together to gain a comprehensive understanding of international graduate host country employability.

Second, the findings extend international graduate employability literature, an understudied group in skilled migrant research. As calls for additional research of international graduate workforce integration had been made (Han et al., 2022), this study

responded by exploring employability of international graduates with the addition of capital building. Similar to literature on skilled migrant employability (Fang et al. 2013; Luo & Mezias, 2002; Harcourt et al., 2008; Dietz et al., 2015), international graduates also experience liability of foreignness. In this study, international graduates experienced liability of foreignness as the lack of trust in the job market and network-driven hiring impacts their potential to be employed. Additionally, international graduates encounter underemployability difficulties during their job search which is consistent with liability of foreignness research (Harcourt et al., 2008). These difficulties include inconsistent employment and skill paradox (Dietz et al., 2015) which contribute to over-qualification and hiring doubts.

This study also extends literature on internal and external employability (e.g. Fugate et al., 2004; Hillage & Pollard 1998; Forrier & Sels, 2003; Berntson et al., 2006) by exploring additional factors which impact employability. Internally, the findings show that employability can be aided by building capital, including cultural integration, building a network, developing job-related competencies, and exerting intentional efforts. The findings also show that lack of trust in the job market, specifically when developed from the perception of trust in Finnish culture, is an additional external factor as individuals cannot control cultural differences. Additionally, understanding the nuances of network-driven hiring is both inside and outside individual control as individuals can learn to navigate these discrepancies but are still subject to experiencing them. These findings are consistent with research (Hillage & Pollard, 1998) about employability being influenced by multiple factors, rather than just external or internal. In addition, this study found that perceptions of employability and capital building mechanisms influence each other. This is seen particularly as international graduates exert intentional efforts as a capital building mechanism, with many participants actively pursuing networking opportunities and additional resources to aid in their employability. As international graduates were aware of their liability of foreignness, they exerted additional efforts in order to be more recognizable by Finnish employers, supporting research that skilled

migrants turn to support to become validated by host country employers (Risberg & Romani, 2022). This result of mutual influence of perceptions of employability and capital building mechanisms details the innerworkings of how perceptions of employability are formed and how these perceptions can be used to adapt capital building mechanisms in order to increase employability.

Finally, this study extends the theoretical lens of Bourdieu's theory of capital by demonstrating how capital is built throughout the duration of international graduates' host country degrees and how it influences perceptions of employability. In skilled migrant employability literature, types of capital tend to be studied individually using Bourdieu's theory of capital rather than collectively (e.g., See Aksakal & Schmidt, 2021 for cultural capital; and Saksela-Berhgoim, 2020 for social capital). In capital building literature (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011), capital has only begun to be studied collectively using Bourdieu's theory in its entirety. To expand on earlier research, this current study's findings show how cultural and social capital are equally valuable for international graduate employability purposes, as opposed to human capital or solely education or work experience. While all four types of capital were studied, findings show that cultural capital and social capital are most prevalent for international graduates. Particularly, cultural capital is in the form of learning nuances of Finnish social culture and working culture, while social capital is in the form of forming friendships and creating personal networks. The way these types of capital are built refers to the mechanisms utilized by international graduates. Cultural capital is built through cultural integration in Finnish society, while social capital is built and maintained through building a network. As capital contributes to employability, the lens of Bourdieu's theory provides comprehensive examination of these concepts and a deeper understanding of how they interact.

Additionally, this study extends Bourdieu's theoretical lens by introducing a "What, How, When and Where" model (Figure 2) to further break down the concept of capital

building. The findings show the two types of capital which international graduates build in throughout their degrees, which is the “what”. The four capital building mechanisms are the “how” which details how international graduates build capital, both specifically within social and cultural capital, as well as the general process of doing so through exerting intentional efforts. Additionally, the findings show the “when and where” of capital building which is done at different stages and in different places. The findings show that international graduates determine “when” to build capital depending on various factors. For example, for cultural capital, participants choose to continue learning Finnish depending on academic demands and motivation, while others plan in advance to learn Finnish after graduation. For social capital, international graduates plan to attend seminars, coffee chats, or events in pursue of networking. As for “where”, international graduates actively look for places and opportunities to build capital, as seen through joining associations and clubs, pursuing internships and other working opportunities, and actively learning Finnish. By using this “what, how, when and where” model to study capital building, Bourdieu’s theory is extended by breaking down the specific of capital building, as well as expanding the theory into employability research use.

5.2 Practical Implications

This study’s findings provide practical insight for international graduates looking to build capital, higher education institutions, employers, and host country policymakers. First, this study informs international graduates about the two most common types of capital built during host country degrees and the capital building mechanisms that are utilized in order to build these types of capital. As noted in previous literature (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011), human capital tends to be the type of capital which is most heavily researched for skilled migrants. As such, it is likely that international graduates are already aware of the importance of increasing knowledge, skills, and abilities either

through education or employment. However, this study brings attention to the other forms of capital which are important for employability, thus broadening the range of capital building activities that international graduates can participate in throughout their degrees. This study is of particular interest to international graduates in Finland, as the study highlighted the importance of cultural and social capital in Finland, particularly the integration and network development, for employability. As such, international graduates can use this study to gain insight on what mechanisms they can utilize throughout their degrees to increase their employability after graduation.

Second, the findings provide insight for higher education policymakers as a way to gain an understanding of student efforts and perspectives in terms of capital building and employability. In this study, all international graduates participated in at least three capital building activities, and all participants had at least one paid employment throughout the duration of their degrees. Despite this, all graduates encountered difficulties in their job search. As such, this study brings attention to the various activities which international graduates engage in throughout their degrees. Specifically, it highlights the efforts exerted alongside their studies, which provides higher education policymakers with a deeper understanding of how graduates build capital and increase employability. In addition, this study shows the perceptions of employability of international graduates in Finland which informs higher education policymakers of the general outlook that international graduates have on employability in Finland. By bringing attention to both international graduate capital building efforts and perceptions of employability, higher education policymakers can use this study to inform future programming and tailor it to employability necessities in Finland, such as networking opportunities or increased integration efforts, among others.

Third, as the findings highlighted the different perceptions of employability that international graduates have in Finland, this study brings awareness to international graduate perceptions and barriers of employability. For companies seeking international

graduate talent, understanding perceptions such as trust, cultural competencies, and language capabilities aids in identifying the barriers for both parties. As such, this can inform hiring practices and recruitment efforts for companies and highlight potential workplace culture barriers.

Finally, while this study was done in the Finnish context, other host countries could use this study to understand the effort exerted by international graduates in order to build capital throughout their degrees. If host countries have the perception that international graduates generally are not making an effort to integrate or increase their employability, this study provides a small insight that international graduates do attempt to build capital and employability. As such, this could aid in the extension of job searching visas after graduation if host countries recognize the efforts being made by international graduates. Especially in the Finnish context, this provides additional insight as to why international graduates may feel it is necessary to leave Finland following their graduation. This study's direct quotations from international graduates themselves provides this insight as they share their personal capital building experiences and perceptions of employability. As Finland looks to increase the number of international graduates that stay to work in Finland, this study provides insight on how barriers impact international graduate employability. However, utilizing these findings to change policies and perceptions of all parties - international graduates, higher education institutions, employers, and government-level policymakers - can aid in increasing employability of international graduates, and subsequently improve the rates in which international graduates stay in Finland.

5.3 Limitations

A main limitation of qualitative research concerns rigor. Qualitative research is often met with a high degree of skepticism resulting in questions about evidence and conclusions.

As a result, qualitative data is often challenged (Gioia et al., 2013). In this study, qualitative rigor was considered when choosing the study's methodology, the Gioia Method, as it is an approach that balances rigor and creativity in the analysis process (Gioia et al., 2013). In addition to the methodology choice, there are other aspects of qualitative research which involve rigor including reliability and internal validity. First, Gibbs (2007) noted that one way to increase reliability is through the coding procedure, including coordinating coding among team members and cross-checking coding with outside researchers. While this was not possible due to the nature of this study, I addressed this limitation by using the other methods noted by Gibbs (2007) including checking transcripts for mistakes and adhering to initial code definitions throughout the duration of the analysis.

The second limitation regarding qualitative rigor in this study is researcher bias. This is when the researcher influences the outcome of the study either knowingly or unknowingly which can impact validity. In any qualitative research, the researcher's interpretation and reporting of findings should be objective and neutral (Johnson et al., 2020). As I am an international in Finland myself, the risk for subjective data interpretation is increased when conducting a study with a participant group similar to myself. While it is not possible to remove bias completely, identification and clarification of this bias is a measure in which I took to address this limitation and increase internal validity, as suggested by Creswell and Creswell (2017, p. 314). In addition, I also used triangulation to increase internal validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 314), by interviewing participants of many nationalities and programs in order to capture the unique experiences of various international graduates.

Another limitation of this study is the unequal ratio of participant groups. At the time of the study, two participants had graduated while six had not yet graduated. Additionally, only three people were officially employed (excluding freelancers) versus five unemployed. As the ratio between those who were employed versus unemployed and

graduated versus non-graduated were unequal, it is possible that the findings include the bias of participants who are unemployed and not yet graduated. Increasing the number of participants in future studies could be beneficial in order to increase the scope and ratio of participants, as well as gain a deeper understanding of capital building and employability of international graduates.

In addition to the unequal ratio of participant groups, the participant group itself was small and concentrated in Jyväskylä. Due to this, the opinions of participants are related to their experiences in only one Finnish city, and opinions and experiences could vary in different parts of Finland in both capital building and employability. Expanding both the participant number and the geographical scope of this study would be beneficial in order to increase study result generalizations.

5.4 Additional Suggestions for Future Research

While increasing the geographical scope within Finland is one way to generalize study findings and identify capital building patterns of students outside of Jyväskylä, another way is through a comparison with another country. In this study, only the Finnish context was researched, leaving an opportunity to compare this study to other international graduates in other countries. Countries in proximity such as Estonia or Sweden could be interesting due to similarities in culture and job market. On the other hand, it could be interesting to compare capital building and employability with countries such as United Kingdom or Canada which are known for high international student intake. By conducting a comparison with another country, further research could identify the similarities and differences between both capital building and perceptions of employability across international graduates in different environments. Including other countries into a future study would expand the generalization of findings across international graduates in various countries.

Another future research avenue is including previous experiences of international graduates. In this study, the focus of capital building was specifically on what international graduates did throughout the duration of their degrees. However, many participants had extensive previous capital building experiences through employment, previous degrees, and other international experiences. In future research, it would be interesting to study these previous experiences to gain a comprehensive understanding of how these informed current capital building mechanisms and how, if at all, it shaped employability perceptions. Additionally, this could lead to further explanation on what makes international graduates successful in gaining employment by identifying patterns of capital building between participants.

Future research could also benefit from expanding on triangulation by utilizing data from multiple sources, rather than only interviews with international graduates. As this study only researched the point of view of international graduates, research could build upon this by studying the perspective of employers and universities. For example, higher education admission staff or faculty point of views could be studied to gain a more comprehensive understanding of capital building, and the opinions of both higher education staff and employers could be studied to understand their own perception of employability for international graduates. This would increase the scope of the study by including multiple perspectives which may provide more information than a single perspective could.

5.5 Conclusion

Through international graduates in Finland, this study explored (1) how capital is built throughout the duration of international graduates' host country degrees and (2) their perceptions of employability in Finland. First, three perceptions of employability in Finland were identified, including a lack of trust in the job market, network-driven hiring,

and underemployability. Second, study findings identified cultural and social capital as the main types of capital built by international graduates. Cultural capital was built by learning the nuances of Finnish culture and workplace practices, while social capital was built by forming friendships and creating personal networks. To build capital, international graduates used four different mechanisms - cultural integration, building a network, developing job-related competencies, and exerting intentional efforts - throughout the duration of their degrees. As a result, this study makes three contributions to employability literature by (1) proposing a framework detailing international graduate capital building and perceptions of employability in Finland, (2) extending skilled migrant employability literature on international graduates, and (3) extending the theoretical lens of Bourdieu's theory of capital by studying it alongside employability. Additionally, this study has practical implications for international graduates, higher education policymakers, employers, and host country policymakers to share insights for solutions regarding international graduate employability in Finland.

REFERENCES

- Adler, P. S., & Kwon, S. W. (2002). Social capital: Prospects for a new concept. *Academy of management review*, 27(1), 17-40.
- Aksakal, M., & Schmidt, K. (2021). The role of cultural capital in life transitions among young intra-EU movers in Germany. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47(8), 1848-1865.
- Al Ariss, A. (2010). Modes of engagement: migration, self-initiated expatriation, and career development. *Career Development International*, 15(4), 338-358.
- Al Ariss, A., & Syed, J. (2011). Capital mobilization of skilled migrants: A relational perspective. *British Journal of Management*, 22(2), 286-304.
- Becker, G. S. (1994). Human capital revisited. In *Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis with special reference to education, third edition* (pp. 15-28). The University of Chicago Press.
- Beine, M., Docquier, F., & Rapoport, H. (2008). Brain drain and human capital formation in developing countries: winners and losers. *The Economic Journal*, 118(528), 631-652.
- Berntson, E., Sverke, M., & Marklund, S. (2006). Predicting perceived employability: human capital or labour market opportunities?. *Economic and Industrial democracy*, 27(2), 223-244.
- Bourdieu, P. (2018a). The forms of capital. In *The sociology of economic life* (pp. 78-92). Routledge.

- Bourdieu, P. (2018b). *Distinction a social critique of the judgement of taste*. In *Inequality* (pp. 287-318). Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. C. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (Vol. 4). Sage.
- Carr, S. C., Inkson, K., & Thorn, K. (2005). From global careers to talent flow: Reinterpreting 'brain drain'. *Journal of world business, 40*(4), 386-398.
- Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American journal of sociology, 94*, S95-S120.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- Crowley-Henry, M., O'Connor, E., & Al Ariss, A. (2018). Portrayal of skilled migrants' careers in business and management studies: A review of the literature and future research agenda. *European Management Review, 15*(3), 375-394.
- Dacre Pool, L., & Sewell, P. (2007). The key to employability: developing a practical model of graduate employability. *Education+ training, 49*(4), 277-289.
- DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). The qualitative research interview. *Medical education, 40*(4), 314-321.
- Dietz, J., Joshi, C., Esses, V. M., Hamilton, L. K., & Gabarrot, F. (2015). The skill paradox: Explaining and reducing employment discrimination against skilled immigrants. *International Journal of Human Resource Management, 26*, 1318-1334.

- DiMaggio, P. (1982). Cultural capital and school success: The impact of status culture participation on the grades of US high school students. *American sociological review*, 189-201.
- DiMaggio, P., & Mohr, J. (1985). Cultural capital, educational attainment, and marital selection. *American journal of sociology*, 90(6), 1231-1261.
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of management review*, 14(4), 532-550.
- Elliott, R. (1999). Editor's introduction to special issue on qualitative psychotherapy research: Definitions, themes and discoveries. *Psychotherapy Research*, 9(3), 251-257.
- Esses, V., Sutter, A., Ortiz, A., Luo, N., Cui, J., & Deacon, L. (2018). Retaining international students in Canada post-graduation: Understanding the motivations and drivers of the decision to stay. *CBIE Research in Brief*, 1-8.
- Fang, T., Samnani, A. K., Novicevic, M. M., & Bing, M. N. (2013). Liability-of-foreignness effects on job success of immigrant job seekers. *Journal of World Business*, 48(1), 98-109.
- Forrier, A., & Sels, L. (2003). The concept employability: A complex mosaic. *International journal of human resources development and management*, 3(2), 102-124.
- Fowler, B. (2011). Pierre Bourdieu: Unorthodox Marxist. *The legacy of Pierre Bourdieu: critical essays*, 33-59.

- Fugate, M., Kinicki, A. J., & Ashforth, B. E. (2004). Employability: A psycho-social construct, its dimensions, and applications. *Journal of Vocational behavior*, 65(1), 14-38.
- Fugate, M., Van der Heijden, B., De Vos, A., Forrier, A., & De Cuyper, N. (2021). Is what's past prologue? A review and agenda for contemporary employability research. *Academy of Management Annals*, 15(1), 266-298.
- Gibbs, G. R. (2007). *Analyzing qualitative data*. SAGE Publications, Ltd, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849208574>
- Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational research methods*, 16(1), 15-31.
- Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American journal of sociology*, 78(6), 1360-1380.
- Guillory, J. (1993). *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*. University of Chicago Press.
- Guo, C., & Al Ariss, A. (2015). Human resource management of international migrants: Current theories and future research. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 26(10), 1287-1297.
- Hajro, A., Caprar, D. V., Zikic, J., & Stahl, G. K. (2021). Global migrants: Understanding the implications for international business and management. *Journal of World Business*, 56(2), 101192.

- Han, Y., Gulanowski, D., & Sears, G. J. (2022). International student graduates workforce integration: A systematic review. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 86*, 163-189.
- Harcourt, M., Lam, H., Harcourt, S., & Flynn, M. (2008). Discrimination in hiring against immigrants and ethnic minorities: the effect of unionization. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 19*(1), 98-115.
- Harvey, L. (2001). Defining and measuring employability. *Quality in higher education, 7*(2), 97-109.
- Hawe, P., & Shiell, A. (2000). Social capital and health promotion: a review. *Social science & medicine, 51*(6), 871-885.
- Hillage, J., & Pollard, E. (1998). Employability: developing a framework for policy analysis. London: DfEE.
- Johnson, J. L., Adkins, D., & Chauvin, S. (2020). A Review of the Quality Indicators of Rigor in Qualitative Research. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education, 84*(1), 7120. <https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe7120>
- Judge, T. A., Cable, D. M., Boudreau, J. W., & Bretz Jr, R. D. (1995). An empirical investigation of the predictors of executive career success. *Personnel psychology, 48*(3), 485-519.
- Laberge, S. (1995). Toward an integration of gender into Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital. *Sociology of sport journal, 12*(2), 132-146.
- Lather, P. (1992). Critical Frames in Educational Research: Feminist and Post-Structural Perspectives. *Theory Into Practice, 31*(2), 87-99. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1476394>

- Luo, Y., & Mezas, J. M. (2002). Liabilities of foreignness-Concepts, constructs, and consequences. *Journal of International Management*, 3(8), 217-221.
- Magnani, G., & Gioia, D. (2023). Using the Gioia Methodology in international business and entrepreneurship research. *International Business Review*, 32(2), 102097.
- McCall, L. (1992). Does gender fit? Bourdieu, feminism, and conceptions of social order. *Theory and society*, 837-867.
- Merriam, S. B. (2002). Introduction to qualitative research. *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*, 1(1), 1-17.
- Migri. (2022). A record number of international students move to Finland in 2022. Retrieved from: <https://migri.fi/en/-/a-record-number-of-international-students-move-to-finland-in-2022#:~:text=The%20number%20of%20international%20students,were%20granted%20to%204%2C595%20applicants>.
- Neuman, L. W. (2007). *Social research methods*, 6/E. Pearson Education India.
- OECD. (2022). Rising international student mobility. Retrieved from: <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/en/data-insights/rising-international-student-mobility>.
- Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice*. Sage publications.
- Peltokorpi, V., & Xie, J. (2023). When little things make a big difference: A Bourdieusian perspective on skilled migrants' linguistic, social, and economic capital in multinational corporations. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 1-27.

- Putnam, R. D. (2015). Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. In *The city reader* (pp. 188-196). Routledge.
- Risberg, A., & Romani, L. (2022). Underemploying highly skilled migrants: An organizational logic protecting corporate 'normality'. *human relations, 75*(4), 655-680.
- Seibert, S. E., Kraimer, M. L., & Liden, R. C. (2001). A social capital theory of career success. *Academy of management journal, 44*(2), 219-237.
- Siisiäinen, M. (2003). Two concepts of social capital: Bourdieu vs. Putnam. *International journal of contemporary sociology, 40*(2), 183-204.
- Skeggs, B. (2004). Context and background: Pierre Bourdieu's analysis of class, gender and sexuality. *The Sociological Review, 52*, 19-33.
- Saksela-Bergholm, S. (2020). Socially included or excluded? The role of social capital among Filipino labour migrants. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research, 10*(3), 27-40.
- Saksela-Bergholm, S., Toivanen, M., & Wahlbeck, Ö. (2019). Migrant capital as a resource for migrant communities. *Social inclusion, 7*(4), 164-170.
- Sullivan, A. (2002). Bourdieu and education: How useful is Bourdieu's theory for researchers?. *Netherlands Journal of Social Sciences, 38*, 144-166.
- Sullivan, S. E., & Al Ariss, A. (2019). Employment after retirement: A review and framework for future research. *Journal of Management, 45*(1), 262-284.
- Syed, J., & Özbilgin, M. (2009). A relational framework for international transfer of diversity management practices. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 20*(12), 2435-2453.

- Tharenou, P., & Kulik, C. T. (2020). Skilled migrants employed in developed, mature economies: From newcomers to organizational insiders. *Journal of Management*, 46(6), 1156-1181.
- UKCES (2009). The employability challenge: Full report. UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES). Retrieved from webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.ukces.org.uk/upload/pdf/EmployabilityChallengeFullReport.pdf
- Van Hoye, G., Van Hooft, E. A., & Lievens, F. (2009). Networking as a job search behaviour: A social network perspective. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 82(3), 661-682.
- Van Hooft, E. A., Kammeyer-Mueller, J. D., Wanberg, C. R., Kanfer, R., & Basbug, G. (2021). Job search and employment success: A quantitative review and future research agenda. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 106(5), 674.
- Wilson, F., Carter, S., Tagg, S., Shaw, E., & Lam, W. (2007). Bank loan officers' perceptions of business owners: The role of gender. *British Journal of Management*, 18(2), 154-171.
- Wolff, H. G., & Moser, K. (2009). Effects of networking on career success: a longitudinal study. *Journal of applied psychology*, 94(1), 196.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (Vol. 5). sage.
- YLE. (2023a). Survey: Nearly half of foreign students plan to leave Finland after graduating. Retrieved from: <https://yle.fi/a/74-20022258>

YLE. (2023b). Study: Immigration needs tripling to maintain Finland's labour force.

Retrieved from: <https://yle.fi/a/74-20016231>

Zikic, J., Bonache, J., & Cerdin, J. L. (2010). Crossing national boundaries: A typology of qualified immigrants' career orientations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31(5), 667-686.

APPENDIX A

Employability and capital building of international graduates in Finland: A semi-structured interview guide

Introduction

- **Demographic information** (home country, age, program, how many years living in Finland, current role)
- **Employability experiences**
 - A. Underemployment, secure vs unstable job, contract, etc
 - B. Different employability experiences in Finland or elsewhere

Main Interview Questions/Guiding Themes

Cultural Capital

1. International Background

- A. Were there any opportunities/obstacles as an international, and how did your specific international background contribute to them?
- B. Were your previous international experiences useful/helpful in Finland?
- C. How did being an international impact your employability in Finland?

2. Educational Experiences

- A. How did your program and general educational experiences in Finland contribute to your employability?

3. Language Skills

- A. Did you actively learn Finnish, and if so, how did it impact your employability?

Social Capital

1. Networking

- A. How did your social networks (includes all networks - students, work, online, etc) contribute to your employability?
- B. Was there a certain approach you had to networking throughout your program?

2. Mentorships

- A. Did you have any informal or formal mentorships?
- B. How did these mentorships aid in your understanding of the job market and opportunities in Finland?

3. Student Activities

- A. Were there any social activities that significantly impacted your social capital (clubs, associations, sports, etc)?
- B. How did networking with other students and faculty impact your employability?

Economic Capital

1. Employment

- A. Did you work (part-time, full-time, etc) or take part in internships during your program?

2. Education

- A. Did you take part in any workshops, additional courses, certifications, etc throughout your program?
- B. How did these or other educational investments impact your employability in Finland?

Conclusion

Is there anything else you would like to add about employability or capital building as an international in Finland?