

**NAVIGATING CAREER PATHS IN A FOREIGN LAND: A  
FOCUS ON DETERMINANTS OF CAREER CHOICES  
AMONG EDUCATED IMMIGRANTS AND INTERNA-  
TIONAL STUDENTS IN JYVÄSKYLÄ**

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Abstract	<p>The study examines the variables that affect the employment decisions of educated immigrants and international students in Jyväskylä, Finland. Qualitative methodology was used and 10 educated immigrants and international students were interviewed in winter, 2023. The study poses the following research questions: What elements did the participants interviewed for this study (i.e. educated immigrants and international students) perceive to affect their choice of career in Finland? and To what extent did the participants interviewed for this study explain their career decision making process in Finland to be influenced by cultural differences and language barriers?. Thematic analysis was used and themes such as language barriers, cultural differences, resilience, and adaptability have been identified in the research. These findings emphasise the interaction between structural obstacles and individual objectives. The results underline the importance of professional networks and integration programmes, as well as the need for legislative initiatives aimed at supporting career development by educated migrants and international students. Overall, this research has improved knowledge of the career paths of educated immigrants in Finland and the factors that influence their career choices. In addition, it provides useful data to legislators, businesses and educational institutions in order to increase the success of this population as well as its</p>

integration into the workforce.

Keywords

Educated immigrants, International students, Career choices, Intergration, Laguage barriers, Structural obstacles, Personal obligations, Recilience

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Additional information

## **FIGURES & TABLES**

Table 1: Data on Interviews .....	17
Figure 1: Coding Framework .....	19

## Table of Contents

1	CHAPTER: INTRODUCTION.....	1
	1.1 Background of the Study .....	1
	1.2 Research Problem and Theoretical Framework .....	2
	1.3 Research Gap.....	3
	1.4 Statement of the Problem .....	4
	1.5 Research Objectives and Research Questions .....	5
	1.6 Social Relevance of the Study .....	6
2	CHAPTER: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	7
	2.1 Immigrant Integration and Workplace Environment.....	7
	2.2 Theoretical Perspectives on Career Choices .....	8
	2.3 Social Cognitive Career Theory .....	9
	2.4 Cultural Adaptation and Acculturation.....	9
	2.5 Overview of Migration Trends in Finland.....	10
	2.6 Factors Influencing Career Choices .....	12
	2.7 Previous Research on Immigrants' Career Choices in Finland .....	13
3	CHAPTER: METHODOLOGY .....	15
	3.1 Data Collection.....	15
	3.2 Population and Sampling.....	16
	3.3 Method of Data Collection .....	19
	3.4 Data Analysis Techniques .....	19
	3.5 Protecting Confidentiality and Anonymity.....	21
4	CHAPTER: RESULTS .....	23
	4.1 Overview of the Results.....	23
	4.2 Understanding Interview Responses.....	24
	4.3 Theme 1: Motivations for Migration.....	26
	4.4 Theme 2: Challenges in the Job Market.....	27
	4.5 Theme 3: Strategies for Overcoming Barriers.....	28
	4.6 Theme 4: Career Goals for the Future.....	29
	4.7 Mapping Results through SCCT Theoretical Lens .....	30
5	CHAPTER: DISCUSSION .....	33
	5.1 Determinants of career choices .....	34
	5.2 Comparison of the Findings from the Interviews with Existing Literature.....	36
6	CHAPTER: CONCLUSION .....	39
	6.1 Summary of Key Findings.....	39

6.2 Contribution to Literature .....	40
6.3 Implications of Findings for Career Counseling and Support Services .....	42
6.4 Limitations of the Study .....	43
6.5 Suggestions for Future Research .....	45
7 REFERENCES.....	47
APPENDICES.....	54
APPENDIX A: Interview Guide .....	54
APPENDIX B: Coding Framework .....	56

# 1 CHAPTER: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

As a result of Finland's well established education system, high standard of living and sound economy, this country has become increasingly popular as a destination for immigrants and international students (Eskelä, 2013). Over time, the number of immigrants in Finland has been growing and they represent a wide range of cultures, languages or educational backgrounds. In spite of the fact that immigration in Finland has not historically been very common, over recent decades there has been a significant increase in immigration. Indeed, the number of immigrants in Finland increased from 31,278 to 49,998 between 2012 and 2022 (Statista, 2023). These immigrants include a number of international students who come to Finland in search of opportunities for higher education, as well as skilled professionals who move to Finland in search of employment and personal development (Mutuku, 2017).

However, there are a number of obvious advantages and disadvantages to moving to Finland, in particular as regards employment prospects and career development. Language, cultural, and social barriers are commonplace for immigrants, and they may have a large influence on their ability to pursue rewarding professional routes and integrate into the workforce. It is therefore clear that immigrants who wish to establish themselves professionally in Finland may find it difficult to cope with the complexity of the new environment and to understand the obstacles in the Finnish labour market. Rather, some of them may be inclined to make a name for themselves by taking the first job they find, even if it has little to do with their area of expertise (Mutuku, 2017). Out of all the immigrants in Finland who are looking for work, this study is focused on two types of immigrants: international students and educated immigrants. An international student is someone who pursues his or her studies in another country

than their own. They fall under the category of student visas and enroll in an educational institution, such as a college or university, to pursue a course of study. On the other hand, educated immigrants are those who have left their country and moved elsewhere. They have completed their studies, such as a university degree or the equivalent of an occupational qualification, within their own home country or where they are now living. They can also apply for other kinds of visas, such as family, employment, and others (Mattoo et al., 2008).

## **1.2 Research Problem and Theoretical Framework**

This study uses the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent et al., 2002) as its main theoretical framework to assess the complexity of career choices made by immigrants in Finland. A comprehensive framework for analyzing how personal characteristics, contextual factors and cognitive processes influence career development and decision making is provided by the SCCT which was developed by Robert Lent, Steven Brown and Gail Hackett (2002).

The concept of self-efficacy, or people's confidence in their ability to perform activities and achieve the results they desire, is strongly emphasized by SCCT. In order to determine an individual's professional aspirations, decisions, and perseverance, Lent and Brown argue that the concept of self-efficacy is essential (Lent & Brown, 2016). In terms of professional decisions made by immigrants, confidence in their ability to overcome language and cultural barriers, adapt to new work settings or make a successful career choice is likely to influence how they feel about themselves (Lent & Brown, 2016).

Additionally, SCCT emphasizes the significance of outcome expectancies, which are people's perceptions of the results of their deeds (Brown & Lent, 2023). It has a significant impact on the way in which immigrants make decisions about their career when they are aware of the advantages and disadvantages associated with different employment options. Because of the apparent hazards of discrimination or reduced prospects for progress owing to language or cultural difficulties, immigrants may not weigh the possible benefits of pursuing employment in high-demand industries. In addition, contacts with employers, family members, colleagues and other connected persons of their community can influence the perception of job potential and restrictions carried by immigrants.



This study is embedded in qualitative methodology and therefore focusing on the factors that educated immigrants and international students perceive to influence their career choices. This may include self-efficacy beliefs, expectations of outcomes, and social contextual factors, which explains why the use of SCCT as a theoretical framework is relevant. This deep examination of the perceived mechanisms underpinning immigration's career development and integration into host societies is thereby thorough and reliable.

### **1.3 Research Gap**

Given the growing number of immigrants in Finland, it is clear that there is a lack of studies to analyze factors perceived to influence their career choices and working experience. Although some previous research has clarified certain aspects of immigrant integration and labour market participation, there is still a lack of knowledge on the unique challenges and possibilities encountered by educated immigrants and international students in Finland (Mutuku, 2017). In addition, a large body of literature done on the topic has focused on immigrants who are currently in Finland under a visa category which includes refugee visas (Asylum in Finland) (Koskela, 2014). Thus, few studies have been carried out on employment prospects for immigrants who are under student visa and family visa. In addition, it is important to take into account that the trajectories of educated immigrants' career choices, given that international students pursuing a Master's degree are already well educated and are about to receive their degree from a Finnish university. However, as the present Master's thesis observed, it can be very rare for a previous education to contribute their choice of professional path in the early stages of job search, even though these factors may be expected to have an impact on their employability. It is therefore necessary to investigate the aims and experiences of highly educated immigrants, since it is still unknown how hard their situations such as, financial instability, limited time to extend visa, and conditions to meet before applying for visa extension, had an impact on their chosen careers.

This study specifically addresses this gap by examining factors perceived to influence the employment choices of educated immigrants and students from abroad living in Jyväskylä. This study provides an important perspective on the different obstacles and prospects facing immigrants, through an in-depth examination of the way participants talked of the connection between their identity, culture, environment and professional decisions. This study thus con-

tributes to the development of more effective planning and support systems for international students and educated immigrants in Finland so as to enable them to make informed career choices and realize their professional objectives. Furthermore, by fully understanding the complex processes affecting career decisions of international students and educated immigrants in Jyväskylä, this study will contribute to a higher level of equality, diversity and inclusion in Finland's job market.

## **1.4 Statement of the Problem**

Finland has become one of the most attractive destinations for educated immigrants and international students, according to reports ("Migration decisions of skilled immigrants", n.d.). However, there is still a fundamental problem with the mismatch between immigrants' professional goals and their actual job experience in Finland. Many educated immigrants face anxiety and difficulty when deciding to enter the labour market, often leading to mismatches between their qualifications, skills and prospects in local employment markets. The complexity of the interplay between elements affecting their professional decision-making processes makes it harder to overcome obstacles (Gati et al., 1996). Moreover, the absence of tailored support systems may make immigrants feel lost and powerless in pursuit of their professional goals (Schultheiss & Davis, 2015).

In addition, the lack of extensive and relevant career advice and support services for international students and immigrants makes this problem worse as they are left to struggle in a complex Finnish employment market with little guidance or assistance. The lack of knowledge on the factors that influence employment choices by educated immigrants and foreigners in Jyväskylä is thus a key issue which this study addresses. The objective of this study is to identify the key elements that international students and educated immigrants perceive to affect their decision-making processes when searching for jobs. Further, this thesis proposes improvements in career counselling and support services for educated immigrants and international students living in Finland. To this end, proposals and workable plans for improving the efficiency and inclusion of career counselling programmes are also envisioned in the conclusion pointing to the societal implications of this study. The study therefore directly contributes to the development of more inclusive, unrestricted, and successful paths to

professional integration and success in Finland by identifying obstacles and enabling factors for career development.

## 1.5 Research Objectives and Research Questions

In order to fulfill the main objective of this study, which aims at examining the reasons educated immigrants and international students in Jyväskylä present as affecting their career choices, it is necessary to examine perceived individual factors that influence their choices. Looking at traits, attitudes and goals of immigrants which affect their decision to work or pursue a career reveals the different elements that play a role in factors their career choices. The different demands and preferences of immigrants in their transition to foreign employment are also highlighted by these results (Tiedekunta et al., 2022).

In addition, the study pays attention to contextual elements brought forth by the participants. That is, the study investigates how hard it is for immigrants to perceive the Finnish labour market and its opportunities as a result of difficulty to adapt to culture, lack of linguistic skills and time consuming acculturation experience. Consequently, the study reveals the specific difficulties that immigrants in Finland face in integrating into the labour market. Literature on skilled Nepalese immigrants' employment paths in Finland has shown language to play a significant role (Tiedekunta et al., 2022). Informed by the body of literature mentioned previously, the present study aims to reveal the specific difficulties that educated immigrants and international students in Finland perceived to play a significant role in integrating into the labour market. The research question and sub-questions of this thesis are therefore as such:

**Research Question:** What elements did the participants interviewed for this study (i.e. educated immigrants and international students) perceive to affect their choice of career in Finland?

**Sub-question:** To what extent do the participants interviewed for this study explained their career decision making process in Finland to be influenced by cultural differences and language barriers?

These research questions examine the perceived impact of language and culture barriers on professional decisions made by educated immigrants international students. They also refer to

the difficulties faced by participants who find themselves in a foreign land and are struggling to thrive for better opportunities that will enable them to make a career progress.

## **1.6 Social Relevance of the Study**

By bridging the gap between earlier studies on related issues and current questions and problems that immigrants are still facing as they seek to find their ideal work in another country, this study highlights the importance of immigration integration, education, employment and policy making. This study could provide important insight to policymakers and programme managers who assist immigrants in their employment and integration by knowing the difficulties they encounter in the Finnish labour market. As a result, they can make more effective policy interventions to foster their integration into the economy and society.

This study can also contribute to increasing diversity and inclusion in Finland's labour market by tackling the problems immigrants face when discovering and fulfilling their potential for employment. This research can highlight the impact of cultural differences, language obstacles and some immigration policies on job choices for immigrants by drawing attention to the importance of setting up a diverse workplace and adopting diversity friendly recruitment and retention strategies between employers and organizations.

Overall, this study brings to light the dynamics of career decision making for educated immigrants in Jyväskylä by adding new data and theoretical understandings. As a result, the academic debate on immigration integration, career development and cross-cultural psychology will continue to improve. The study is of particular importance as it has the potential to produce knowledge and recommendations that can be implemented in practice. The development of a knowledge base on the adaptation and integration of educated immigrants into host societies will thus develop their quality of life, economically, socially and psychologically.

## **2 CHAPTER: LITERATURE REVIEW**

The employment decisions of educated immigrants and international students in Finland are influenced by a number of factors, from personality traits to culture dynamics and immigration legislation in their host countries (Negassa, 2015). As shown in literature, to support the professional growth of immigrants and international students, as well as their efficient integration into the work environment in Finland, it is important that we understand how these decisions are made in detail (Negassa, 2015). For this purpose, this thesis investigates the difficulties that educated immigrants in Finland may perceive to play a significant role in integrating into the work environment by interviewing ten participants about their professional paths.

### **2.1 Immigrant Integration and Workplace Environment**

In particular, immigrants find it difficult to navigate the labour market in their host countries. Language barriers, cultural difficulties and a lack of acceptance of foreign qualifications are some of the main obstacles that may prevent immigrants from finding jobs that match their abilities and experience (Alho, 2020). Owing to these difficulties, compared to those who are native-born, most immigrants are more likely to encounter underemployment, unemployment, or unauthorized employment (jobs without working contracts) (Mathies & Karhunen, 2020). It is therefore equally important to recognize obstacles and the drivers of educated immigrants' integration in the Finnish workplace environment in order to develop supportive

policies and support systems that effectively promote social mobility and economic inclusion within a host country.

Educated immigrants, especially international students enrolled in courses, constitute a diverse demographic with specific demands and goals for professional growth. Unlike other migrants, international students can start studying abroad in order to obtain a degree that will allow them to work internationally. Because of that, a number of international students have succeeded in finding employment and advancing their career after graduation in their host country (Eskelä, 2013). However, transition may be hard from student to professional life. Adjustment to cultural norms, obtaining work experience, and competing in the labour market, as well as the management of work visa requirements that require a fulltime permanent contract with a higher annual salary, are some of the challenges (Alho, 2020). The provision of specialized career counselling and support services to enable international students to make a seamless transition into the labour market is thus more important than ever before in understanding their careers and objectives. If this is not the case, the host nation's investment in their education will be as worthless as the skills and knowledge they have acquired.

## **2.2 Theoretical Perspectives on Career Choices**

The social cognitive career theory (SCCT) (Lent et al., 2002) is used in this study to clarify how immigrants and international students make career decisions. The key SCCT variables, such as self-efficacy, outcome expectations, perceived obstacles and their relationship to career choice are more illuminating for the research question of the study (Lindley, 2005). In brief, this theory highlights how people's job choices and behaviours are shaped by their self-efficacy beliefs, result expectancies, and environmental circumstances (Lent et al., 1994). In addition, SCCT provides a thorough examination of the factors influencing educated immigrant and international students' career choices by considering all aspects of society, politics, family and environment.

## **2.3 Social Cognitive Career Theory**

As briefly explained in Chapter 1; Introduction, the fundamental concept of SCCT is self-efficacy, which describes people's belief in their ability to complete tasks successfully and deliver what they are supposed to do (Bandura, 1977). The beliefs of individuals on the level of self-efficacy play an important role in their decisions, career goals and perseverance to pursue them. International students and immigrants rely on their ideas about their own abilities to overcome obstacles, which boosts their self-esteem and drives them to pursue professional chances. SCCT also stressed the importance of outcome expectations, which is to say that people's perception of outcomes from their performances at the workplace. (Lent & Brown, 2013). For that reason, the advantages and disadvantages of various employment routes may be taken into consideration by educated immigrants according to their objectives for success, fulfillment or renewal of residence permits. In spite of negative expectations such as discrimination, restricted opportunities for advancement and the inability to comply with Migri's (Customer Guidance Services, n.d.) requirements in order to obtain a work permit, immigrants may still be encouraged to pursue some career paths by positive expectations like promotion and financial stability.

In order to deal with the difficulties of professional advancement in their new country, support networks are usually used by educated migrants. Institutions' policies and practices, including diversity efforts and career counselling programmes, provide them with tools and knowledge of the opportunities they must exploit in order to be successful in their selected professional paths. According to SCCT, it is the people's surroundings that shape their professional choices and behaviour (Lent & Brown, 2013). In addition, SCCT provides a simple framework for understanding how the careers of educated immigrants are changing in their new home countries (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994).

## **2.4 Cultural Adaptation and Acculturation**

Acculturation is the process of becoming more familiar with a culture which differs from one's own, resulting in changes in thinking and behavior (Maehler et al., 2019). Depending on the person, acculturation may take a number of years. Embracing, adjusting or negotiating differences of the foreign culture is a process that requires time and patience of the immi-

grants (Maehler et al., 2019). Some studies also highlight the significant role played by host societies by openly embracing immigrants from different cultures to ease out the difficulties faced by both immigrants and locals (Maehler et al., 2019). However, cultural adaptation and acculturation have a major impact on immigrants' experience and choice of profession. Thereby, it can be difficult for immigrants to understand the cultural norms, attitudes, and expectations of the working environment in their host country (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). In addition, these difficulties may be exacerbated by dialects and language barriers which make cooperation and communication with colleagues even harder for immigrants (Tange & Luring, 2009).

Going on to a few schools of thought from Intercultural Communication to handle this intricate idea of acculturation and adaptation, essentialist viewpoints are important since they frequently highlight the maintenance of cultural identity throughout adaptation. In addition, these views suggest that immigrants must move with their fundamental cultural values, beliefs and practices which may change but remain necessary in order to preserve their cultural heritage as they adjust to a new environment (Bastian & Haslam, 2008). It is also important to understand the intersectionality of identity, so as to address problems related to intercultural adaptation and migration. A number of diverse factors such as race, ethnic origin, gender and socioeconomic status shape the experience of an immigrant in his host society (Bastian & Haslam, 2008). In the case of immigrants, these factors also play an important role in their choice of employment. The importance of language in the acculturation process is also apparent. It is not just the obstacles to communication; it also relates to how language skills affect immigrants' ability to access resources, networks of friends and career prospects (Kang, 2006). Therefore, for a full understanding of cultural adaptation and acculturation it is necessary to take account of the various views expressed in Intercultural Communication.

## **2.5 Overview of Migration Trends in Finland**

Finland has welcomed a large number of immigrants over the past few decades and has been open to labour migration in many forms. The reason is that the working-age population is declining and certain industries are experiencing a labour shortage as a result of Finland's ageing population and low birth rate. Therefore, immigration is one way to address issues with the employment market and keep the welfare state intact (Labour Migration, n.d.). In



addition, the dynamics of the Finnish labour market and demographic composition are greatly influenced by migration. Finland has seen a marked change in its migration patterns as a result of the significant increase in immigration over recent decades. Consequently, Finland's immigrant population has become more diverse than in the past.

It should be noted that in Finland immigration in the past has not had much impact on population dynamics in the country. As a result, the emigration rate in Finland has also been higher than the immigration rate in the past. Accordingly, due to the factors such as globalization, labor shortages, and international mobility, Finland has seen a steady increase in immigration in recent years that has contributed to an increase in immigration rates (Statistics Finland, 2023). Thus, in recent years Finland has become a more attractive destination for immigrants seeking education, work and resettlement opportunities.

The growth in Finland's immigrant population is mainly due to international students from different backgrounds and nationalities coming to study at the country's institutions and universities (Mathies & Karhunen, 2020). Two significant factors contributing to this are the exceptional quality of Finland's educational system, which is widely regarded as one of the best in the world, and the high demand for degrees awarded by Finnish institutions across the globe (Välimaa, 2021). Moreover, Finland has emerged as a sought-after spot for skilled migrants and experts aiming to progress in their fields and elevate their living standards, owing to its thriving economy and exceptional healthcare services (Alho, 2020).

The demographic composition of immigrants in Finland is varied, encompassing individuals who arrived under different visa classifications and from different countries and cultural heritages. A significant portion of Finland's immigrant community hails from neighboring countries like Russia, Estonia, and Sweden. Additionally, immigrants from non-European countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, and India are increasingly establishing a presence in the country (Immigration Statistics 2021, 2022). The range of diversity exemplifies Finland's changing landscape as a sought-after hub for immigrants from across the world, leading to an expansion of possibilities for cooperation and intercultural communication within the country.

The growing diversity of Finland makes it possible to innovate and make progress in the economy, but also poses challenges for Social Cohesion and Immigration Absorption. The ability of immigrants to obtain employment, education or social services is significantly in-

fluenced by language barriers, cultural differences and discrimination (Negassa, 2015). In addition, it is necessary to introduce new policies and programmes in order to facilitate the integration of immigrants into Finland and Finnish society. Language training, employment assistance and cultural orientation should be included in these programmes and policies (Negretti & García-Yeste, 2014).

## **2.6 Factors Influencing Career Choices**

Environmental conditions, societal dynamics and individual traits are some of the major elements literature on the topic has shown to influence career choices in Finland (Alho, 2020). The personal qualities of the immigrants in Finland have been shown to have a major impact on professional decisions, among other factors (Mukutu, 2017). Personal interests, values, skills and personality factors affect people's choices and ambitions for their careers (Lent & Brown, 2013). For educated immigrants and international students, concerns such as previous education and employment experiences, family history, and cultural upbringing may also have an impact on these aspects. While the academic interest and talent of international students can influence their choice of employment after college (Mathies & Karhunen, 2020), immigrants' previous work experience in their home country may have an important impact on their aspirations and professional ambitions when they move to a new country (Mukutu, 2017).

Job decisions are also influenced by the social and cultural context. Peer pressure, cultural norms and family expectations can also influence the immigrant's understanding of adequate career pathways and occupations (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1994). Moreover, immigrants' opinions about work, achievement and career satisfaction can be influenced by their culture or beliefs (Koskela, 2014). These views may also lead to immigrants feeling dissatisfied with the way decisions are being made in a foreign context. Due to the fact that they must negotiate several cultural settings and attempt to strike a balance between expectations from home and host countries, skilled migrants and overseas students need to make more complex career choices.

Another important factor influencing career choices is the seemingly available freedom of choice of employment and education. Immigrants and international students may face obsta-

cles in their pursuit of these opportunities due to language skills requirements, acceptance of foreign qualifications or budgetary constraints even though they have the same rights as local residents when it comes to pursuing educational and professional possibilities (Negassa, 2015). In the same way, a lack of employment opportunities or occupational segregation based on nationality or ethnic origin may have an impact on immigrants' career prospects (Alho, 2020). Therefore, an awareness of the structural constraints and competition for employment opportunities on the labour market is needed to address differences in career success between immigrant communities.

Career decisions may also be affected by the lack of funds and support from the support services. As they navigate their careers, international students and immigrants can benefit greatly from career counselling services, mentor programmes and by being informed on available opportunities (Negretti & García-Yeste, 2014). By implementing policies and initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace, as well as creating a more welcoming environment, institutions can also make it easier for educated immigrants to decide on their career path (Eskelä, 2013).

## **2.7 Previous Research on Immigrants' Career Choices in Finland**

Different aspects of immigrant career paths have been examined in a number of studies, giving an insight into the obstacles and possibilities faced by immigrants when trying to fulfil their professional ambitions in Finland. For instance, the Alho's research (2020) has shown how difficult it is for international students to find work in Finland. Alho's research (2020) shows that the common challenges for international students are language proficiency requirements, the lack of employability networks and the absence of experience in Finland's labor market. Most of them are struggling to find work opportunities that meet their visa extension criteria, rather than their professional ambitions, despite the fact that they have acquired relevant skills and qualifications. In Eskelä's study (2013) on migration decisions of skilled migrants, international students at Finnish universities were also included. This study shows the reasons why educated immigrants choose Finland, such as educational opportunities, quality of life and employment prospects, while highlighting the difficulties that skilled migrants are facing such as, language skills, cultural adjustment or recognition of foreign qualifications. Negassa's study (2015) showed that, although they have important skills and

qualifications, foreign graduates in Finland are confronted with workplace discrimination, language proficiency requirements as well as a lack of employment experience. According to Negassa's study (2015), social networks and support services play an essential role in helping immigrants to find work and progress in their careers.

However, a thorough understanding of the obstacles and opportunities faced by immigrants to achieve their career goals has been provided through earlier research on immigrant employment choices in Finland. By closely examining the employability, migration decisions and job seeking experience of migrants, researchers have identified obstacles to their integration into the labour market. In order to achieve progress, it is necessary to study in more detail the structural injustices and obstacles faced by immigrants living in Finland as well as provide targeted interventions that will help them succeed in their integration with society and employment.

This research adds to the existing literature by examining the experiences of international students and educated immigrants in Finland. This is achieved by focusing on the factors which affect their career choice. The study analyses the possibilities and obstacles faced by educated immigrants from different backgrounds as they navigate the Finnish labour market in order to identify variables that influence their career choice. This research will also contribute to filling gaps in literature and assisting initiatives aimed at promoting diversity, inclusion and fair access to employment opportunities within the Finnish context by providing insight into experiences of educated immigrants and international students living in Finland.

### **3 CHAPTER: METHODOLOGY**

This section describes the methodology, processes and strategies which have been applied to examine factors affecting career decisions of educated immigrants in Jyväskylä. A robust methodology is required to answer the research questions and objectives set out in Chapter 1 and to guarantee the validity, reliability and accuracy of the research findings.

In this context, the study uses a qualitative research approach in order to examine factors the participants perceived to influence their career choices. The participants of this study (more information below) were international students and educated immigrants living in Jyväskylä. Qualitative research is a valuable addition to more traditional methods for investigating complex phenomena, such as the decision making of professionals and their impact on career ambitions, because it enables an in depth examination of people's experiences, views or motivations (Hu & Chang, 2017). The study has been able to gain insight into the complexity and mutative nature of immigrants' career paths and decision-making processes using interviews as a qualitative data collection approach.

#### **3.1 Data Collection**

The only method used to obtain data for this study was the interviews with international students and educated immigrants in Jyväskylä, which were conducted in a participatory format. In semi-structured interviews, more freedom and deep examination of participants' experiences can be obtained which leads to the emergence of new themes and insights (Patton,

2001). Based on participants' preferences and practical considerations, interviews for this study were conducted either in person or online. The theoretical framework and research questions set out in Chapter 1: Introduction, have been a basis for developing the semi-structured interview guide, in which questions touched upon the participants' career decisions, experiences, obstacles they encountered as well as their perspectives on life and career in Finnish context.

## **3.2 Population and Sampling**

In order to select the research participants, a purposive sample of educated immigrants who have been enrolled for study programmes in several institutes of Jyväskylä and those who are currently residents in Jyväskylä was considered. The sample included a diversity of country, immigration status, educational background and career stage. Eligible participants were encouraged to take part in the study through a range of channels, including social media platforms, community groups and workplace colleagues as well as university premises.

It is first of all necessary to understand the population in order to determine the best sampling technique. This is a key element of research methodology because it establishes the reliability and generalizability of results from studies. The targeted demographic of the observation as well as sample methods used to select its participants are illustrated in this section.

The study's target demography consists of educated immigrants and international students living in Jyväskylä who have completed or are preparing to complete their studies while seeking jobs. Also, this group consists of people who came to Finland in search of employment or training opportunities. They are from a variety of professions, education levels and cultural backgrounds. This group offers particular insight into the difficulties and prospects faced by educated immigrants and international students, particularly in Jyväskylä. An insight into the integration process, obstacles they face when deciding on a job and effectiveness of support networks is offered by their varied professional experience, education background and cultural exposure. Moreover, given that they are educated immigrants who constantly seek employment or training opportunities in Finland, they have a good opportunity to comment on the specific obstacles faced by them. By focusing on this group of immigrants, the study better identified the variables that influence the choice of professions and the path to integration,

as well as captured a variety of experiences that would not have been apparent to other immigrant groups.

In view of the heterogeneous nature of the Jyväskylä’s immigrant community, the study used a purposive sampling strategy to ensure the inclusion of individuals with a variety of backgrounds and experiences. By allowing researchers to select participants on the basis of certain characteristics that are relevant to study topics, an intentional sampling enables data obtained to be collected with a high level of detail.

Participants are selected on the basis of inclusion criteria that, in particular, aim at individuals who are students from abroad or immigrants living in Jyväskylä. Moreover, they must be enrolled in school or looking for work in Finland, or have just graduated and joined the labour market. The sample includes people from a variety of cultures in order to broaden the range of views and experience. However, to determine the sample size for this study, the saturation principle (Quantilope, 2024) was used. According to this concept, the collection of data should continue until there are no new themes or findings from the analysis (Guest et al., 2006). As a result, the sample size has been indeterminable and dependent on the volume and quality of data collected during the course of the investigation.

Table 1: Data on Interviews

Participant	Duration of the Interview	Time Spent in Finland	Education Level	Previous Job	Career Goals	Current Job
HM	22 min	1 year and 6 months	Master’s in Food Science	Food Specialist	To become a Food specialist in a Reputed Hotel in Finland	Part-time cook
IND	30 min	2 years and 3 months	Bachelor’s in Sports Science	Entrepreneur, owner of a summer cottage	To open a Fitness academy	Bachelor’s in Biology of Physical Activity student; part-time GIG Distributor
NI	35 min	2 years	Master’s in Sports Science	University lecturer	To become a senior university lecturer	Master’s in Biology of Physical Activity student; part-time

Participant	Duration of the Interview	Time Spent in Finland	Education Level	Previous Job	Career Goals	Current Job
					turer in Finland	GIG Distributor
RE	25 min	2 years and 8 months	Bachelor's in Nursing	Nurse at Government Hospital	To become a permanent nurse	Bachelor's in Nursing student; part-time caretaker
SH	40 min	3 years	Bachelor's in Economics	Accountant	To become a project manager	Bachelor's in Business Management student; part-time housekeeper
AB	20 min	4 years	Bachelor's degree in English	English teacher	To become a Teacher	A cleaner
AF	30 min	1 year and 6 months	Master's degree in Business Management	A banker	To become a marketing executive	A Master's in Digital Marketing student; a GIG cleaner
AL	30 min	3 years	Master's Degree in English Literature	An English teacher	To become a teacher	Part-time delivery person
CE	18 min	6 years		Owned a business	To open a travel agency	Student at Vocational Training College; part-time cab driver
CH	25 min	3 years	Bachelor's degree in Software Developing	A Software developer	To become a software developer	Bachelor of Engineering in Information and Communication Technology student



### **3.3 Method of Data Collection**

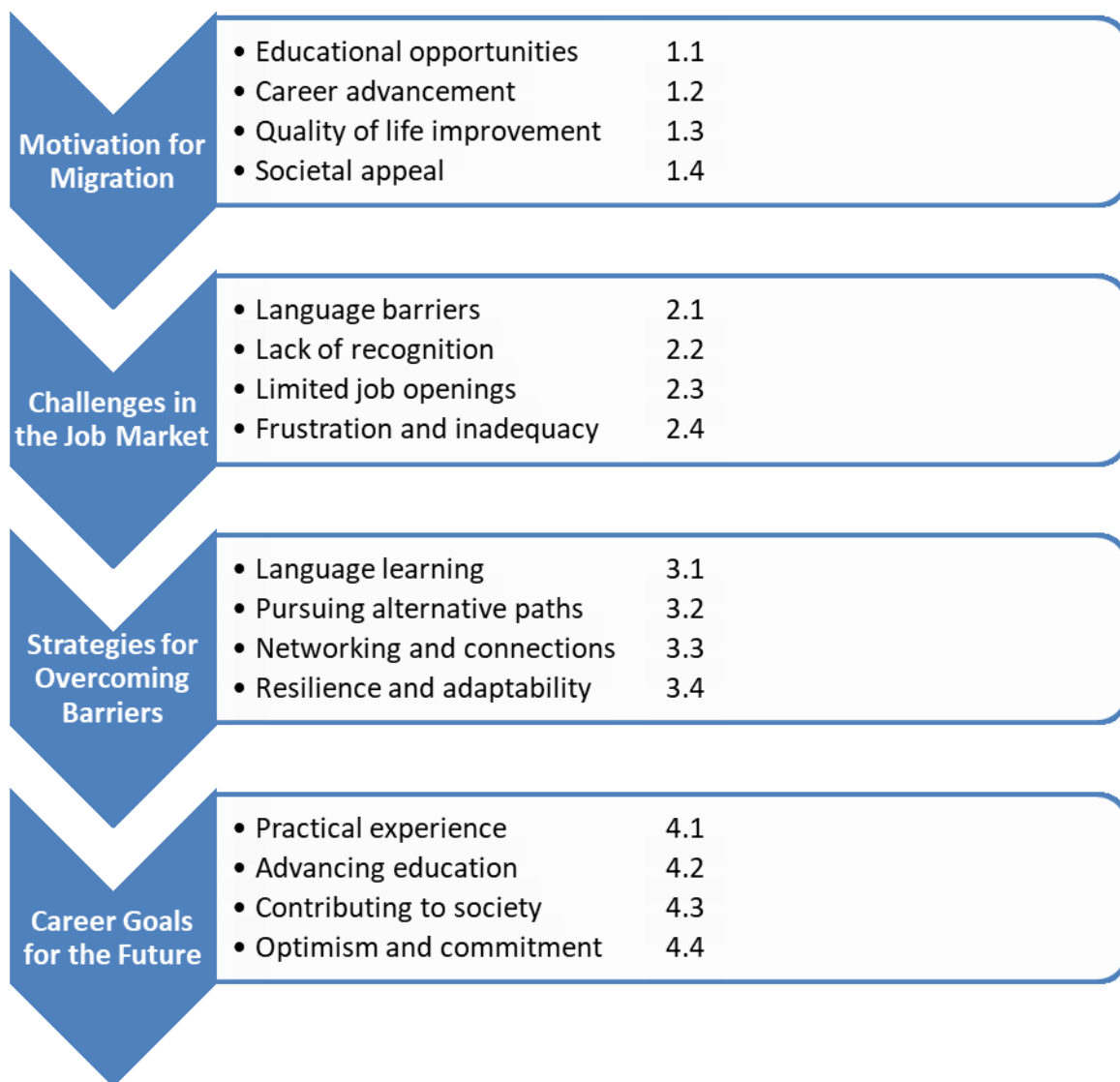
In view of all the different interview formats, a more flexible and comprehensive way to study participants' points of view, experience in decision making processes for occupations and professions is provided by semi-structured interviews (Radcliffe, 2013). The researcher can gain a more complete insight into the variables that influence immigrants' career paths in Jyväskylä by speaking to participants about their ideas, feelings and motives through open-ended reasoning via semi-structured interviews. These types of interviews also capture the depth and complexity of immigrants' lived experiences by giving participants a chance to express their own thoughts and opinions (Guest et al., 2006).

A semi-structured interview methodology has been developed based on the goals and research questions set out in Chapter 1. The interview guide (Appendix A) contains a series of open-ended and fast questions to explore more about participants' career paths, decision-making processes, problems, ambitions or views on the support services that are available. To ensure that this technique is appropriate, relevant and clear before going into full use, first it is tested on a small sample of participants.

### **3.4 Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis, which involves analyzing the information collected and making conclusions that are relevant to the study questions, is a key phase in qualitative research. The analysis of data in this study is based on thematic analysis, a popular methodology for qualitative research to identify patterns, themes and meaning within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a flexible and systematic approach for compiling and analyzing qualitative data. This process involves a number of steps, such as becoming familiar with the data, developing preliminary codes, searching for themes, looking for improvements and identifying and labeling topics.

Figure 3: Coding Framework



The transcripts of the interviews are reread systematically over a period of time, so that important data units or codes were identified. These codes (Appendix B) are applied to some of the text passages which bear a link with key concepts, topics and classifications referred to in study questions and goals. Key codes are drawn up using participant answers to the interview questions, and as the analysis of the collected data goes on more codes are revealed. For example, Code 1.4: Societal Appeal relates to Theme 1: Motivation for Migration since it indicates participants' affinity for Finnish culture, values, or way of life, which encompasses equality, social cohesion, environmental sustainability, or work-life balance, among other things. The next step is to establish relationships and patterns among codes so that major themes can be developed after the basic code has been completed. The themes are then assessed and linked to relevant theoretical frameworks, after careful analysis of the data has

been carried out. Analyzing involves identifying themes in a broad literature, evaluating the implications of results and taking account of the research questions to be answered.

Interviews transcripts are coded and analyzed in the framework of a thematic approach, so as to find patterns, themes or insight into immigrant labour market choices and decision making process. A number of themes are identified from the data by a sequential process to classify, categorize and analyze the exact content of interviews.

A thematic analysis method for analyzing data was used in this study to identify, analyze and interpret the patterns or themes of qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis enables a systematic examination of participants' stories and experiences, which highlights similarities and differences as well as major findings on professional decisions taken by migrants. The interview transcripts were coded, the codes were grouped into themes, and the results were interpreted in light of the theoretical framework and research goals.

### **3.5 Protecting Confidentiality and Anonymity**

In this study, it is important to first acknowledge the researcher's positionality as an international student or an immigrant researcher, since this may have an impact on a number of study related factors, such as the researcher's perspective, biases, and interactions with the participants. Since the researcher may immediately connect to the experiences and difficulties experienced by the participants, being conscious of the researcher's positionality affected the interest in the study. Expectations for the results of the study could also be influenced by the researcher's pursuit of insights that might be relevant to individual experiences and add to the knowledge base. The researcher's previous relationship with the participants, which also contributed to building rapport and trust, allowed for a more candid and frank conversation during the interview.

It is also necessary to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of the participants in order to ensure their privacy as well as protection of private data. All information collected in the course of this study, such as audio recordings and transcript data from interviews, are secured and kept confidential. In order to ensure the confidentiality of the participants, pseudonyms are used to anonymize the identity of the participants in the reporting and dissemination of

the results. Only the researcher has access to this unprocessed data; all further identifying information is deleted in order to prevent any potential breach of confidentiality.

Every effort is taken to ensure data protection, in order to minimize potential risks and discomfort when dealing with sensitive subjects such as immigration, professional decisions or individual experience. The questions for the interview are prepared in a sympathetic and non-intrusive manner, so that participants are free to skip or stop answering any question which makes them feel uncomfortable or distressed. However, the research has led to a thorough and morally sound conclusion that upholds participants' rights, autonomy and dignity in accordance with these moral guidelines and protocols.

Furthermore, the confidentiality and rights of participants are preserved during the sample procedure by complying with ethical principles. Participants are guaranteed the right to withdraw from research at any time, without being subject to repercussions and with complete assurance that participation is entirely voluntary. The project uses purposive sampling and adherence to ethical standards in order to collect a thorough and pertinent set of data, which allows clear understanding the factors that influence immigrants' career choices in Jyväskylä.

Ethical issues have been given the highest priority throughout the study process. Prior to their participation in the study, all participants provided their informed permission and were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality. Participants in the study were free to leave at any time with no harmful consequences. In addition, in order to guarantee the ethics of data management great attention was paid during this research to safe storage and anonymization of transcripts.

## **4 CHAPTER: RESULTS**

### **4.1 Overview of the Results**

The objectives of the interviews were to gain a deeper understanding of educated immigrants' and international students' career experiences, obstacles they encountered and ambitions for working on the Finnish labor market. The educational records of the participants have been shared, indicating a variety of degrees they had acquired prior to their arrival in Finland. Five of the participants had obtained their degree from home countries, including Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the Philippines, in different areas such as sports science, nursing or economics. Four of the remaining participants possessed a good background in their respective fields, having obtained master's degrees in areas such as food science and sports science. The disclosure of previous educational experience has been avoided by just one participant. Table 1 includes all the facts in brief collected from the interviews.

Before they moved to Finland, the participants had different professional backgrounds in their home countries. The positions of teacher, tutor, accountant, nurse and business owner were covered by these experiences. Many participants found it difficult to find work in Finland that matched their previous experience and qualifications, despite having a wide range of professional experience. Language barriers, employers who refuse to accept prior training and experience, discrepancies in certification requirements as well as mandatory visa extension requirements were highlighted as the major challenges they had to face.

In addition, participants had similar reasons for moving to Finland, most of which were related to returning to school and seeking better employment opportunities. During their stay in Finland, each participant expressed a desire to improve their knowledge, experience abroad, and contribute positively to their respective fields. Financial considerations and visa restrictions also influenced their decision to seek employment while studying; and even they were ready to take a job that would put their dreams on hold for several years. In addition, all participants stated that speaking Finnish was a major obstacle to their ability to find work in Finland. It was also difficult for them to find jobs that were directly relevant to their studies because of differences in certification requirements and limited job prospects. Financial constraints have added to these difficulties, which have led to the search for other employment opportunities.

The participants revealed that they rely on a mix of official and informal support networks in order to manage their professional development in Finland. The personal networks of the participants, including friends, family, and professional contacts, were essential to help them find employment and to provide emotional support, even if the career services and academic counselors could provide some assistance. The participants maintained a positive outlook on their future employment opportunities in Finland, despite facing several challenges. The majority of participants indicated that they wanted to gain experience in the real world, improve their language skills and look for more education so as to expand their job options. However, they were aware that the key to achieving their long term career objectives lies in developing professional networks and making best use of qualifications.

## **4.2 Understanding Interview Responses**

The analysis of the interview data gives a clear understanding of experiences, difficulties and goals of the participants who are pursuing professions in Finland. Some of the recurrent themes the participants perceived to have a significant effect on their career paths are individual characteristics, language barriers and cultural differences.

It was discussed how some of the participant's own concerns influenced their decisions as to whether or not to pursue a career in Finland. Due to budget constraints, many participants have been forced to look for work in order to make ends meet while they continue their stud-

ies. For example, the importance of finding a job in view of high living and visa costs was emphasized by 7 out of 10 participants. They also acknowledged that one of the main reasons they gave priority to getting any work over pursuing jobs that matched their educational credentials was financial strain.

A significant amount of cultural integration and adaptation was experienced by the participants in Finland, whether they worked or studied. They were all agreed that adapting to new professional standards and cultural norms would be difficult, despite their respect for Finland's culture. Some participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the apparent preference of native Finnish speakers in the labour market, drawing attention to possible prejudices and structural obstacles faced by immigrants. Differences in workplace practices, communication methods and societal interactions have been identified by all participants working at the moment. It was also emphasized that cultural sensitivity and adaptability are important for effective integration.

Language barriers have been identified by each participant as a major obstacle to obtaining employment opportunities in their respective fields. Their limited level of Finnish proficiency made it more difficult for them to obtain work in their field of specialization, since those professions required a high degree of linguistic competence. The necessity of language skills as a prerequisite for acceptance in Finnish culture has been emphasized by all participants and the need to provide more support among newcomers who wish to learn languages was also highlighted.

Participants have also revealed the influence of government policies and initiatives on their employment opportunities in Finland. For example, the difficulties faced by immigrants and international students in finding work and prolonging their stay in this country can be attributed to regulations relating to working permits and visas. Participants discussed how their career choices and objectives have been influenced by the pressure of finding work in order to comply with visa requirements, as well as its complexity.

The participants acknowledged that professional contacts and networking were essential to their career development in Finland. Participants stressed the importance of making recommendations to ensure employment especially in Jyväskylä. In view of this, they all agreed that networking with peers, academic advisers and industry experts is essential for access to employment opportunities and career advice. In spite of the difficulties they encountered as

immigrants, participants remained active in networking and marketing themselves on sites such as LinkedIn with a view to improving their chances of finding employment.

Despite a number of obstacles, the participants have demonstrated their flexibility and adaptability as they navigate the Finnish labour market. Each participant had tales of perseverance, ingenuity and resolutions to overcome obstacles and take advantage of possibilities. Eight out of ten participants took on a variety of roles, showing their adaptability to the situation at hand. These professions include gig distributors and cooks, part-time housekeepers and caregivers. However, their desire to achieve their professional objectives in a foreign country has been highlighted by their continued efforts to overcome these challenges.

### **4.3 Theme 1: Motivations for Migration**

A range of aspects, such as reasons for migration, labour market challenges, ways to overcome obstacles and future objectives were explored in interviews with 10 participants. The following themes have been identified in the course of a thorough examination of the interview materials:

Participants have come to Finland for a variety of reasons, e.g. in order to be able to take advantage of education opportunities, seek greater business opportunity and escape from the unstable political environment at home countries. Each participant was brought to the country on a dependent or student visa. Those with dependent visas were those whose family members were holders of student visas. Finland, which provides excellent research opportunities and education programmes, was seen as an example of intellectual excellence by a few interviewees. Others, who appreciated Finland's world-class educational system, were motivated by the nation's reputation for excellent living standards, social welfare benefits, and gender equality. *"I came here to advance my education and explore international career opportunities in the healthcare sector,"* said one of the participants. This topic underlines SCCT's emphasis on environmental variables influencing employment choice (Lent et al., 1994), given that participants were motivated by the perceived opportunities and benefits offered by Finland. However, there were a number of reasons for participants to move to Finland, such as family reunion, political and financial crises within their own countries or lack of freedom.



## 4.4 Theme 2: Challenges in the Job Market

Immigrants face a number of obstacles when trying to find work in Finland, regardless of their educational background and years of experience in their home countries. Throughout the interviews, this was highlighted as an ongoing problem. Language barriers were one of the main obstacles that prevented participants from understanding employment requirements, communicating in an effective manner and finding work which met their qualifications and abilities. Moreover, as Tiedekunta (2019) highlights in his research, Difficulty to achieve recognition for the previous educational qualifications hinder the job seeking process of the immigrants (K. J. P. Tiedekunta et al., 2019). The participants of this study too have highlighted the difficulty to obtain recognition for their professional skills and academic achievements in their home countries that have prevented them from making career progress. These challenges often caused participants to feel frustrated and inadequate, as they demonstrated in the interviews. One participant said, regretfully *"I can't find a job I'm familiar with. One of the factors is the language barrier, and I think they don't like the fact that immigrants are in higher positions."* This theme emphasizes the impact of individual circumstances, such as dissatisfaction, on unsuccessful attempts and career outcomes, in line with SCCT's emphasis on the influence of personal characteristics on employment decisions (Lindley, 2005). Also, the participants noted that they had encountered obstacles from unfamiliar workplace standards, communication styles, cultural competence gaps, and organizational hierarchy.

When it comes to workplace standards, all the participants referred them as expectations, customs, and behaviour seen in Finnish workplaces, such as punctuality, professionalism, work ethic, and compliance with the rules and regulations. *"In Finland, efficiency and punctuality at work are highly valued. Since I'm from a different culture, I must have learned to cope with those expectations."* said one of the participants. Another participant said, *"I have noticed that Finnish workplaces place a high priority on collaboration and an open environment where everyone's contribution is valued, which is different from the hierarchical structures I have come to know in my home country."*

Further, the participants defined cultural competence gaps as situations in which their cultural background or knowledge is not compatible with the norms and practices of Finnish society. Miscommunications, wrong perceptions or discomfort have often occurred as a result. For example, one participant said, *"I found it difficult to adapt to Finnish social interaction at*

*first because I did not know the unspoken rules and expressions. It led to a series of unpleasant situations and confusion." One participant described an example of cultural misunderstanding as, "My Finnish colleagues used to take my direct communication style, which is common in my culture, as too strong and argumentative."*

Communication styles, the way in which information is expressed through tone, language choice and verbal and nonverbal clues, have also been defined as unfamiliar workplace standards by the participants. This applies to situations in which official and informal communication takes place. The following example was provided by a participant: *"In Finnish companies, the interaction is usually brief and direct with an emphasis on effectiveness and clarity. It's taken me a while to get used to this direct approach, because I know more indirect ways of communicating."* The following comment came from another participant: *"I had to learn how to change my style of communication, even when confronted with difficult situations, in order to reflect the Finnish attitude towards honesty and transparency. That has made me a more direct messenger compared to the delicate manner in which I've been used in my home country."* Considering all of these facts, it is obvious that educated immigrants face a number of obstacles when trying to find work in Finland, irrespective of their educational background and years of experience in their home countries.

#### **4.5 Theme 3: Strategies for Overcoming Barriers**

Resilience, resourcefulness and adaptation were the key techniques to be used for negotiating Finland's labour market as all participants showed. Participants have revealed concrete steps to improve their employability, despite major structural barriers such as limited career opportunities and language restrictions. These actions included language training, consulting academic counselors and industry experts, and exploring other employment options such as gig work, part time work, and entrepreneurship, with a view to achieving financial stability while pursuing professional objectives. This shows that the participants have committed themselves to using their unique skills and actively working towards improving their employability even though there are major structural obstacles to overcome. In addition, the short duration of the residence permit has encouraged some participants to prioritize obtaining a work visa under their current employment contract, highlighting the need to secure a steady job in Finland. However, the participants demonstrated perseverance and adaptability in their work on the

Finnish job market. *"If you're financially able to wait, don't give up on your career goals and take time for learning Finnish language or gaining more qualifications,"* said one of the participants. This theme stresses the need for flexibility and adaptation to career growth, in line with SCCT's emphasis on proactive behaviour responding to contextual constraints.

#### **4.6 Theme 4: Career Goals for the Future**

Participants shared their expectations of living and working in Finland, despite the difficulties and uncertainties. All the participants have expressed a strong desire to make an impact on Finland's society, improve their skills and knowledge as well as pursue fulfilling professional opportunities that match their interests and passions. The importance of developing skills, career development and continuous learning to achieve professionals' objectives was a major point that the participants put forward. Each of the participants set out a number of future professional objectives, such as expanding their education, gaining real world experience in their field and contributing to Finland's society. It is important to note that despite obstacles, participants continue to pursue their objectives and believe in themselves. As one participant put it, *"I have a qualification provided from here when I complete the degree. Looking for work in my field is advantageous. So in the future, it's going to be useful to me"*. As a reflection of the intersection between individual ambitions and possibilities, this theme is resonant with SCCT's emphasis on goal setting and career planning in relation to contextual possibilities.

Most of participants emphasized the importance of creating a warm, accepting environment in which the skills and abilities of the educated immigrants in Finnish workforce are respected. *"I think Finland's going to embrace diversity and welcome qualified people who can contribute,"* said one of the participants. This statement of reciprocity is intended to foster a two way interaction in which immigrants seek opportunities for advancement both personally and professionally, while also bringing important talents into the Finnish job market. This is in line with the idea of integration, which emphasises the active involvement and integration of educated immigrants into their host country's social, economic and cultural fabric. By recognising and appreciating the contributions of immigrants, Finland can promote a more welcoming and uniform culture in which immigrants from all backgrounds can develop and contribute to the wealth of Finland and Finnish society.

## 4.7 Mapping Results through SCCT Theoretical Lens

As described in previous chapters, the theory of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) developed by Robert W. Lent, Steven D. Brown, Gail Hackett (Lent et al., 2002) provides a complete framework to understand career development processes. According to the SCCT theory, the factors affect a person's professional decisions and behaviour include his or her belief in self-efficacy, goals, and expectations for success as well as contextual support. By analyzing the basic principles of SCCT in their experiences, key insights were gained about factors affecting the career development paths of educated immigrants and international students who are thriving to achieve success in Finnish job market. This gives rise to focused interventions which support their integration and success.

The ideas and experiences of the interviewees thus far show that immigrants' perception of their ability in terms of language competence, job search strategies as well as intercultural skills have a significant influence on what they choose to do or behave.

*“Finding a job that I've been trained in is just so hard. I tried my best and then realized that it's impossible. One reason is language barrier and I personally think that they don't like immigrants to reach higher positions here”.*

On prolonged disappointment, one of the participants commented in detail. All other participants said the same thing when it came to their job search in their areas of competence. During the interviews, it was common for participants to express fears and doubts due to language barriers, unfamiliarity with Finland's labour market or concern about being recognized as qualified. Despite disappointment, they continued to try and improve their employability and self-efficacy through the implementation of active techniques such as networking, skills development and language training. These results are consistent with SCCT's emphasis on the dynamic interplay of self-efficacy beliefs (Lindley, 2005).

During the interviews, one participant commented;

*“It's really hard, but I learn Finnish now and still update my LinkedIn profile to promote myself in the hope of being elevated after graduation”.*

In spite of the early difficulties, this reinforces the idea that they are resilient and will continue to improve their language skills and actively pursue employment opportunities. In the

same way, as this statement shows, SCCT also takes a strong interest in people who are working to overcome difficulties and develop their own self-assurance so that they can successfully manage career transitions (Lent & Brown, 2013).

Participants felt that their expectations of employment prospects, career advancement opportunities and social integration in Finland have been significantly influenced by a number of external factors such as language proficiency requirements, recognition evaluation procedures of previous educational qualifications or culture norms. The lack of available jobs in their industry has often been raised by participants. One participant openly commented on for giving up searching for related jobs saying “*only the cleaning jobs are open for immigrants like us*”. This shows that the participants perceived the Finnish labour market not to value their previous educational experience, which hindered the participants’ professional development. Despite these obstacles and their disappointment, participants expressed optimism and showed examples of the steps they had taken to improve their chances of success in professions and social well-being in Finnish society. This shows SCCT’s emphasis on the ability of people to adapt their expectations and plans when circumstances change, which is a sign of an active approach to career development (Lent & Brown, 2016).

SCCT emphasizes the importance of setting goals to guide people’s behaviour and career choices (Lent & Brown, 2013). Interviews showed that the participants had a desire to use their knowledge and skills in order to pursue careers which complemented their interests and education background. However, in order to address these contextual barriers such as linguistic differences, limited job prospects and institutional mandates, participants acknowledged the necessity of modifying their objectives and expectations. The participants expressed their desire for direction and a sense of purpose in the choice of employment. They have shown resilience by setting reasonable and achievable targets, even though they are now working in occupations unrelated to their areas of expertise. The fact that they are able to adapt and endure in the face of difficulties, which is essential for successfully adopting a new community, is particularly noteworthy. It provides an insight into the multifaceted nature of immigrant experience and links this idea of resilience with a body of research on integration routes, notably as outlined by Cardoso and Thompson, (2010) paper. In this context, resilience is regarded as a dynamic process by which immigrants are confronted with obstacles and failures in their efforts to achieve their objectives (Cardoso & Thompson, 2010).

All participants recognized that access to support networks such as friends, career services and academic advisers had a major impact on their ability to negotiate Finland's labour market and overcome obstacles in employment. The importance of recommendations in the assessment of candidates for employment has also been emphasized, particularly in Jyväskylä. Their socioeconomic integration and professional growth in Finland have been hampered by institutional obstacles they have also experienced, such as language competency standards, equalization process of previous educational qualifications, and migration laws.

## 5 CHAPTER: DISCUSSION

The overview of the interview data provides insights into the complex experiences and difficulties faced by the participants, all of whom could be categorized as educated immigrants and international students, in setting up their careers in Finland. In this section, the main findings are detailed, and the research questions answered. Implications for immigrant employment in Finland's wider social environment are also given more attention.

The study, which sought to answer the primary research question of the study "What are the various factors that influence the educated immigrants and international students interviewed for this study perceived to affect their choice of career in Finland?" has revealed a number of important aspects providing insight into participant's experiences. The important factors, including educational background, work prospects, language skills and cultural adaptation, have been identified through semi-structured interviews and thematic analyses, which have a significant impact on career paths in the Finnish environment. These themes have given insight into the multifaceted nature of job decision making for educated immigrants, through exposing interactions between individual interests and external influences.

In addition, the following sub-question is part of the study: "To what extent did the participants interviewed for this study explain their career decision making process in Finland to be influenced by cultural differences and language barriers?", which focused especially on understanding how these linguistic and cultural obstacles had an impact on participants' career-choice decisions. The study, through in depth conversations and analysis of interview data, showed a more detailed understanding of how cultural competence gaps, communication styles and workplace norms have an impact on career choice and occupational interactions. The research was able to identify the specific challenges faced by educated immigrants and

international students when trying to navigate the Finnish job market and workplace dynamics through a thorough analysis of these factors.

## **5.1 Determinants of career choices**

Participants have identified a number of important barriers to their choice of profession in Finland, with the main ones relating to culture and language differences, as well as requirements for qualifications. The main obstacle to their employment was found to be their level of language competence. Several participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of job opportunities that match their qualifications as a result of linguistic barriers. In addition, some of the participants who have been having trouble adapting their qualifications to the Finnish environment found it more difficult to meet the requirements for certification. Furthermore, the equalization of certifications takes longer than immigrants with inadequate funds can afford to wait. This condition has further limited their career possibilities. Based on what participants shared during the interviews, cultural differences have also influenced immigrants' perceptions of acceptable working practices and communication methods, which have an impact on their professional relationships and development.

Financial constraints were cited as a recurrent problem by all of the participants, which had an impact on their career choice. Participants from Asian countries have been forced to seek work quickly and often in positions outside their fields of expertise, due to the high cost of living in Finland. As they said, the amount of money decreased when their native currency was exchanged for euros due to higher inflation rates in their home countries despite having presented Finnish immigration with proof of their own financial situation while applying for a student visa. Consequently, they were not in a position to meet Finland's high cost of living with no job. The need to provide for their families and secure a living made it difficult for them to pursue professional ambitions that matched their abilities and desires. The motivation of the participants to devote time and resources to learning a language or pursuing further education, which exacerbated their difficulties in finding employment, was also affected by the pressure on them to fulfill financial commitments.

The participants repeatedly stressed the fact that, in Finland, there are few professional opportunities for educated immigrants and International students who have a particular field of



expertise and need language training. Immigrants often faced obstacles in their search for work that corresponds to their educational background, even if they had the necessary training, experience or qualifications. The competitive job market, as well as the preference of employers for Finnish language expertise and domestic experience, has therefore made it difficult for educated immigrants to establish themselves in their respective fields. In addition, the lack of options has exacerbated immigrant's feelings of dissatisfaction and disappointment, which have affected their ability to advance in their careers and general well-being.

Support networks and systems have been identified by the participants as essential components for professional development and integration of immigrants to Finnish culture. Although some of the participants found it hard to obtain formal support services that fulfill their needs, others believed they had been supported informally by friends, relatives or colleagues. The lack of integrated support systems, in particular language training and job placements, was one of the most significant barriers the participants mentioned for immigrants to enter Finland's labor market. In addition, the value of having access to professional networks and relationships was emphasized by the participants given has the necessity of recommendations and referrals for potential candidates to secure a job.

All the participants recognized that they have been worked towards integration into Finnish society and workplaces, through language learning, culture awareness as well as occupational integration. Still, their struggles to integrate to Finnish cultural norms and communication techniques have had a major impact on their professional relationships and feelings of belonging in the workplace. Language barriers make it harder for the participants to meet their integration into Finland's society and take advantage of its employment prospects. However, the participants recognized the importance of language and cultural competence in achieving their professional objectives. Further, they revealed their techniques of adaptation that they have already implemented and their desire to further develop these skills.

In pursuit of their professional ambitions, participants also showed a spirit of perseverance and determination. They stressed their commitment to lifelong learning and career development, despite the constraints of limited resources and employment opportunities. In general, the interviews showed the determination and resourcefulness of educated immigrants and

international students with a high educational background to navigate the Finnish job market and pursue their career objectives.

## **5.2 Comparison of the Findings from the Interviews with Existing Literature**

By consistently pointing out that language barriers are a major obstacle to the participation of immigrants in the job market and their career development, the participants confirmed the results of previous literature. For instance, the study by Saleem (2023) about career prospects of international students in Finland indicates that the struggle to integrate into the new environment is mostly due to struggles with the first language of the host country (Saleem, 2023). Studies have shown that immigrants are restricted to employment in Finland as a result of their lack of language skills, particularly when they apply for jobs relating to their expertise field which require them to be fluent in Finnish or Swedish. Language skills are not only necessary to communicate effectively at work, but they also serve as a prerequisite for qualifications such as certificates and licenses which further restrict the job opportunities of immigrants (Tiedekunta et al., 2022). In addition, previous research has shown that immigrants with a higher level of linguistic skills are more apt to be employed according to their education and experience, which underlines the vital role played by language training in fostering integration into the Finnish job market (Saleem, 2023).

The interviews revealed a number of recurrent issues relating to difficulties encountered throughout the process of equalizing/recognizing previous certificates and qualification process, which were stated in previous literature on integration of immigrants into the job market (Tiedekunta et al., 2019). Prior research has identified the difficulties experienced by immigrants who wish to transfer their foreign degrees into Finland's education system, which are often accompanied by a need for further learning or training in order to comply with local requirements (Tiedekunta et al., 2019). Particularly in regulated areas such as engineering, education and healthcare, evaluation procedures may differ depending on the subject of study, which may lead to differences in official approval and recognition (Råholm et al., 2010). Consequently, for the reason that Finnish companies might not take full account of or recognize their capabilities and qualifications, educated immigrants find it difficult to find work and progress in their proficient careers (Werquin, 2010).

The issue of structural impediments and discrimination in Finland's labour market has also been raised by participants throughout the interviews. These issues highlighted by the participants have come to light as major factors influencing the career path of educated immigrants in Jyväskylä, and they are mirrored by a wider trend of marginalization and inequality. Studies have shown that there are systematic barriers to talented immigrants, particularly from outside the European Union (H. Tiedekunta et al., 2022). Employers' bias, preferential treatment and discrimination in the workplace are among these barriers. As a result of their language, country or ethnic origin, immigrants may experience stereotyping and discrimination, which may lead to unfair treatment throughout the recruitment and promotional process (Ahmad, 2020). In order to eliminate these structural barriers, there is a need for intensive efforts on combating prejudice, advancing diversity and inclusion as well as giving all people equal access to employment opportunities irrespective of their origin or background (Markkanen, 2007).

The question of how support systems and integration policies might help immigrants to enter the labour market and improve their employability has also been explored in interviews. The lack of support services was pointed out by all the participants. The importance of tailored assistance services, language training efforts and skill enhancement programmes for enhancing the employability and social inclusion of qualified immigrants has been highlighted in previous studies (Shields et al., 2023) and aligns with the experiences of the participants. The weaknesses and shortcomings of existing support systems have been highlighted by all participants, for example their limited accessibility, lack of financial resources or cultural sensitivity. To meet the various needs and ambitions of immigrants, concerted efforts (determined and serious efforts) must be made at all levels. Moreover, the effectiveness of integration programmes can vary depending on national and local implementation methods (Schrover et al., 2019). The experiences shared by the participants indicated that regional events as well as community dynamics have an impact on participants' experiences in addition to domestic policies. The effectiveness of integration initiatives can therefore have a significant impact on the career paths and integration results of educated immigrants. For example, in areas where integration initiatives are coordinated and appropriately resourced, educated immigrants can benefit from better access to language classes, employment opportunities as well as social support networks which make it easier for them to move into the labour market and society. On the other hand, in regions where integration initiatives are dispersed or inadequately sup-

ported, immigrants may face more difficulties to obtain employment, gain access to necessary services and establish social networks which could slow down their integration process (Schrover et al., 2019).

In the face of a number of obstacles, the participants have demonstrated resilience and determination to pursue their career aspirations similar to other studies about immigrants (Suto, 2009). It has been found that educated immigrants are resourceful, flexible and resilient in adapting to new situations as well as overcome obstacles to reach their professional goals (Schultheiss & Davis, 2015). In addition, studies show that opportunities, experiences and situations change over time which may affect the career goals of educated immigrants (Suto, 2009). The study's participants demonstrated that by recognizing the positive and efficient impact of educated immigrants and international students on strengthening their host country's economy, policy makers, employers as well as service providers can better encourage immigrants' professional development and foster an inclusive, diverse labour market.

## 6 CHAPTER: CONCLUSION

### 6.1 Summary of Key Findings

This research project has found that a number of factors are perceived to have an impact on the choice of career for educated immigrants and international students. These perceived factors include, experience within the Finnish labour market, integration into Finnish society as well as interactions with career support services. The in-depth thematic analysis, revealed a number of significant findings which have provided insight into the possibilities and difficulties experienced by international students and educated immigrants who are trying to make their careers in Finland.

Language and cultural difficulties have been found to be the biggest barriers to the participants' employment prospects and professional relationships in Finland. The importance of language skills in securing employment prospects and integration to Finnish work environments has been highlighted by all participants. However, their views on communication techniques, job choices and professional standards were also influenced by cultural differences, highlighting the importance of cultural awareness and adaptability in the Finnish environment.

In addition, the labour market in Finland is considered to be highly competitive and difficult for immigrants, particularly when it comes to employment which matches their experience and qualifications. Few job opportunities, rigid certification requirements, and reports of

prejudice against immigrants regardless of their educational background were obstacles to finding work in the areas of study or competence of the participants. Several participants decided to take low skilled or unrelated work, which short term risked their professional objectives, in order to meet their immediate financial needs.

In addition, the involvement of support networks, which included friends, family, academic advisers and professional networks, has been recognized as an important factor in the growth of the immigrant's career and integration process. Informal support networks offered valuable advice, networking opportunities and emotional support, making it easier for immigrants to adapt to Finnish culture and work, although some participants found that institutional career guidance services were poor and not helpful enough.

In addition, proposals have been made to improve Finnish employment counselling services for educated immigrants and students from other countries on the basis of this study. These recommendations include the establishment of specialized mentor and coach programs, improving language and skills training programmes, strengthening cooperation and alliances with relevant stakeholders as well as promoting inclusive laws and procedures. In order to overcome obstacles in employment and integration, the implementation of these proposed career advice services could be very beneficial for immigrants. This would help them to integrate successfully into Finnish society and the labour market, thus enabling Finland to benefit from their knowledge and experiences.

## **6.2 Contribution to Literature**

By examining the factors that influence the choice of employment and the experience of educated immigrants and international students in Finland, this study adds significant value to the existing knowledge base. The study examined and assessed the possibilities, constraints, supports and systems that shape immigration's career paths in order to provide valuable information on the difficulties of developing professionally in a cross-cultural context.

One of the main contributions to this study is to indicate which variables are perceived to affect one's job selection, particularly in view of Finland's labour market and society. The study, through semi-structured interviews with educated immigrants and international students, reveals a wide range of barriers the respondents perceived to prevent them from find-

ing work opportunities that match their educational qualifications and career goals. The research reveals that closely monitoring the impact of language barriers, cultural differences, institutional factors and societal constraints on their career trajectories have revealed a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between these factors which shape and alter immigrant employment decisions and experience.

The study also shows clearly the obstacles immigrants face in integrating and how their lack of integration makes them less able to achieve success at work. The study provides further information on the structural and systemic challenges of Finland's labour market, which is revealed in terms of language proficiency, certification requirements, perceived bias and limited job opportunities for immigrants to gain access to suitable employment. Moreover, this research reveals how these obstacles have an impact on immigrants' social well-being, career goals and integration outcomes. In order to support the successful integration and participation of immigrants in the labour market, it highlights the importance of calling attention to systemic injustice and promoting inclusive policies and practices.

In addition, this study advances our understanding by identifying the functions of support networks and coping mechanisms used by migrants to manage their professional routes in Finland. Through an examination of official and informal support networks, such as friends, family, academic advisers or professional contacts, the research highlights the importance of social networks in immigrants' career paths and adaptation processes. Moreover, by analyzing immigrants' courage, resourcefulness and resilience to overcome obstacles and pursue alternative career paths, the study has highlighted the importance of promoting an environment in which they can reach their fullest potential and make a significant contribution to society.

Finally, this research has made a significant contribution to policy and practice by providing evidence on how to improve career counselling and support services for educated immigrants and international students in Finland. By integrating the results of this study into practical ideas, legislators, teachers, businesses and community organizations can all develop targeted programmes to improve immigrant workers' access to employment, education and social integration opportunities. In addition, by promoting inclusive policies and practices that recognize and value the talents, experiences, and contributions of immigrants, Finland can foster a more inclusive, diverse, and open society that benefits both individuals and communities.

### **6.3 Implications of Findings for Career Counseling and Support Services**

The study has implications for career counselling and support services aimed at supporting educated immigrants in Finland. By examining the opportunities and constraints identified in the participants' interviews, this illustration offers a view on how effective measures can be taken to support educated immigrants' career growth and integration into labour markets.

One of the main implications of the findings is the importance of developing and implementing language and skills training programmes to improve the employability and career prospects of educated immigrants. Priority should be given to language learning programmes that are tailored for the specific requirements of immigrants in career counselling services. It would be an appropriate way to increase the employability of educated immigrants in certain sectors, by providing them with language classes that include workplace communication skills and terminology related to employment. In addition, in order to help educated immigrants integrate into Finnish industries, training programmes introducing cultural dynamics in workplace should be implemented. In addition, career counselling services could provide skill assessment and training programs that would help educated immigrants to identify any gaps in their knowledge and skills before they give up the dream of moving into a new profession. This would make them more prepared to work in the fields of their choice. In order to allow participants access to regulated professions or specialized jobs, it is necessary to ensure that prior education qualifications are assessed and validated properly.

Career counselling services play an active role in raising awareness of diversity, equality and inclusion issues on the Finnish labour market alongside providing training and resources to cooperate with a diverse work environment, cultural competence as well as inclusive recruitment practices. In addition, career advisers could act as intermediary between educated immigrants and other interested parties for the purpose of making contacts, recommendations or easier access to support resources. In order to meet the diverse needs and objectives of educated immigrants, it is possible to make career advice more successful and sustainable by setting up a cooperative support network that includes their educational institutions.

The results have shown that it is essential to strengthen integration strategies and support networks in order to enable labour market participation and social inclusion of immigrants



with a higher educational background. Career counselling services could work with community groups, businesses, education institutions and government agencies to set up comprehensive support programmes that meet the different needs and objectives of educated immigrants in order to strengthen integration strategies and support networks. In order to enable immigrants to navigate the career progression process, it is also of great importance that support services and career advice services can help them obtain employment or training opportunities, be informed about available resources as well as provide guidance on how best to take advantage of these options.

In addition, there is a critical need to promote inclusive policies and practices in the Finnish labour market and society so as to remove structural obstacles and increase equitable opportunities for immigrants. It was clear from the participants' expressions throughout the interviews that they had encountered discrimination, exclusion and a lack of respect and trust for their qualifications and skills. This is a situation that goes beyond career advice services, but still can implement some strategies to eliminate discrimination and exclusion by joining hand in hand with institutions and companies, so that not only immigrants but also locals become aware. Thus, it is clear that career advice services should provide active support to policy reforms, regulation changes and organizational practices that foster diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace and education. This could include raising awareness of anti-discrimination legislation, encouraging educational institutions to participate in diversity education and awareness campaigns as well as pushing for the adoption of inclusive hiring and retention policies. In situations where educated immigrants are subjected to unfair treatment or discrimination, career advisors can also help them to advocate for their rights, navigate the legal system, and gain access to other channels.

## **6.4 Limitations of the Study**

Although the focus of this research is on factors that affect immigrants' career choices in Finland, there are good insights into opportunities, barriers and support networks which help them to make decisions about their careers. Some limitations that may affect the validity, generalizability and scope of studies should nevertheless be acknowledged.

The small sample size of the subjects interviewed can be seen as a weakness in this study. Although the results bear implications for educated immigrants and international students in Finland, these are not applicable such as to other groups of immigrants with different histories, education level, and type of visa, experience or socio-economic background.

Another drawback is that the study relies on self-reported information obtained by means of semi-structured interviews. In spite of the fact that they offer rich, qualitative insight into participants' experiences, opinions, and attitudes, interviews are susceptible to social desirability bias (Guest et al., 2006), in which participants are able to provide information that they consider pleasant or socially acceptable. This may affect participants' perceptions about their professional experience, leading to overestimation or underestimates of difficulties that they might encounter during the use of particular techniques and support networks. In addition, self-reported data may be considered to have been manipulated in certain situations where individuals' memories of past experiences or events might not be complete or unbiased.

The findings of the study can be drawn from specific immigration laws, labour market conditions and Finnish societal structures. As a result, the extent to which the conclusions of the study can be applied may be limited. For example, because of differences in labour market dynamics and the number of available jobs, immigrants in Helsinki can respond to the same questions in a different way than immigrants in Jyväskylä. Although these findings are useful for understanding the career experiences of immigrants in Finland, it is important to take into account other cultural, political and social circumstances when drawing conclusions from this research. Factors such as language skills, job prospects, and social support networks can vary widely within the provinces of the same country, which can have a significant impact on the career path of immigrants.

Finally, it is important to recognize that the design, methods, analysis, the choice of participants, interview questions, coding systems and analytical frameworks are all influenced by the researcher' assumption, positionalities and theoretical orientations, which, in turn, influenced data interpretation and analysis. Even if efforts have been made to provide methodological thoroughness and reflexivity in the course of the investigation, the researchers' personal history, views or presumptions played a role throughout the study.

## 6.5 Suggestions for Future Research

Although the study provides an insight into the professional experience of educated immigrants in Finland, there are a number of other possibilities for future research, which could expand the understanding of this complex phenomenon and strengthen the research idea in line with the ongoing changes in Finland's rapid internationalization.

One option to further the study in the future is to carry out longitudinal studies looking at the long term career development and outcomes of educated immigrants and international students in Finland. It is possible for researchers to closely follow participants in longitudinal studies, which allow them to monitor changes in their employment status, career path and socioeconomic background over time. For example, researchers can identify all the elements that lead to effective integration, career growth or barriers for professional development by tracking individuals from their initial arrival in Finland during different stages of their careers.

A comparison study comparing the professional experiences of educated immigrants and international students in Finland with those from other countries or cities may provide further research into the influence of contextual factors on immigrants' career paths. In order to improve the career prospects of immigrants in Finland, comparable studies could be used to identify good practices from elsewhere which can be adapted or implemented there. The examination of similarities and differences between the different national contexts, policies, practices or support systems which facilitate or hinder immigrants' career development can contribute to achieving these objectives.

Intersectional methods (Clarke & McCall, 2013) may also be used to investigate the ways in which different societal identities, for example gender, race, nationality and so on, interact with immigrants' professional experience in Finland. By looking at how each person's identity relates to his or her immigration status in order to affect employment prospects, researchers can gain a better understanding of the obstacles and effectively facilitate professional development for immigrants in Finland.

Even though this study focused mainly on the views of educated immigrants, future research could take into account the views of employers and organizations offering career advice to immigrants. This would allow for a more detailed understanding of the factors that affect the

employment outcomes of immigrants in Finland. In conducting interviews with employers, researchers can explore the opposing views and strategies on the acquisition, employment and retention of foreign workers. By understanding the views of employers, research can gain an overall perspective and aid in identifying potential bias, opportunities or obstacles on the labour market.

In summary, future research on immigrants' employment experiences in Finland should use a variety of methodological techniques, analysis of intersectional dynamics, taking into account the views of stakeholders and assessing policy initiatives with a view to deepening our understanding of immigration career development. By filling these research gaps, researchers can develop more effective policies, initiatives and networks to improve the professional integration and socioeconomic well-being of immigrants in Finland and abroad.

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## APPENDICES

### **APPENDIX A: Interview Guide**

#### **Step 1: Introduction**

The researcher introduces herself and explains the purpose of the interview. Then ask for consent to record the interview and get the participants written approval in the consent form.

#### **Step 2: Background Information**

Would you like to introduce yourself and briefly describe your educational background and professional experience?

How long have you lived in Finland, and what brought you here to seek employment or further education?

#### **Step 3: Educational Background**

What impact did your educational background have on the careers you chose in Finland?

#### **Step 4: Career Experiences in Finland**

Is there anything you can say to us about your search for work and acquisition in Finland?

What opportunities and obstacles have you encountered in the Finnish job market that is relevant to your course of study?

#### **Step 5: Determinants of Career Choices**

In Finland, what important influence did you have on your professional decision?  
Were your professional choices influenced by institutional, linguistic and cultural factors?

### **Step 6: Support Systems**

When pursuing your career in Finland, did you receive any official or informal assistance or guidance?

What are the ways in which professional associations, family and friends or other support systems influence your choice of career?

### **Step 7: Integration and Cultural Adaptation**

In Finland, what do you think of your level of work and social integration?

What impact has cultural differences had on your professional relationships or career choices?

### **Step 8: Networking and Connections**

In your career development in Finland, can you explain the importance of networking and professional connections?

### **Step 9: Government Policies and Initiatives**

What are your views as to the impact of Finnish national policies and programmes on career opportunities for educated immigrants and international students?

### **Step 10: Future Aspirations**

In the future, do you want to work in Finland or abroad?

What are your expectations for the next few years of your career?

### **Step 11: Reflection on Experience**

Looking back, what advice would you give to future international students and educated immigrants who want to work in Finland?

Would you like to say something more about your experiences and knowledge of the choice of work in a Finland?

### **Step 12: Conclusion**

Thank the participant for his or her time and contribution during the interview. Provide the participant opportunity to express his or her opinion and add further comments.

## **APPENDIX B: Coding Framework**

### **Theme 1: Motivation for Migration**

#### Code 1.1: Educational opportunities

Code 1.1 indicates the desire of the participants to pursue further education or specialised training in Finland because of its good teaching standards and a wide range of courses that are available.

#### Code 1.2: Career advancement

This indicates their desire to take up more flexible work options, e.g. in professional development, career advancement or business involvement.

#### Code 1.3: Quality of life improvement

This code highlights the participants' desire to improve all aspects of life, including safety, social security, healthcare and economic stability, is reflected here.

#### Code 1.4: Societal appeal

Denotes the attraction of Finnish cultural ideals, culture or way of life which include elements such as fairness, community harmony, environmental sustainability and balance between work and personal life.

### **Theme 2: Challenges in the Job Market**

#### Code 2.1: Language barriers

This code indicates that, due to a lack of Finnish language skills, there are difficulties in communicating effectively and in obtaining employment opportunities.

#### Code 2.2: Lack of recognition for foreign qualifications

It describes how it can be difficult to obtain recognition or validation of work experience or educational qualifications acquired outside Finland, which may affect one's ability to find employment.

#### Code 2.3: Limited job openings in the field

This shows that there are insufficient job opportunities for people in the field of study or occupational area, which may lead to dissatisfaction and disappointment.

#### Code 2.4: Frustration and inadequacy

It represents emotions, such as helplessness, disappointment, or a feeling of inadequacy due to the difficulties they in the job market, which ultimately lead to emotional pain or loss of confidence.

### **Theme 3: Strategies for Overcoming Barriers**

#### Code 3.1: Language learning

It refers to actions and activities, such as language exchange programmes, self-study or language classes, aimed at increasing immigrants' ability to speak Finnish.

#### Code 3.2: Pursuing alternative career paths

This code highlights how participants ended up looking for work or opportunities in fields unrelated to one's education or experience in order to get over challenges and make a living.

#### Code 3.3: Leveraging networking and connections

This refers to the use of one's network, professional or private connections in order to find work, learning new things and obtaining help and guidance.

#### Code 3.4: Resilience and adaptability

The ability to endure, maintain adaptability, and adapt to changing circumstances or obstacles in the labour market demonstrates resilience and determination.

### **Theme 4: Career Goals for the Future**

#### Code 4.1: Practical experience in the field

It shows that immigrants want to acquire practical knowledge, hands on experience or solid work experience in the field of their expertise.

#### Code 4.2: Advancing education

To improve their chances of finding work or knowledge, they want to seek opportunities for professional development, specialized training and additional academic qualifications.

#### Code 4.3: Contributing positively to Finnish society

The aim is to make a significant contribution to Finnish society through the use of professional skills, involvement in the community and social efforts.

#### Code 4.4: Optimism and commitment

Participants represent a positive approach and unwavering dedication to reach professional objectives, in spite of obstacles or disappointments faced.